



2020comprehensiveplan

Adopted July 15, 2020
(Amended January 1, 2024)

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A special thanks to all those who participated in the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Process. Your input has been invaluable to the overall process and development of the Comprehensive Plan.

GIS Disclaimer: The City of Thornton GIS Division and the consultant have made every reasonable effort to represent geographic data as accurately as possible, and assume no liability associated with the use or misuse of their products. Information contained herein is for representational purposes only and is not intended to be substituted for accurate boundary locations, legal or professional opinions.

R E S O L U T I O N

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO SUPERSEDE THE 2012 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the City Council originally adopted a major update of the Thornton Comprehensive Plan on September 11, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Council adopted a five-year technical update of the Thornton Comprehensive Plan on September 11, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Council considers the Comprehensive Plan a guiding document for growth in the City; and

WHEREAS, many changes have occurred since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the 2012 Comprehensive Plan recommended that a major update of the plan take place approximately every 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the last major Comprehensive Plan update was in 2007; and

WHEREAS, Council directed staff to proceed with the major 10-year update of the Comprehensive Plan on February 16, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the preparation of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan included an extensive and inclusive community outreach process; and

WHEREAS, a new 2020 Comprehensive Plan has been prepared using Council direction and community input; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan provides vision statements, goals, policies, and implementation strategies to guide development; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan includes a Future Land Use Map depicting land uses within the City's Future Growth Boundary as well as Placemaking Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan will guide development in the Future Growth Area and will be used by City Council, the Development Permits and Appeals Board, other City officials, citizens, developers, and City staff to evaluate development proposals; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan provides a foundation to guide other City plans; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan will supersede the 2012 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, on July 14, 2020, the City Council conducted a public hearing on said Plan, pursuant to the procedural and notice requirements of Chapter 18 of the Thornton City Code. The Council considered the evidence presented in support of and in opposition to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan as presented and have considered the record and given appropriate weight to the evidence; and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing, the City Council moved to amend the proposed Comprehensive Plan document including the proposed Future Land Use Map of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan as follows:

- To depict the northern portion of the quarter section of land on the southwest corner of York Street and Highway 7 as residential rather than Employment Center; and
- To depict the two parcels on the northeast corner of Quebec Street and 120th Avenue as Commercial rather than Mixed-Use Neighborhoods; and
- To depict the south Washington corridor as Commercial rather than Community Mixed-Use.

WHEREAS, the above motions to amend the proposed 2020 Comprehensive Plan passed; and

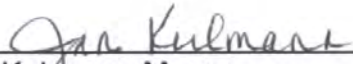
WHEREAS, the City Council then conducted a vote on the 2020 Comprehensive Plan as amended by the above motions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF THORNTON, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

The Comprehensive Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted to provide guidance on growth in the City's future growth area.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Thornton, Colorado, on July 15, 2020.

CITY OF THORNTON, COLORADO


Jan Kulmann, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kristen N. Rosenbaum, City Clerk

Note about adoption date: The Comprehensive Plan public hearing opened on July 14, 2020. However, due to extensive public testimony, the public hearing continued past midnight and the Comprehensive Plan was officially adopted on July 15, 2020.

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Plan Amendments and Updates

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan may be initiated by staff and property owners to update the Comprehensive Plan as necessary and appropriate and are approved by City Council. Administrative Updates may be initiated by staff for approval by the City Development Director to correct errors or make minor updates. This section is reserved for future amendments and updates approved after the date of adoption of this 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Amendment/ Update Title	Action Number	Date
Amendment to Section 1.7 and Appendix F (Glossary) to Amend the Approval Process for Comprehensive Plan Amendments.	C.D. No. 2023-132	Approved: July 25, 2023 Effective: January 1, 2024
Administrative Amendment to Executive Summary and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 to correct minor grammatical and textual changes not impacting the function of the document. Additionally, updates approved by City Council to the FLUM between 2020 and July of 2024 have been reflected in Chapter 4.	C.D. Administrative Directive No. 2024-001	Approved: October 15, 2024
Administrative Update to Correct a Future Land Use Map Error for Parcels in Timberleaf Subdivision.	C.D. Administrative Directive No. 2026-001	Approved: August 3, 2026

Intent of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is an aspirational document that outlines the community's long-term vision for the future. The Plan is ambitious and does not depict exactly what the city will look like in the future. The intent is to provide guidance and examples to help move closer to the community's long-term vision. It is also a living document that is revisited and updated over time to meet the changing conditions and evolving needs of the community. The achievement of the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan relies on the guidance and decision-making of City Council and implementation by city staff and many other local and regional partners.

2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thornton's Comprehensive Plan ("the Comprehensive Plan" or "the Plan") serves as the long-term vision and road map for the community's future. The Plan is used to guide and align public and private investments in Thornton with the shared vision and values of the community, and to provide policy direction on a variety of topics that affect the quality of life of our community - including housing, transportation, recreational amenities, employment opportunities, and more. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundational tool that guides the community toward its desired outcomes and is meant to be a "living document" that should be revisited and updated over time to meet the changing conditions and evolving needs of our community.

The last extensive rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan occurred in 2007, followed by a technical update in 2012. In 2018, a major rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan was initiated with the intent of addressing the emerging trends and key issues that are most relevant to the community with a particular focus on engaging a broader cross-section of the community. This Plan was adopted on July 15, 2020.



Executive Summary

ES.1 ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”) serves as a foundational tool that provides the long-term community vision and road map for the next 10-20 years of Thornton’s growth. The Plan is used to guide and align public and private investments in Thornton with the shared vision and values of the community.

In Thornton, this vision is evaluated approximately every 10 years and results in a new document that guides decision-making for the city. The last extensive rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan occurred in 2007, followed by a technical update in 2012. In 2018, this major rewrite of the Plan was initiated with a desire to proactively engage a broader cross-section of the community than had been achieved during prior planning efforts. The Plan was adopted on July 15, 2020.

ES.2 ASPECTS OF THE PLAN

The following are important aspects of the Comprehensive Plan:

SET A VISION

The Plan establishes a vision and goals for the future growth and development of Thornton, including areas currently within city boundaries, as well as land identified within Thornton’s Future Growth Area.

PROVIDE GUIDANCE

The Plan lays out a road map to help achieve that vision over the next 10 to 20 years. The Plan provides policy direction on a variety of topics that affect the quality of life of the community, such as housing, land uses, transportation, recreational amenities, employment opportunities, and more.

ASPIRATIONAL

The Plan is an aspirational and ambitious document. While it does not depict exactly what the city will look like in the future, the intent is to provide guidance and examples to help move closer to the community’s long-term vision.

RELY ON DECISION-MAKERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The achievement of the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan relies on the guidance and decision-making of City Council, and implementation by city staff and many other local and regional partners.

LIVING DOCUMENT

The Plan is intended to be a living document that is updated over time to meet changing conditions and the evolving needs of the community.

FUTURE LAND USE VERSUS ZONING

The Plan includes a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) that depicts what the city desires for future land use designations. The FLUM is an advisory document that represents a forward-looking view. This differs from zoning which regulates specific uses currently permitted on a property. The city regulates the specific use of land and buildings through Zone Districts that are described in the Thornton City Code and identified on the city’s official Zoning Map. As opposed to the FLUM, zoning only applies to land currently within city boundaries. Generally, the zoning and FLUM designations are compatible for land within city boundaries. However, in certain locations where the city has determined that future needs would be better met by a different use, the two maps may differ. The Comprehensive Plan should act as a guide for any decisions regarding rezoning requests.

ES.3 HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Plan is made up of several inter-related components. Together, these components are used to guide day-to-day decision-making; inform discussions regarding the long-range needs of the community; inform residents, property and business owners, and other potential stakeholders/investors about what the community wishes to preserve, change, and invest in over time; and promote continued coordination and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions and the many public, private, and nonprofit agencies that play a significant role in the city’s future.



ES.4 PLAN PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan rewrite started in mid-2018 and continued through 2020. The rewrite process had two major phases:

PHASE 1: VISIONING PROCESS (COMPLETED DECEMBER 2018)

In this phase, the community was involved in identifying the core values, vision, and goals for Thornton's future.

PHASE 2: TECHNICAL DOCUMENT UPDATE (COMPLETED JULY 2020)

The rewrite of Thornton's Comprehensive Plan document was the focus of Phase II. This phase incorporated the outcomes of the visioning process as well as ongoing engagement with the community.



PLANNING PROCESS: PHASE 1



Summer - Fall 2018 Vision and Values

As a first step in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan rewrite process, an array of events and activities were hosted to engage the community in a discussion about Thornton's future.

PLANNING PROCESS: PHASE 2



Winter - Spring 2019 Policy & Land Use Choices

Participants provided input on a variety of topics and issues regarding the city's future housing, employment, and destination opportunities. The 1st Draft of the new Future Land Use Map was a key focus.



Summer 2019 Draft Plan

Participants had the opportunity to review and comment on the draft elements of the Comprehensive Plan including the 2nd Draft of the Future Land Use Map.



Fall 2019 - Summer 2020 Final Plan Adoption

The community had the opportunity to attend the public hearing on July 14, 2020. Due to extensive public testimony, the public hearing continued past midnight and City Council officially adopted the Plan on July 15, 2020.

Figure ES-1: Project/Community Engagement Timeline

ES.5 PLAN OUTREACH

The city conducted an extensive community and stakeholder engagement process for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process. Over the course of almost two years, hundreds of people representing a diverse cross-section of the community were actively engaged to provide feedback and vision for Thornton's future.

Participants included residents, businesses, property owners, youth, underrepresented groups, members of the development community, school districts, community organizations, regional partners, appointed and elected officials, and numerous other

stakeholder groups. The city also conducted focus groups with the Thornton Idea Exchange, a group of community members who wished to be more actively involved with the Plan rewrite process. Figure ES-2 depicts the number of people reached through the city's extensive outreach methods.

Spanish translation of materials was provided and interpretation services were offered for community events. While a particular focus was placed on engaging the city's Latino population, targeted outreach to other ethnic groups represented in the community was also conducted.

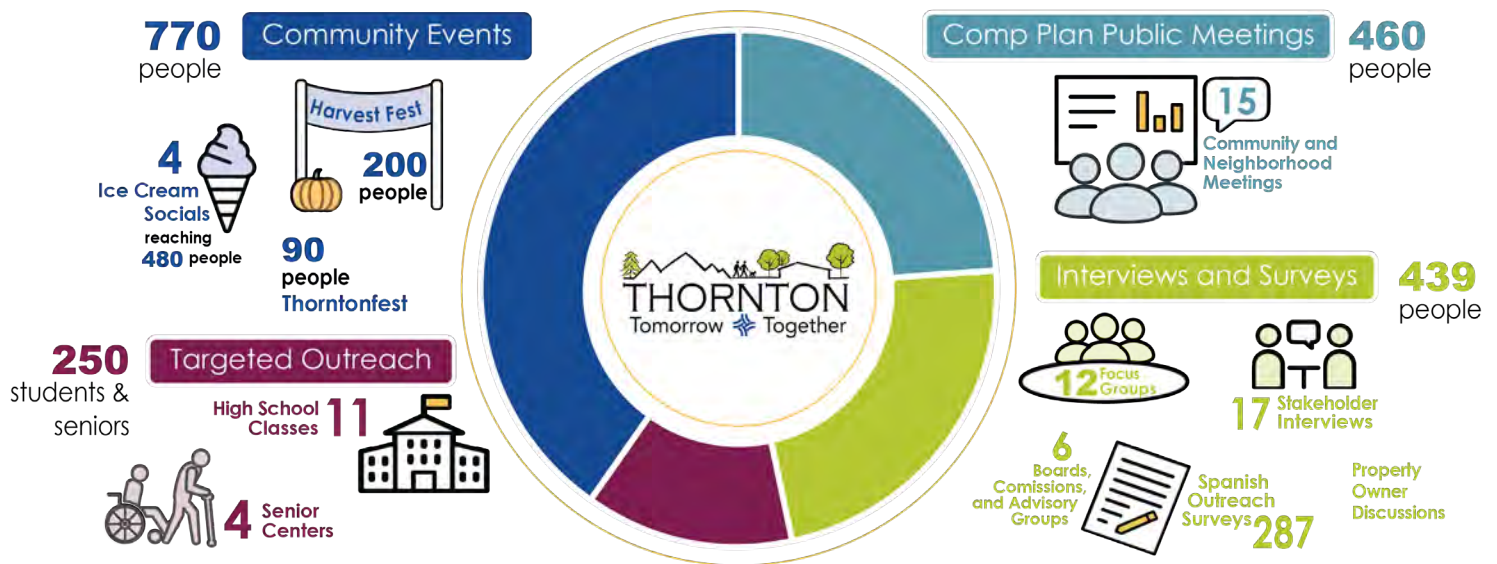


Figure ES-2: Plan Outreach by the Numbers



ES.6 COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the “umbrella” plan that provides guidance for all other planning efforts in the city, such as the more detailed plans and implementation programs. For example, the Comprehensive Plan provides the overall policy direction that guides the focus of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, Housing Master Plan, Station Area Master Plans for the future N Line Stations, area plans for specific locations in the city, and many other strategic plans. While the Comprehensive Plan provides the ‘big picture’ vision for Thornton, the city uses these more detailed plans to supplement and advance the community vision established in the Policy Framework.

Figure ES-3 illustrates how the components of the Plan build upon each other. The Plan’s foundational Policy Framework includes the Vision Themes, Goals and Policies that form the base for the Future Land Use Map and Placemaking Guidelines that are outlined in the Plan’s Growth Framework. At the highest level, the Implementational Framework includes the Strategies that will help the city implement the Policy Framework and Growth Framework.

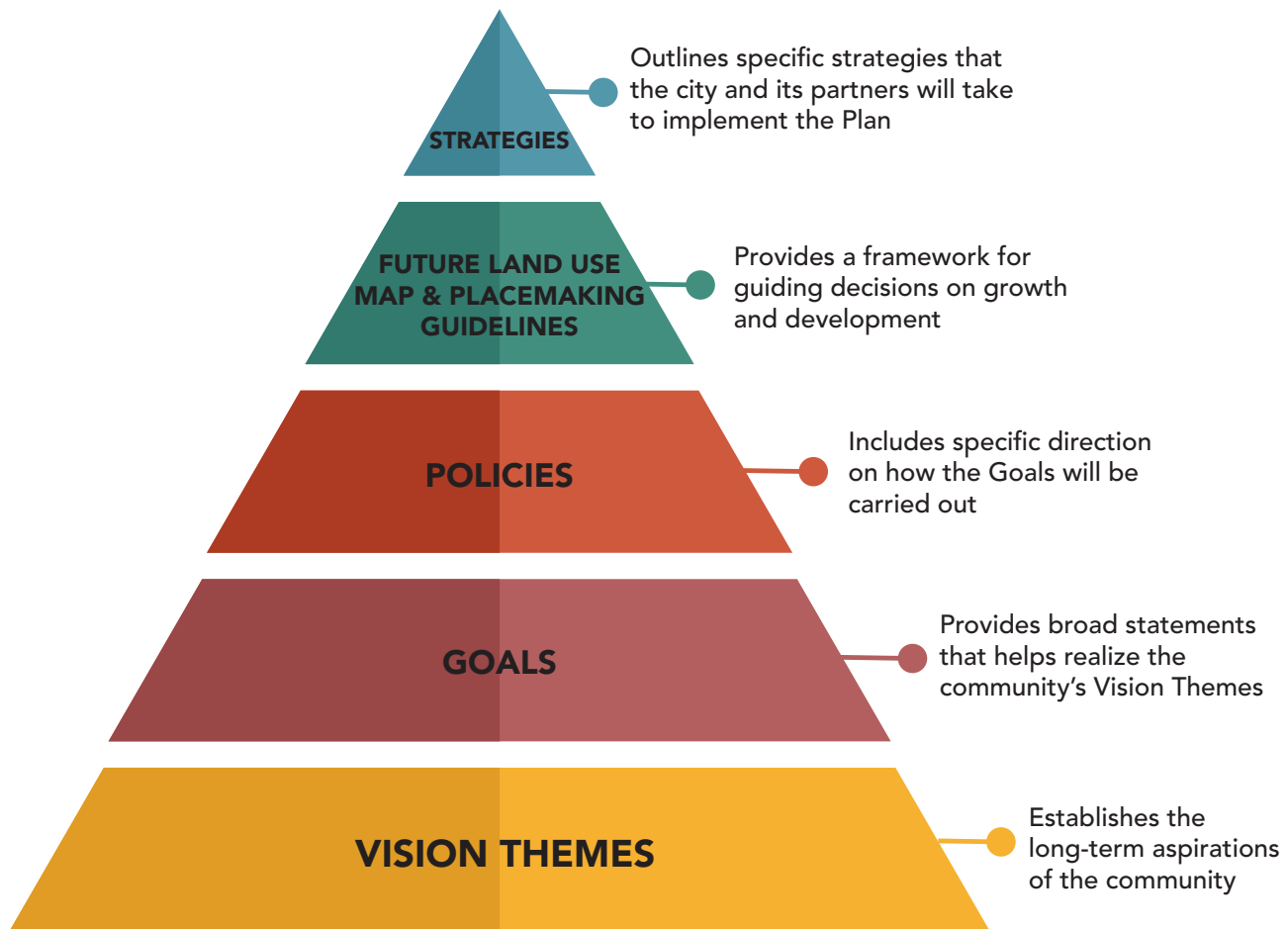


Figure ES-3: Components of the Plan

ES.7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Plan includes a Policy Framework that provides the foundation for all other parts of the Plan. This framework consists of the Vision Themes that represent the long-term aspirations of the community, while their accompanying Goals provide more specific targets to support these aspirations. The detailed Policies provide guidance on day-to-day decision-making that will continue to advance the Vision Themes and their respective Goals.

VISION THEMES

The Comprehensive Plan is based on eight “big ideas” or Vision Themes that emerged from community and stakeholder input received during the visioning process. The Vision Themes, identified

in Figure ES-4 below, inform and provide the basic organizing structure for the Policy Framework.

The importance of working toward a more equitable and inclusive Thornton was a reoccurring topic throughout the outreach process that touched on all eight Vision Themes and therefore is reflected throughout the Comprehensive Plan. While the eight themes are distinct in concept, the issues they address are cross-cutting. As such, potential benefits and tradeoffs across all eight themes should be taken into account during the decision-making process.



Figure ES-4: Eight Vision Themes of the Plan



ES.8 GROWTH FRAMEWORK

The Plan includes a framework to guide future growth and investment so that it enhances the overall quality of life for current and future residents. The two key components of the Growth Framework are the Future Land Use Map and the accompanying Placemaking Guidelines. Through these, the Growth Framework helps translate the key concepts embedded in the Vision Themes, Goals, and Policies of the Policy Framework into the land uses and types of places that the community envisions and desires for the future.

The Growth Framework should be used as a tool to help city staff, elected and appointed officials, property owners, residents and others plan for, anticipate, evaluate, and make consistent decisions regarding the location, intensity, type and design of development in Thornton, as well as plan for infrastructure and public services needed to serve Thornton's growing population.

GROWTH POLICY BACKGROUND

Thornton is expected to add approximately 50,000 to 65,000 new residents by 2040. Accommodating this growth will require between 20,000 and 25,000 new homes, as well as a range of jobs and services. The timing, location, and type of growth that occurs in different parts of the community all play a role in the economic health of the city, and in the quality of life of current and future Thornton residents. Established areas of the community have, and will continue to have, very different needs than emerging growth areas from an infrastructure and services standpoint. The types of development and mix of uses that are appropriate in different parts of Thornton will also vary.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Based on the Policy Framework, specific policy focus areas relevant to land use choices were examined through the planning process. The key Council directions of these focus areas became "Building Blocks" upon which the Future Land Use Map and Placemaking Guidelines of the Growth Framework are based. The eight Building Blocks are listed in Figure ES-5.

BUILDING BLOCKS

The following "Building Blocks" reflect the direction received from City Council and the community that informed key policy directions and changes to the Future Land Use Map:

1. Retain employment centers to help preserve and create a diversity of jobs in Thornton.
2. Preserve land in prime locations for commercial use in order to support the fiscal health of the city.
3. Re-balance commercial uses with residential uses where necessary.
4. Create Complete Neighborhoods in suitable areas that create local destinations where residents can live, work, and play.
5. Identify areas around existing and future train stations that can support a greater choice of housing, employment, retail, and/or walkable neighborhoods.
6. Expand housing choices and help implement the recommendations of Thornton's 2019 Housing Needs Assessment by allowing different types of housing to be built in more parts of the city.
7. Help ensure the vision of Thornton's 2017 Parks and Open Space Master Plan by designating sufficient recreation opportunities throughout the city on the Future Land Use Map.
8. Development intensity should taper as it approaches the South Platte River and the Riverdale Road scenic byway.

Figure ES-5: Growth Framework Building Blocks

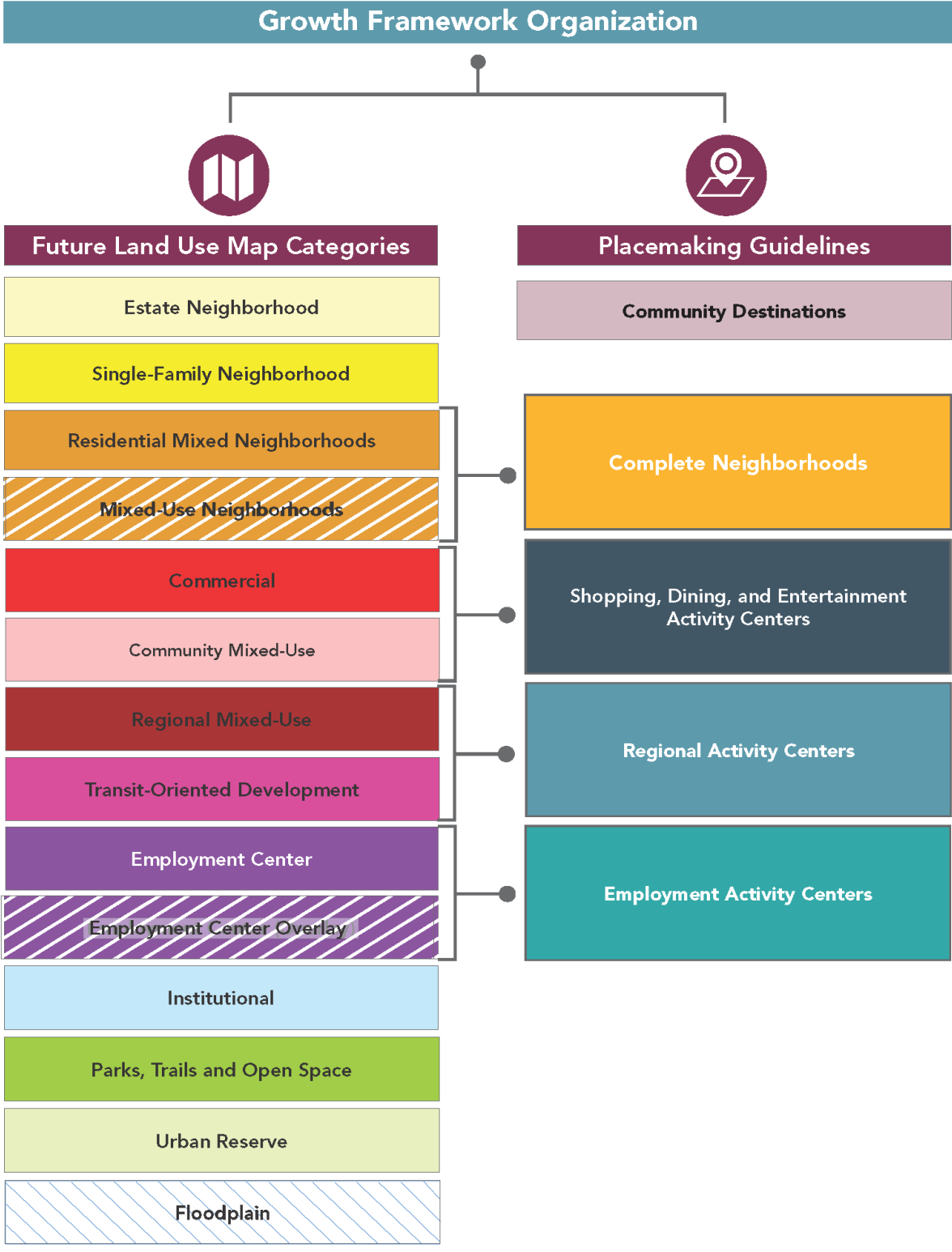


Figure ES-6: Growth Framework Key Components



FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is comprised of the map in Figure 4-3 of the Comprehensive Plan and the associated Future Land Use Category descriptions on pages 4.15-4.28 of the Plan which are used to provide guidance on the type, intensity, and mix of uses that are desired in different parts of the city. The FLUM is also used by city staff to evaluate rezoning requests.

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

The Placemaking Guidelines are a supplement to the FLUM that aids in fostering the sense of place that Thornton residents have articulated in their vision for the city of Thornton's future. These guidelines indicate the city's preferences, but are not requirements. They are used in conjunction with the FLUM as a tool to convey nuanced aspects of individual Future Land Use Categories as they apply to varied community contexts and site considerations in different areas throughout the city. These guidelines also provide an additional level of guidance about the desired character, mix of uses, anticipated amenities, and look and feel of places.

Three different types of places are identified and described in the Placemaking Guidelines: Community Destinations, Complete Neighborhoods, and Activity Centers. The guidelines offered can be applied to the applicable Future Land Use Categories to support the objective of creating a unique identity and image in Thornton.

Figure ES-6 on page ES.9 identifies the Future Land Use Map Categories and their relationship to the types of places described in the Placemaking Guidelines.

ES.9 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The last chapter of the Plan contains recommended Strategies to help support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan's Policy Framework and Growth Framework as informed by City Council and community priorities, as well as near- and short-term department work programs.

It is intended to provide a "big picture" view of the many cross-departmental efforts that will be undertaken or continued to help advance the Goals and Policies in the Plan. It is also intended to serve as a reference for community partners, community members, business and property owners, and others who play a role in supporting Plan implementation or are simply interested in tracking the city's progress over time.



INTRODUCTION

Thornton's Comprehensive Plan ("the Comprehensive Plan" or "the Plan") serves as the long-term vision and road map for the community's future. The Plan is used to guide and align public and private investments in Thornton with the shared vision and values of the community, and to provide policy direction on a variety of topics that affect the quality of life of our community - including housing, transportation, recreational amenities, employment opportunities, and more. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundational tool that guides the community toward its desired outcomes and is meant to be a "living document" that should be revisited and updated over time to meet the changing conditions and evolving needs of our community.

The last extensive rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan occurred in 2007, followed by a technical update in 2012. In 2018, a major rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan was initiated with the intent of addressing the emerging trends and key issues that are most relevant to the community with a particular focus on engaging a broader cross-section of the community. This Plan was adopted on July 15, 2020.



Chapter 1

1.1 REFLECTING ON THORNTON'S ORIGIN

The first families who moved to Thornton were mostly young couples, predominantly ex-GIs and their families. On January 31, 1954, the first 40 families moved into brand new, one-story brick houses constructed by builder Sam Hoffman. Not only did Hoffman have a vision for creating the community of Thornton, he also had a flair for marketing. To attract people from Denver to a grand opening for the model homes, he invited Hollywood actress Jane Russell, whose three brothers built homes for Hoffman.

Thousands of people lined up to get her autograph when Ms. Russell visited the new community of Thornton. She also did the interior decoration for two of the three model homes. This was all before Thornton was an official city. It was the vision of Sam Hoffman that established Thornton's first housing development, and the first residents who formed the Thornton community.

On May 26, 1956, Thornton was incorporated as a Colorado city. At the time, Thornton had a population of 8,640 and was one square mile in size. On August 18, 1956, Thornton residents elected their first city officials, and on August 30th, the first City Council meeting was held. Due to growth and technological advances, much has changed in Thornton since incorporation. However, one thing hasn't changed—the city's commitment to planning for the future. The 2020 Comprehensive Plan reflects the city's ongoing efforts to create a thriving community.



Sam Hoffman at grand opening



Hoffman Homes brochure



Road construction on Russell Blvd.



1.2 ABOUT THORNTON

The city of Thornton is located within the northern portion of the Denver Metropolitan Area and its total incorporated land area as of 2020 is approximately 37 square miles.

Thornton's population has grown steadily since the city was first incorporated in 1956. Likewise, its geographic extent has also steadily expanded. Within the first two decades of being incorporated, Thornton had annexed an additional 17 square miles of land area. This period of rapid expansion continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Since 1996, the city has incorporated an additional 12 square miles of land area. While for many years, Thornton's growth has migrated north; significant opportunities for new or "greenfield" development and infill/redevelopment exist both within the city limits and the Future Growth Boundary.

Over the past 60+ years, Thornton has blossomed from a fledging residential development on the outskirts of Denver into a full-service community that is home to over 140,000 residents and more than 27,000 jobs. Thornton is forecast to reach a population of between 190,000-205,000 by 2040.



City of Thornton gateway sign

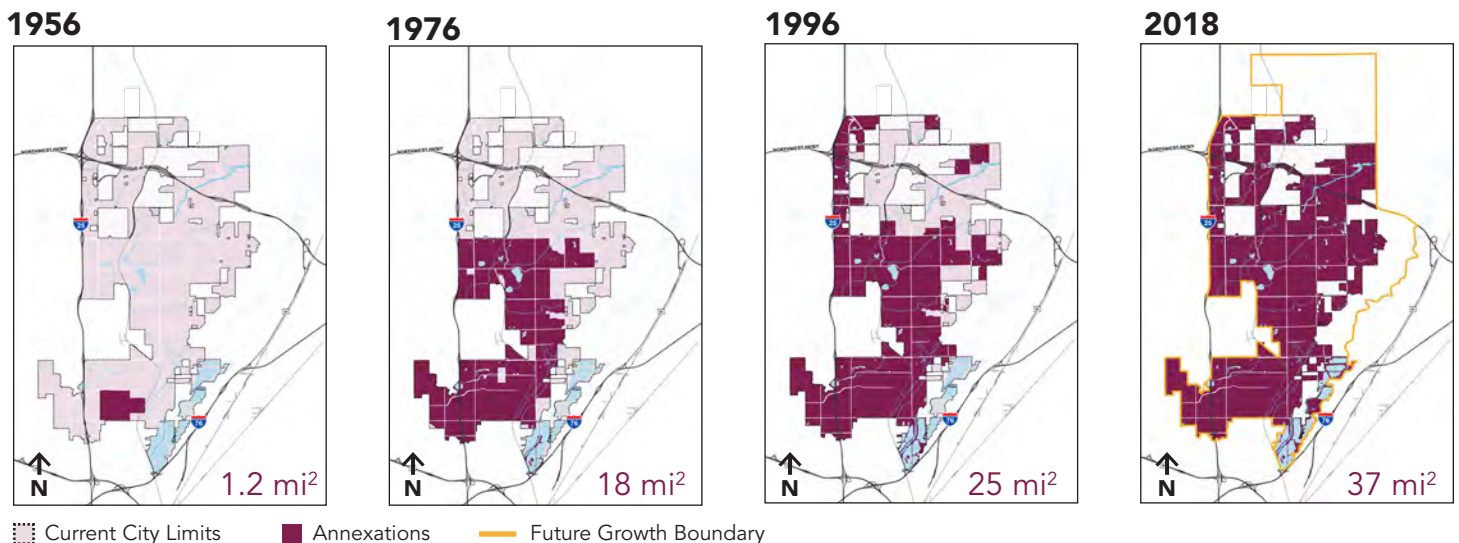


Figure 1-1: Annexations by Decade

► VICINITY

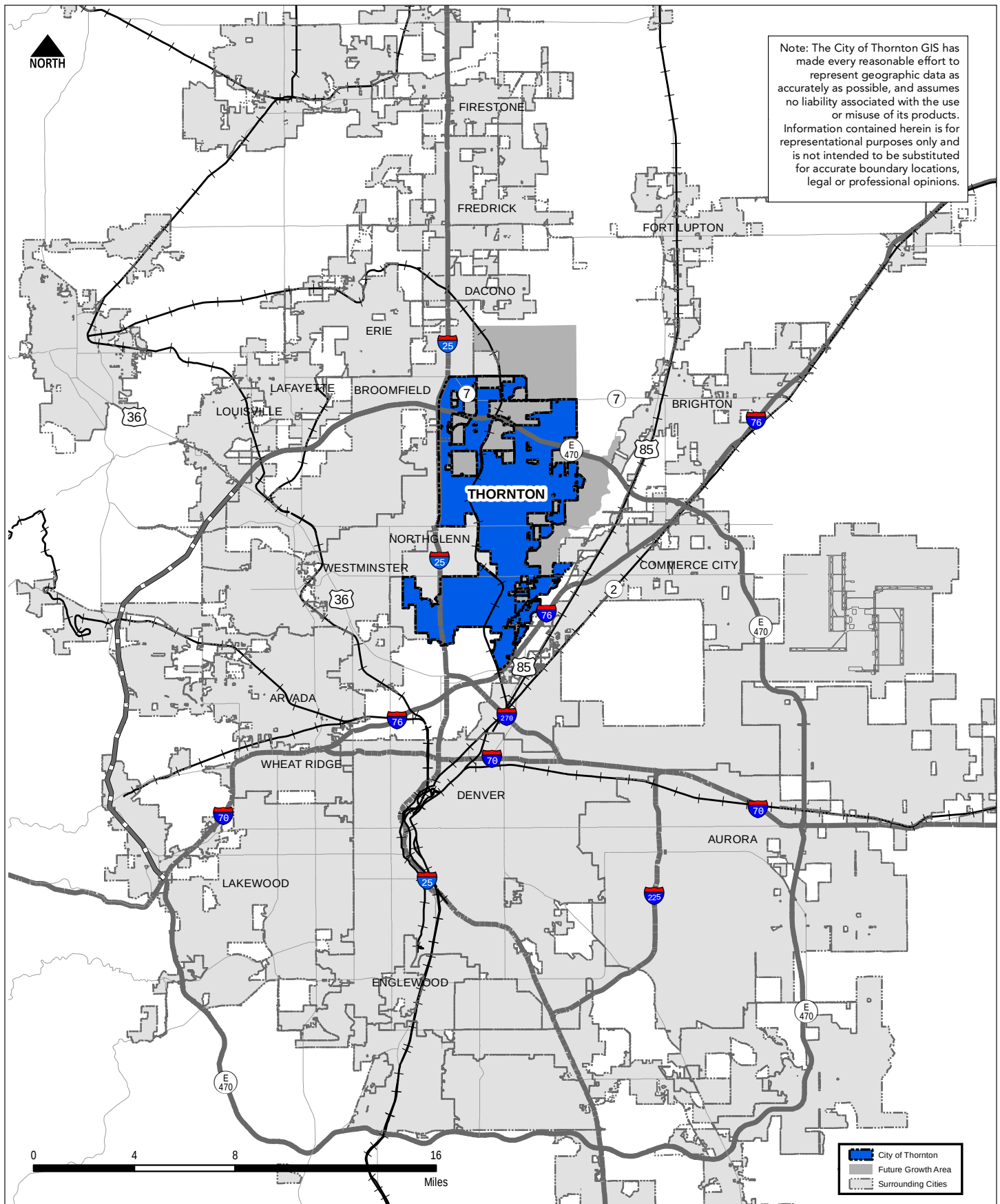


Figure 1-2: Thornton Vicinity Map



1.3 INFLUENCING FACTORS

Since the last major Plan update in 2007, the city and region have seen extensive growth and change. The new North Metro commuter rail line will soon connect Thornton residents directly to Denver's Union Station and many points beyond, and provide visitors easy access to Thornton. There are increasing demands on infrastructure, city services, the local and regional transportation system, and social services. Furthermore, while Thornton has always been recognized as an affordable place to live, housing costs continue to rise. In light of these challenges and opportunities, this rewrite process provided an opportunity for the community to reimagine Thornton's future and establish a shared vision for the city. Trends and key issues that emerged from this process and helped inform updates to the Plan are summarized below. A more in-depth discussion of background data and trends is provided in Appendix A: Community Profile.



Single-family home in Original Thornton



Thornton Harvest Fest

AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING

The cost of housing has risen significantly in Thornton, and an increasing number of Thornton households are cost-burdened. A variety of housing strategies must be deployed to address ongoing issues related to housing affordability, ranging from the need to encourage more diverse housing options, to the need to protect and reinvest in the community's existing workforce and affordable housing supply.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Thornton's population is getting more diverse and older. Meeting the needs of the changing population will require a stronger focus on access to housing and services as well as conscious efforts to be more welcoming and supportive of the different needs of various demographic and ethnic groups.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Improving awareness of, and access to, services has been a recurring theme throughout the planning process, particularly from underserved populations. Opportunities to increase resident awareness of, and access to, available services, and work with local and regional partners to fill gaps in services should be prioritized.



Volunteer appreciation event

DESTINATIONS AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The desire to create and enhance a sense of community and identity within Thornton was frequently mentioned throughout the Comprehensive Plan visioning process. Similarly, many community members desired more quality destinations and gathering spaces where they can shop, recreate, and actively engage with their surrounding environment and other community members. The outreach process has resulted in a more defined community vision about what qualities should be encouraged in these places and where they should be developed. This will better guide private investments and decision-making by the city to ensure future development and reinvestment results in quality destinations and gathering places.

GROWTH AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

Based on Thornton's current plans and policies, and supply of developable lands, the city holds more capacity for future non-residential development than residential development. Due to the need for fiscal sustainability, the city desires to increase the amount of non-residential uses. The city will need to monitor and maintain a balanced supply of land over time to ensure adequate capacity is provided to meet future demands for commercial, housing, and employment.

NEW GROWTH AND PROVISION OF SERVICES

Significant growth opportunities exist in unincorporated portions of the city's Future Growth Boundary, especially in Weld County (north of 168th Avenue). However, the potential impacts of future growth in these areas on existing services,

infrastructure, and the city's overall fiscal health will largely determine if the city will support development in these areas.

REINVESTMENT

New development and redevelopment activity remains low in older areas of Thornton relative to the newer areas of the city. A stronger focus on prioritizing reinvestment in the established areas of the community is needed.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The importance of working toward a more equitable and inclusive Thornton was established as an important theme throughout the visioning process. Future decision-making and investments within the city should consider any potential unwarranted impacts that it may have on vulnerable populations.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Although the new commuter rail line will serve as a major multimodal transportation asset for Thornton, community members desire a more complete transportation system, particularly bus services, that will build on this new asset. This improved transportation system will help connect residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels to employment, health care, services, and other daily needs.



1.4 HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is made up of several inter-related components. Together, these components are used to guide day-to-day decision-making; inform discussions regarding the long-range needs of the community; inform residents, property and business owners, and other potential stakeholders/investors about what the community wishes to preserve, change, and invest in over time; and promote continued coordination and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions and the many public, private, and nonprofit agencies that play a significant role in the city's future. The contents and purpose of each component are listed in Figure 1-3 below.



CHAPTER III Policy Framework

[Vision Themes](#)

[Goals](#)

[Policies](#)

This chapter establishes a city-wide Policy Framework for Thornton that provides the foundation for all other parts of the Plan. The Vision Themes represent the long-term aspirations of the community, while their accompanying Goals provide more specific targets to support these aspirations. The detailed Policies provide guidance on day-to-day decision-making that will continue to advance the Vision Themes and their respective Goals.

CHAPTER IV Growth Framework

[Future Land Use Map](#)

[Placemaking Guidelines](#)


The Future Land Use Map in this chapter serves as a guide for growth and development within the city limits and Future Growth Area. This provides a framework for anticipating, evaluating, and making decisions regarding the location, intensity, and design of future development, and provision of services and infrastructure necessary to support future growth.

CHAPTER V Implementation Framework

[Implementation Strategies](#)

This chapter outlines Strategies that the city and its many local and regional partners intend to pursue in order to implement the Plan.

APPENDICES

The appendices include background information and analysis on current conditions and other related documents that are intended to support the Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 1-3: Plan Components

1.5 PARTS OF THE PLAN

Figure 1-4 illustrates how the components of the Plan build upon each other. The foundational Policy Framework includes the Vision Themes, Goals and Policies that form the base for the Future Land Use Map and Placemaking Guidelines that are outlined in the Growth Framework. At the highest level, the Implementational Framework includes the Strategies that will help the city implement the Policy Framework and Growth Framework.

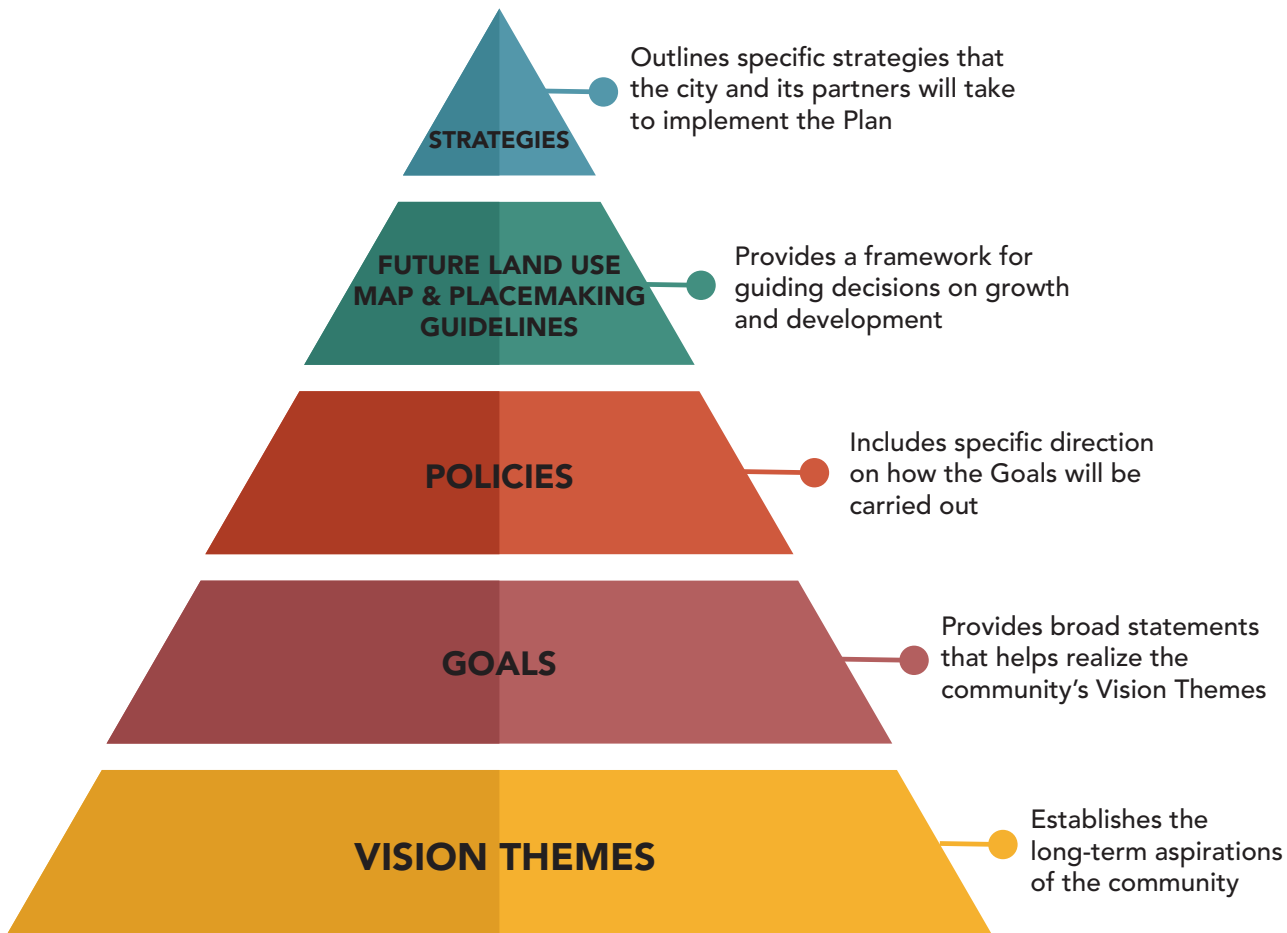


Figure 1-4: Parts of the Plan

1.6 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the “umbrella” plan that provides guidance to all other city functional master plans and area plans, such as the Transportation Master Plan, Parks and Open Space Master Plan, and Station Area Master Plans. While the Comprehensive Plan provides the ‘big picture’ vision for Thornton, the city uses these more detailed plans to supplement and advance the community vision established in the Policy Framework. Where relevant, such plans are referenced within the Comprehensive Plan in order to reinforce important linkages between these plans and the Comprehensive Plan. As these supporting plans are updated, or new

plans are created, they should be in alignment with the community’s vision, as expressed through the Policy Framework. Figure 1-5 illustrates the role of related plans, implementation documents, and other initiatives in relation to the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, the city of Thornton is involved in planning efforts at the regional level, such as Denver Regional Council of Government’s (DRCOG) Metro Vision Plan. Regional entities should look to the Policies of this Comprehensive Plan to better understand the general aspirations of the Thornton community and how the city plans to evolve and develop over time.



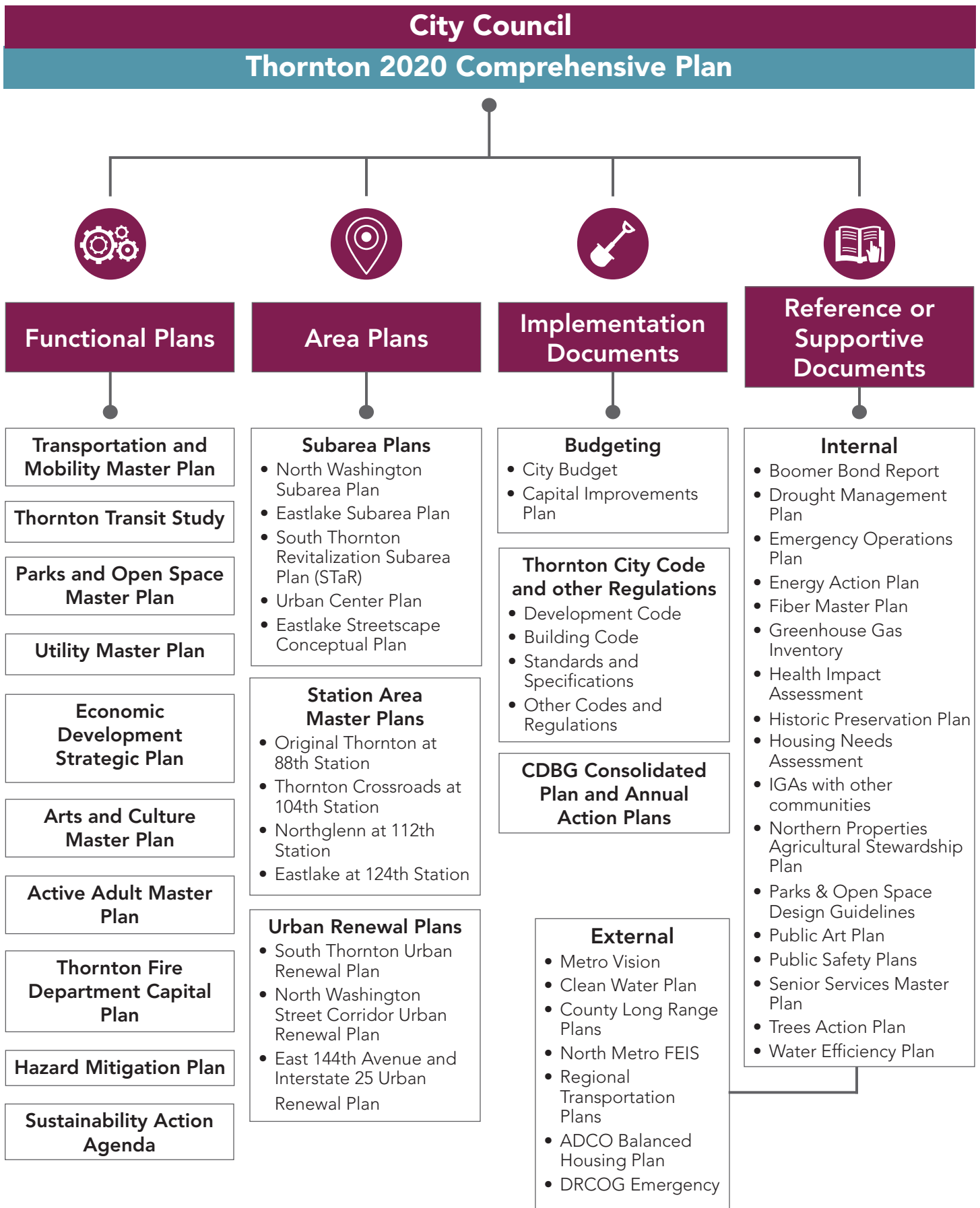


Figure 1-5: Relationship to All Other Plans

RECREATION AND TOURISM ELEMENT

In 2001, Colorado lawmakers enacted legislation requiring municipal comprehensive plans to include a recreation and tourism uses element. The city's Parks and Open Space Master Plan meets this requirement by detailing a variety of existing and planned recreational uses located throughout Thornton. These amenities are available to residents, employees, visitors and tourists alike. The city's existing and planned parks, open space and trails system provide diverse recreational opportunities, including team sports, fishing, hiking, walking, jogging, bicycling, skateboarding, golfing, disc golf, and other activities.

METRO VISION

In 2000, the city of Thornton, along with other members of DRCOG, signed an intergovernmental agreement called the Mile High Compact which addresses planned growth within the DRCOG region. DRCOG adopted the Metro Vision Plan to guide growth in the Denver Metropolitan Area for the next 20 years. This plan is updated every five years. Metro Vision identifies urban growth areas for different jurisdictions within the nine county DRCOG region that are anticipated to be developed prior



to 2040. Thornton's portion of the urban growth area is contained within the city's established Future Growth Area. Metro Vision also identifies four Urban Centers in Thornton which are shown in Figure 1-6. The Future Land Use Map is in alignment with the Urban Center concept and shows higher intensity development in Thornton's Urban Centers.



West Sprat Platte Lake Fishing Facility



► URBAN CENTERS

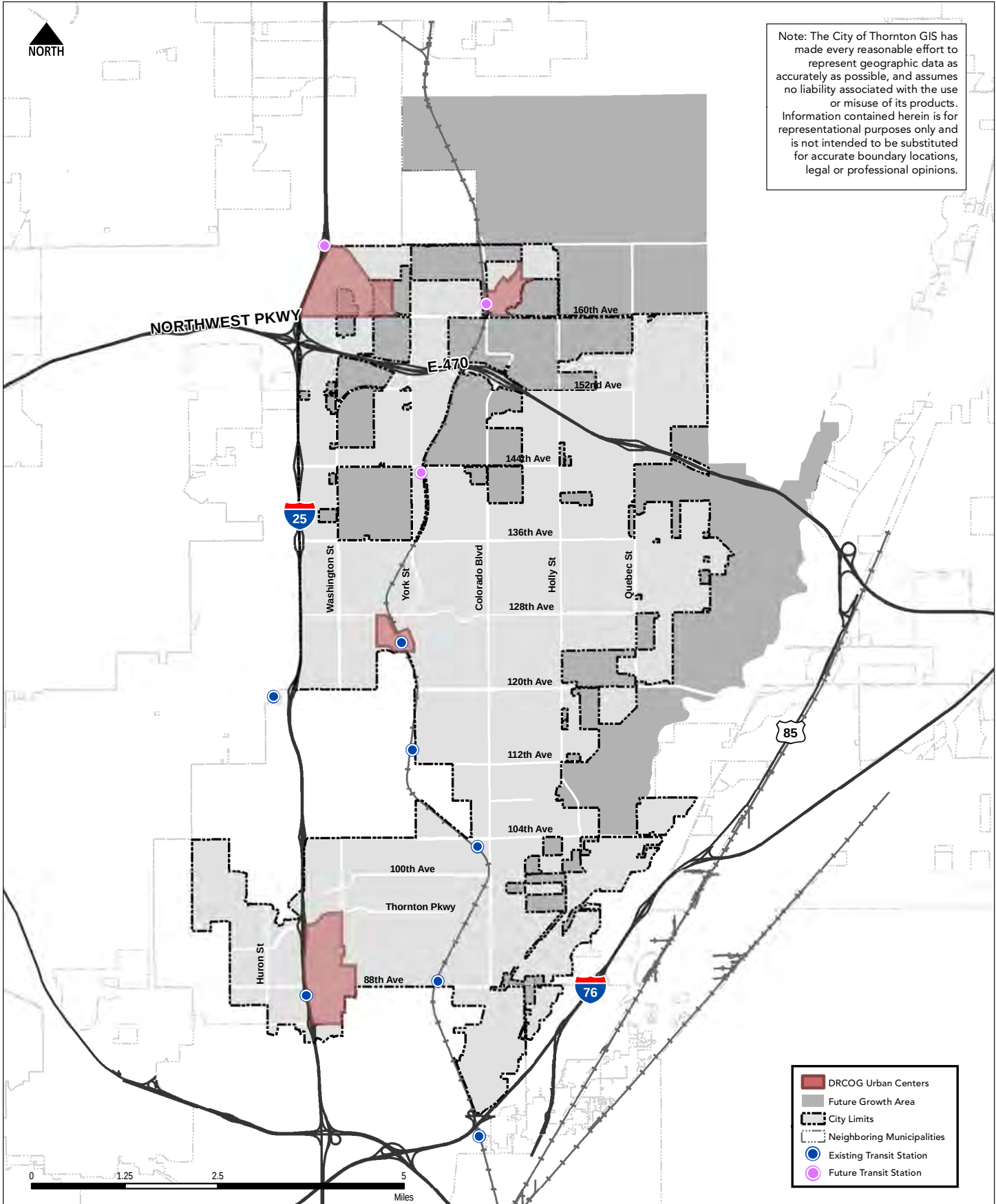


Figure 1-6: Metro Vision Urban Centers

1.7 PLAN AMENDMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that should be reviewed periodically and when new circumstances or changing conditions warrant reconsideration. These periodic updates are necessary to keep the Plan relevant as new issues and opportunities emerge, actions are completed, and priorities shift. Plan amendments should be carefully evaluated to determine their overall impact on achieving core Plan Goals. In particular, proposals to amend the Future Land Use Map to accommodate current market conditions may occur. The approval of multiple Plan amendments is an indicator of an incremental shift in policy direction. All Plan amendments should be thoroughly reviewed in the context of the community vision and Policy Framework. All amendments and administrative updates shall be made in accordance with the procedure and criteria set forth below.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Administrative Updates to the Comprehensive Plan to update statistical, quantitative, or mapping information, address previous errors or omissions, and correct narrative or graphic information may be initiated, reviewed, and approved by the city's City Development Director. The director shall have the discretion to determine whether any update should be considered an amendment to be referred to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation to City Council upon a determination that the public interest would be best served by doing so.

AMENDMENTS

Substantial changes to the Comprehensive Plan, such as significant updates to information and/or adding elements to the text, shall be in the interest of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. Such changes shall be consistent with any intergovernmental agreements in place at the time of the amendment process and the criteria of Section 18-37 of the Thornton City Code.

A Comprehensive Plan amendment may be initiated by the city or property owners. Upon submittal of an application to the city and the publication of notice, the Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment and adopt a resolution recommending that the City Council approve, deny,

or amend the application. Upon publication of notice, the City Council shall hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment and take final action on the application. The recommendation of the Planning Commission and decision of City Council to approve, deny, or amend the proposal may be based on the following applicable criteria:

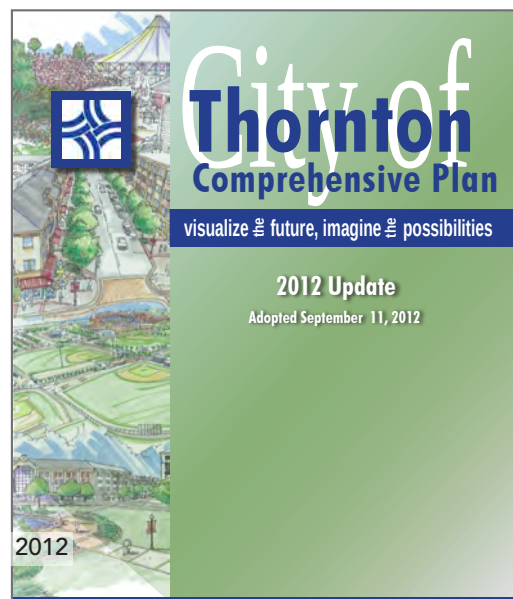
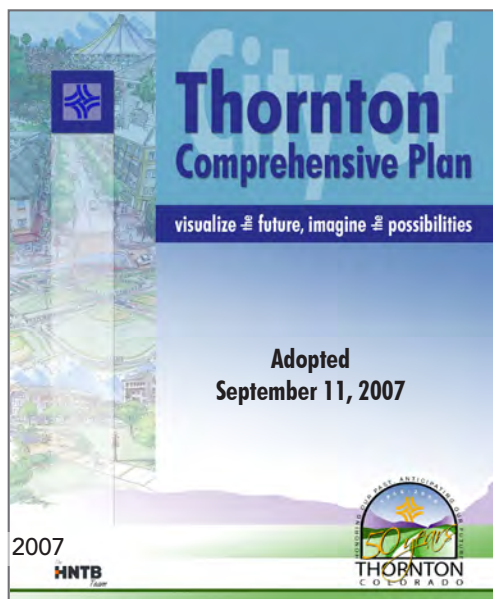
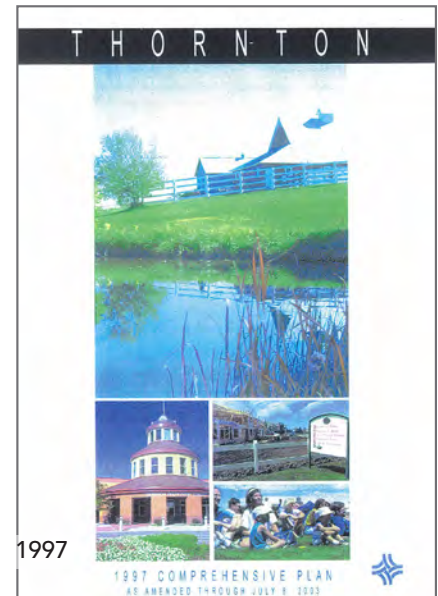
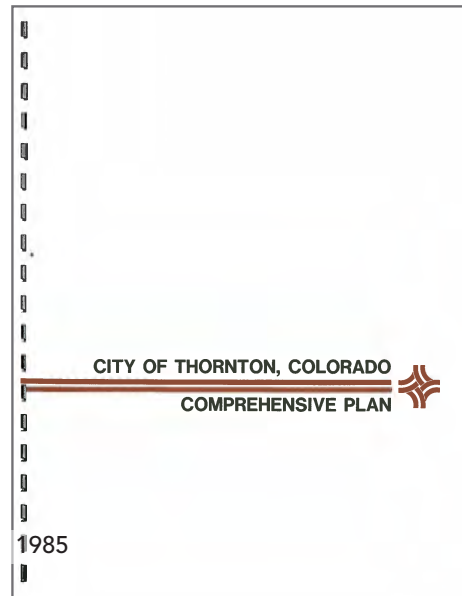
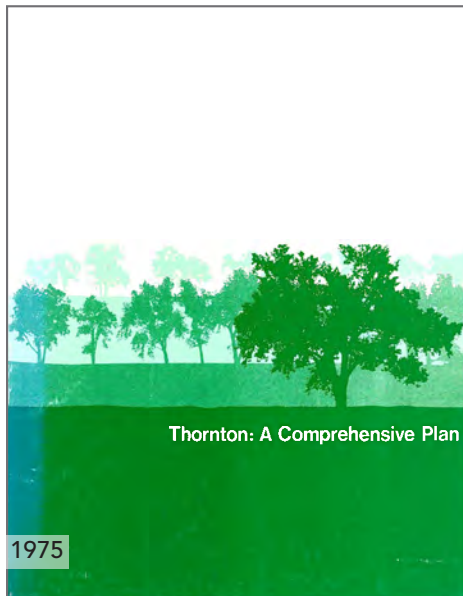
- There has been a change in the area or in the conditions on which the current designation was based that warrants the amendment.
- The density and intensity of the proposed amendment is sensitive to the existing land uses and is compatible with the existing adjacent land use designations.
- It will provide for orderly physical growth of the city; foster safe, convenient, and walkable neighborhoods; and improve access to services, amenities, and jobs.
- There are, or are planned to be, adequate transportation, recreation, utilities and other facilities to accommodate the uses and densities permitted by the proposed Future Land Use designation.
- The proposed change is in substantial conformance with the Comprehensive Plan's Vision Themes, Goals, and Policies, and other adopted plans and policies.
- It is consistent with current zoning of the site unless a zoning change request is under concurrent review.
- It corrects an error in the current Comprehensive Plan adoption.
- Events, trends, or facts evident after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan have changed the City Council's original findings made upon Plan adoption.
- Events, trends, or facts evident after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan have changed the character or condition of the community so as to make the proposed amendment necessary.
- Other changes to the Comprehensive Plan deemed necessary by the city, such as the need to integrate subarea plans, area plans, corridor plans, or other special studies.

Following City Council action on the proposed amendment, a resolution shall be adopted accepting or denying the proposed amendment as an addition or change to the Comprehensive Plan.



MAJOR REWRITES TO THORNTON'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As reflected in the various Plan covers below, the city initiates a major rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan approximately every ten years to reflect changing needs, trends, and circumstances of the community.



PLAN PROCESS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The city of Thornton conducted an extensive community and stakeholder engagement process for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process. Over the course of almost two years, hundreds of people actively engaged in discussions about Thornton's future—exploring questions about hopes and challenges, everyday living, offerings for different age groups—and things to change or try to keep the same as the city grows over time.

This chapter provides a brief synopsis of community engagement efforts led by the city. This synopsis aims to highlight the general purpose and outcomes of these different community engagement efforts and how the community's input informed the overall development of the plan. These community engagement efforts are summarized in greater detail in Appendix B.



Chapter 2

2.1 ABOUT THE PROCESS

With City Council direction, the overall planning process included a visioning phase and Plan production phase. As shown in Figure 2-1, each phase had a different focus and unique round of community and stakeholder engagement events. The process concluded with the Plan's adoption at a public hearing on July 15, 2020.

The planning process was grounded in a strong foundation of community engagement. Over the course of almost two years, a diverse cross-section of the community was engaged to provide feedback and vision for Thornton's future. Participants included residents, businesses, property owners, youth, underrepresented groups, members of the development community, school districts, community organizations, regional partners, appointed and elected officials, and numerous other stakeholder groups. Spanish translation of materials was provided and interpretation services were offered for community events. While a particular focus was placed on engaging the city's Latino population, targeted outreach to other ethnic groups represented in the community was also conducted.

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSIONS

City staff and key members of the project team met with City Council at critical decision points during the process to discuss and seek input on preliminary policy directions. During these meetings, the project team conveyed the input received as part of community and stakeholder engagement efforts.

THORNTON IDEA EXCHANGE

The Thornton Idea Exchange was established for community members who wished to be more actively involved with the Comprehensive Plan rewrite process. This focus group provided community members with a more in-depth engagement opportunity to discuss key issues and topics that were pertinent to this rewrite process. The participants also acted as a sounding board and served as community ambassadors to gain broad-based public input during the planning process to ensure the community is part of defining the vision and goals for Thornton's future. Participants came from various backgrounds, professions, and ages – providing unique perspectives and input throughout the planning process. The Idea Exchange consisted of 27 members and met three times during the Plan rewrite process.



Community outreach at the Thornton Ice Cream Social



PLANNING PROCESS: PHASE 1



Summer - Fall 2018

Vision and Values

As a first step in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan rewrite process, an array of events and activities were hosted to engage the community in a discussion about Thornton's future.

PLANNING PROCESS: PHASE 2



Winter - Spring 2019

Policy & Land Use Choices

Participants provided input on a variety of topics and issues regarding the city's future housing, employment, and destination opportunities. The 1st Draft of the new Future Land Use Map was a key focus.



Summer 2019

Draft Plan

Participants had the opportunity to review and comment on the draft elements of the Comprehensive Plan including the 2nd Draft of the Future Land Use Map.



Fall 2019 - Summer 2020

Final Plan Adoption

The community had the opportunity to attend the public hearing on July 14-15, 2020 where City Council adopted the Plan.

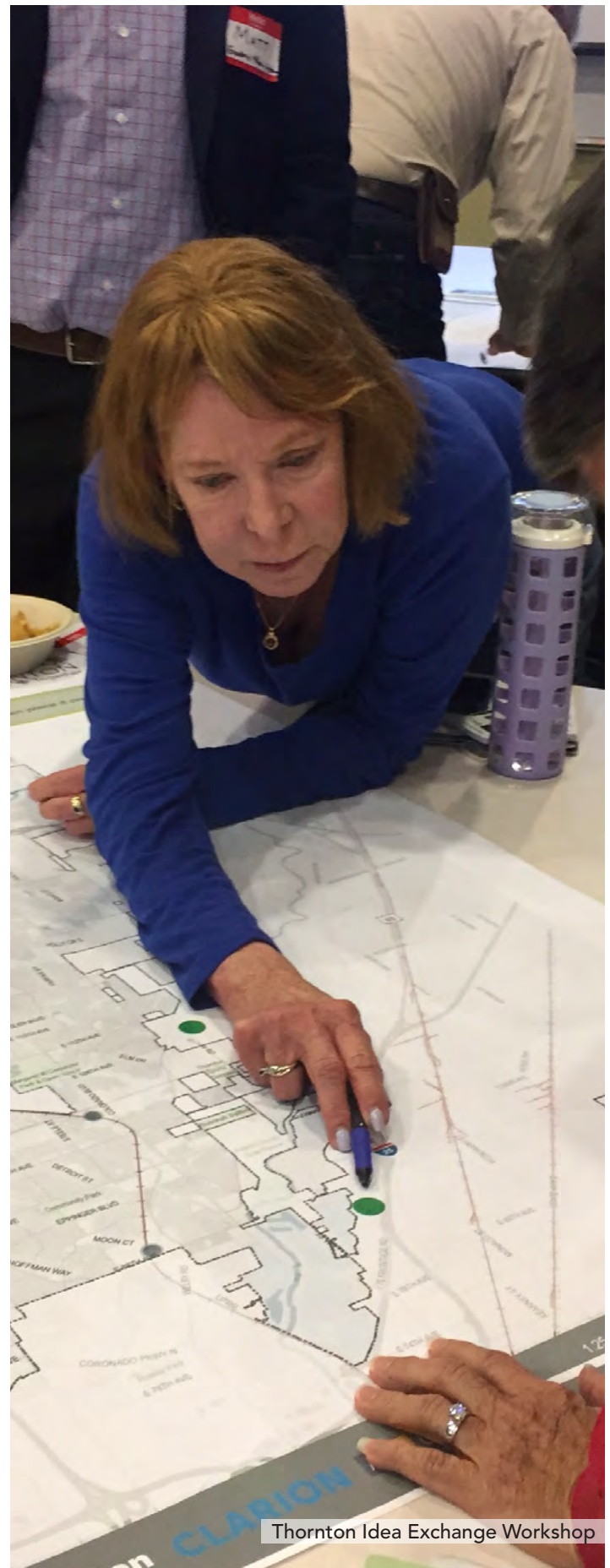


Figure 2-1: Project/Community Engagement Timeline

2.2 PHASE 1: VISION AND VALUES

During Phase 1, the community was invited to share their thoughts on a range of topics, such as transportation, housing, recreational amenities, and social equity initiatives. A broad range of outreach activities were conducted in order to ensure that the visioning process was inclusive and the resulting vision was reflective of the community as a whole. Through the visioning process, the city was able to identify the community's core values and develop a vision for Thornton's future.

These core values and vision are represented by eight distinct Vision Themes that emerged from this process (see Section 3.1). These Vision Themes helped establish the foundation for future engagement efforts and policy discussions with the community. A detailed summary of the visioning outreach process is provided in Appendix B.

CITY COUNCIL VISIONING WORKSHOP

In May 2018, the project team kicked off the process by conducting a workshop with City Council to help confirm the overall approach for the Comprehensive Plan rewrite process and solicit initial direction and ideas. As part of the workshop, each Councilmember drew their vision of Thornton's future and shared their ideas with the group.

Key topics arising from Council's discussion included:

- Equity and inclusion
- Sense of place
- Connected community
- Destination locations
- Mix of housing
- Arts and culture
- Economy
- Integrate north and south Thornton
- Smart City
- Recreation
- Green Thornton
- Good governance

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Between June and October 2018, the project team engaged over 1,500 individuals of all ages, income levels, and ethnic backgrounds from all parts of the city. The team also reached out to local and regional partners, members of the business community, and service providers. Events ranged from focus groups and community/neighborhood meetings to more informal events such as Ice Cream Socials, Harvest Fest, and visiting schools and senior centers. The city also had a project website that provided project information and updates.



City Council Visioning Workshop



Public Meetings



Events



Interviews and Surveys



together reaching over **400** people



Targeted Outreach



reaching over **250** students and seniors

Figure 2-2: Phase 1 Outreach by the Numbers



Thornton Idea Wall

2.3 PHASE 2: POLICY TOPICS AND LAND USE CHOICES

City Council Planning Sessions were held in March and June 2019 where Council gave direction on policy topics and the 1st Draft of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). In addition, the city held a series of community meetings in April and July 2019 focusing on the following:

- **April 2019** - During these meetings, policy topics were explored that support the Vision Themes and Goals that emerged from the visioning process. Community members were also engaged in a series of map-based exercises to identify where they would like to see new or enhanced destinations in Thornton. Community members participated in a keypad polling exercise, followed by open discussions where participants expressed their support, concerns, and general ideas relating to the primary policy topics of fiscal stability, balanced and diverse neighborhoods, revitalization, and destinations.
- **July 2019** - Open houses were held to solicit feedback on the 1st Draft of the Future Land Use Map, which consisted of new Future Land Use Categories and the new map. During this phase, additional Council direction was given on the policy and land use choices as follows:
 1. Preserve employment and commercial lands to support the long-term fiscal health of the city while allowing for some large distribution and warehousing uses in appropriate locations within the city.
 2. Enhance existing, and create new, Complete Neighborhoods to strengthen the quality of life for Thornton residents.
 3. Expand and diversify housing choice within Thornton.
 4. Provide sufficient and unique recreational opportunities throughout the city.
 5. Development intensity should taper as it approaches the South Platte River and the Riverdale Road scenic byway.

The key policy directions received from City Council with input from the community resulted in the identification of “Building Blocks” which are the foundation of the new Future Land Use Map. See Chapter 4, Section 4.2, for further detail on the Building Blocks.

INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

The city contracted with Cultivando, a locally-based non-profit, to conduct extensive outreach and engagement with the Latino community. The purpose was to provide opportunities for the Latino community to participate in the Comprehensive Plan rewrite process, and to lend their voice to inform the overall process and development of the Plan. The consultants facilitated focus groups and community meetings, one-on-one home visits, small group gatherings, Movies in the Park, canvassing, and setting up kiosks around the city to gather input. Surveys were also distributed in Spanish as part of the visioning process to engage Thornton’s Spanish-speaking community members.

Promotoras played a key role as community ambassadors by ensuring that community members were civically engaged and a meaningful part of the public process.





2.4 PHASE 2: DRAFT PLAN

During this stage of Phase 2, a City Council Planning Session was held in September 2019 where Council gave direction on the 2nd Draft of the Future Land Use Map and the draft Comprehensive Plan document. The focus of this meeting was the Plan's Growth Framework.

In addition, community open houses were held in September 2019 to solicit feedback on the draft Comprehensive Plan document as well as the 2nd Draft of the Future Land Use Map. The revisions reflected in the 2nd Draft FLUM were based on conversations with the community, property owners, and city staff. The draft Comprehensive Plan document, including the revised FLUM, was also available on the project website for public review.

2.5 PHASE 2: FINAL PLAN ADOPTION

A final draft of the Comprehensive Plan was completed after consideration of the input received during the outreach for the draft Plan. The project team prepared the final Comprehensive Plan for a public hearing at the October 8, 2019 City Council meeting. However, at this meeting, Council vacated the public hearing in order to allow staff to further study issues with certain land use designations. These issues were presented to Council for further direction at the May 19, 2020 Planning Session.

The project team presented the final Comprehensive Plan to City Council at a public hearing opened on July 14, 2020. Since this was a public hearing, the community had the opportunity to attend and provide testimony about the Plan. Due to the extensive public testimony, the public hearing continued past midnight and the Comprehensive Plan was officially adopted on July 15, 2020.

PHASE 1: VISION AND VALUES (See details in Visioning Outreach Summary)	
Meeting/Activity	Date
City Council Orientation Mtg	May 17, 2018
Ice Cream Socials	Jun & Aug 2018
Movies in the Park (Latino Focus)	Jun & Aug 2018
Mayor's Luncheon	July 24, 2018
Board and Commission Meetings	Jul & Aug 2018
Stakeholder Interviews, Forums, Focus Groups	July & August 2018
Special Outreach Events	Jul & Aug 2018
Senior Facilities Presentations	August 2018
Community Meetings (Huron Anythink Library, Infrastructure Maintenance Center (IMC), Skyview Campus)	September 5, 6 and 12, 2018
Harvest Fest	Sep 8, 2018
Smaller Neighborhood Meetings	Sep & Oct 2018
City Technical Team Meeting	Sep 21, 2018
High School Class Presentations	Sep 2018
Thornton Idea Exchange (TIE) Focus Group Meeting	Nov 28, 2018
City Council Planning Session	Dec 11, 2018
PHASE 2: POLICY AND LAND USE CHOICES	
Meeting/Activity	Date
City Council Planning Session	March 21, 2019
Community Meetings (IMC, City Hall, Margaret Carpenter Recreation Center)	April 24, 25 and 29, 2019
TIE Focus Group Meeting	May 1, 2019
Thorntonfest	June 8, 2019
City Council Planning Session	June 10, 2019
Community Open Houses (City Hall, Margaret Carpenter Recreation Center)	July 10 and 17, 2019
TIE Focus Group Meeting	July 18, 2019
PHASE 2: DRAFT PLAN	
Meeting/Activity	Date
City Council Planning Session	Sep 3, 2019
Community Open Houses (City Hall, Recreation Center)	Sep 6 and 9, 2019
PHASE 2: FINAL PLAN ADOPTION	
Meeting/Activity	Date
City Council Public Hearing (vacated)	Oct 8, 2019
City Council Planning Session	May 19, 2020
City Council Public Hearing	July 14-15, 2020
Council Approval of Resolution Adopting 2020 Comprehensive Plan	July 15, 2020

Figure 2-3: Comprehensive Plan Meetings





POLICY FRAMEWORK

This chapter establishes a city-wide Policy Framework that reflects the long-term vision and aspirations of the community. This Policy Framework provides greater detail on the Vision Themes. Each Vision Theme is articulated by a set of Goals, which in turn are supported by a number of Policies that will help achieve these Goals. The Policy Framework will be used as a reference when questions arise or general guidance is needed on a particular Policy topic. This framework is intended to inform day-to-day decisions made by city staff, elected officials, property and business owners, and the community at large.

The Vision Themes are closely related and should be looked at in unison, considering the potential benefits and tradeoffs across all topic areas. Adhering to the Policy directions provided in this chapter will be essential to ensure decisions made in the future will support and advance the community's vision, and be better aligned with the community's values.



Chapter

3

3.1 VISION THEMES

Eight “big ideas”, or Vision Themes, illustrated in Figure 3-1 below emerged from community and stakeholder input received during the visioning process. The Vision Themes inform and provide the basic organizing structure for the citywide Goals and Policies contained in this chapter. The importance of working toward a more equitable and inclusive Thornton was a reoccurring topic throughout the outreach process that touched on all eight themes and therefore is reflected throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

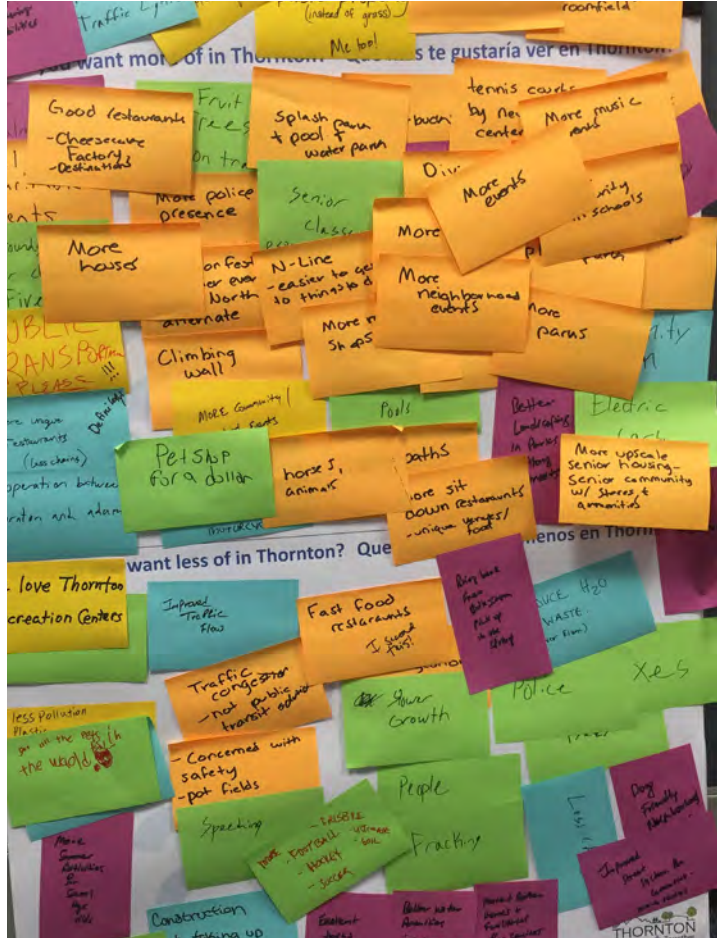
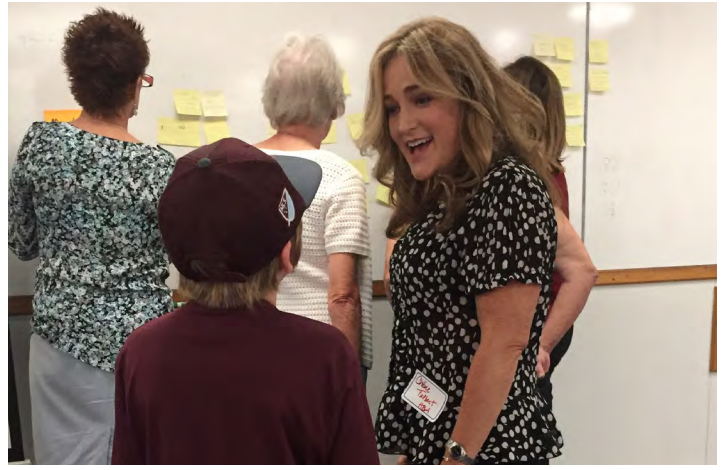
While the eight Vision Themes are distinct in concept, the issues they address are cross-cutting. As such, potential benefits and tradeoffs across all eight themes should be taken into account as they are used in the decision-making process.

The Goals and Policies that follow provide more specific targets and guidance to support the aspirations of the Vision Themes. See Figure 1-4 in Chapter 1 for an illustration showing the relationship between these aspects.



Figure 3-1: Vision Themes







VISION THEME: CULTIVATING IDENTITY AND IMAGE (CII)



Cultivating Identity and Image reflects the desire to create a sense of community, beauty, and pride throughout the city of Thornton. It seeks to celebrate the character, culture, history, and environment that makes Thornton a special place to live, work, and play.

Members of the community were particularly concerned with creating an identity that is uniquely Thornton, improving aesthetics throughout the city, and creating better physical and social connections between north and south Thornton.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"We need development standards for new developers coming into Thornton – we should focus on attractive buildings, landscaping that is beautiful, and low-water use."

"The key to making a stronger and a better city is to make sure to get the community involved."

"Our city needs a heartbeat, a center, a core. We have no identity, no place to go to enjoy just being in Thornton."



CII GOALS



CII 1. Cultivate and embrace an identity that is distinctly Thornton.



CII 2. Foster an equitable and inclusive community.



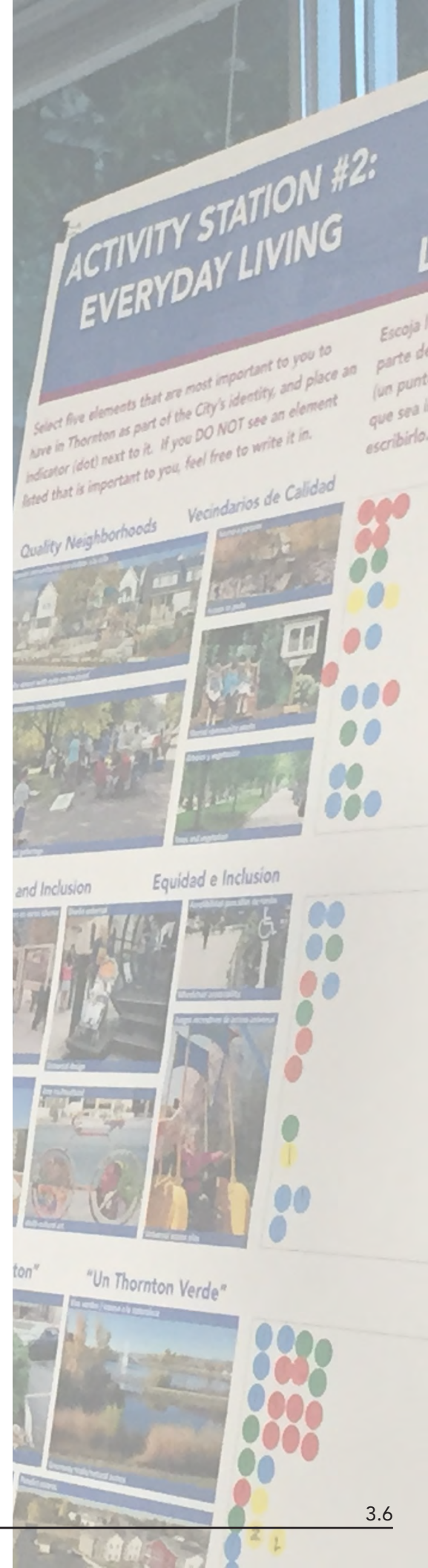
CII 3. Recognize and appreciate our history and significant natural features.



CII 4. Help create regional destinations in Thornton.



CII 5. Celebrate our cultural diversity.



Goal CII 1: Cultivate and embrace an identity that is distinctly Thornton.

Policy CII 1.1 - Community Branding. Use branding as a tool to highlight Thornton's assets and amenities, foster a sense of community, and help distinguish Thornton from neighboring communities.

Policy CII 1.2 - Public Realm. Invest in distinctive and durable urban design elements within the city's public spaces and streetscapes.

Policy CII 1.3 - Community Gateways. Enhance the appearance of key community gateways with consistent design elements—streetscape, signage, public art, landscaping, and other unique features—to provide a sense of arrival when coming into Thornton.

Policy CII 1.4 - Community Events. Continue to support Thornton's flagship community events—Thorntonfest, Harvest Fest, and others—as a way to foster identity and a sense of community. Partner with community organizations, local businesses, and other groups on other family-friendly community events and programs.

Policy CII 1.5 - Beautification Efforts. Partner with organizations to coordinate volunteer efforts and provide the resources necessary to promote the beautification of the city's public and private realm.

Goal CII 2: Foster an equitable and inclusive community.

Policy CII 2.1 - Engagement Opportunities. Encourage meaningful dialogue between the city and community members. Provide engagement opportunities that are convenient to community members that live in different parts of Thornton, and that are welcoming to all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Policy CII 2.2 - Language Barriers. Employ a range of strategies as part of city-led outreach efforts and day-to-day communications to engage residents with limited English proficiency in an equitable and inclusive manner.

Policy CII 2.3 - City Plans and Processes. Ensure that future city plans, investments, budgeting, and other decision-making processes take into account equity considerations.

Policy CII 2.4 - Targeted Outreach. As part of city-led efforts, pursue targeted outreach opportunities to reach community groups that have been traditionally underrepresented.

Policy CII 2.5 - Youth Engagement. Promote local initiatives for youth civic engagement and leadership development, and provide opportunities for creative partnerships that will encourage active youth participation.

Policy CII 2.6 - Multilingual Information. Share information that is linguistically and culturally relevant to a range of residents.



Spanish-speaking outreach surveys



Goal CII 3: Recognize and appreciate our history and significant natural features.

Policy CII 3.1 - Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas that provide significant value to, and integrate well within, the city's open space and open lands system under the guidance of the city's Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Policy CII 3.2 - South Platte River and Corridor Preservation.

Work with Adams County and other partners to preserve and enhance the river's ecological and recreational qualities. Ensure future public and private investments along the South Platte River and other stream corridors are developed in a manner that is sensitive to each corridor's unique ecological qualities and characteristics.

Policy CII 3.3 - Riverdale Road. Protect the natural and scenic beauty of Riverdale Road, and ensure complementary, low-impact uses are encouraged along it to preserve the corridor as a scenic byway.

Policy CII 3.4 - Education and Storytelling. Seek opportunities to educate residents and visitors on the community's history through the use of programs and events.

Policy CII 3.5 - Historic and Cultural Resources. Encourage the addition of properties to the city, state, and national registers. Continue to provide educational resources and other tools to support the recognition, preservation, and interpretation of the city's historic and cultural resources.

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

The city has taken various actions in the past to preserve and celebrate its historic resources. Key accomplishments include:

- **Original Thornton Pattern Book.** This pattern book was created to highlight the unique regional character of Original Thornton by providing an in-depth history and contextual description of the neighborhood. The book also provides homeowners with suggestions and guidance regarding future improvements and additions so that they are consistent with the original character of the neighborhood.
- **Historic Recognition Code.** In December 2012, City Council adopted the "Historic Recognition Code," which is Chapter 19 of the Thornton City Code, to provide a procedure for officially recognizing historic sites, structures, and districts within the city.
- **Eastlake Grain Elevator.** In 2010, the Eastlake grain elevator, built not long after the turn of the last century, was added to the National Register of Historic Places and the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties.
- **Reitzenstein Barn.** In 2015, City Council designated the Reitzenstein Barn as a local historic landmark.
- **Open Space Acquisitions.** The city is preserving open space habitat for future generations.



Goal CII 4: Help create regional destinations in Thornton.

Policy CII 4.1 - City of Thornton Facilities. Continue to pursue the development of signature projects, such as a performing arts center, that will enhance the quality of life of Thornton residents, while also having the potential to draw visitors from elsewhere in the region.

Policy CII 4.2 - Other Public Facilities and Amenities. Support the mutual goals and efforts of partner organizations—such as Anythink Libraries, school districts, Adams County, and others—to develop facilities in the city of Thornton or the Future Growth Area that are unique and provide multiple benefits to the community.

Policy CII 4.3 - Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment Options. Encourage the expansion of shopping, dining, and entertainment options within the city through supportive mixed-use Future Land Use Categories, public/private partnerships, and other programs and incentives, as appropriate.

Goal CII 5: Celebrate our cultural diversity.

Policy CII 5.1 - Community Events. Partner with cultural leaders and community groups to offer a variety of events, programs, and activities that promote learning and understanding. These organized events and programs should aim to involve and bring together diverse groups of residents to create a strong sense of community identity and unity.

Policy CII 5.2 - Cultural Planning Efforts. Improve and strengthen programs and events sponsored by the Thornton Arts and Culture Division, updates to the Thornton Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Council (TASHCO) Master Plan, and other future planning efforts initiated by TASHCO.



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VISION THEME: PROVIDING GREAT SERVICES AND AMENITIES (GSA)



Providing Great Services and Amenities reflects a desire for a city that is a destination for arts, culture, entertainment, and recreation. Members of the community want more diverse and unique amenities within Thornton, accessible for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

They are proud of Thornton's trails, parks, and open spaces and want to see them expand with the growth of the city. Community members also sought a city government that is continuously improving, and seeking opportunities to better its operations and offerings.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Only the imagination is the limitation."

"Universal design to accommodate seniors and people of differing abilities."

"Art is an economic driver."



GSA GOALS



GSA 1. Encourage the creation of engaging community gathering places that are unique to Thornton.



GSA 2. Ensure city amenities and recreation programs are inclusive of all ages and abilities.



GSA 3. Continue to expand and enhance the parks, recreation, open space, and trail system to meet the needs of a growing community.



GSA 4. Continually seek opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of city operations.



Denver Premium Outlets, Thornton

Goal GSA 1: Encourage the creation of engaging community gathering places that are unique to Thornton.

Policy GSA 1.1 - People-Oriented Places.

Encourage the development of “people-oriented” gathering spaces throughout Thornton. These gathering spaces should take form in a variety of different scales and uses, incorporating key characteristics that promote active socialization, including but not limited to outdoor seating/dining, plazas, fountains, and other amenities that will encourage pedestrian activity.

Policy GSA 1.2 - Placemaking. Create visually interesting and comfortable gathering spaces with unique placemaking qualities that aim to promote high quality architecture and landscaping, accentuate the unique characteristics of the surrounding environment, and promote a safe, welcoming space that accommodates all users.

Policy GSA 1.3 - Culturally Appropriate Gathering Spaces. Support the retention and expansion of existing businesses, gathering places, and services within the community that are culturally unique and/or significant—particularly in infill/redevelopment areas.

Policy GSA 1.4 - Community Arts and Programs. Continue to work with community partners and local artists to create an inclusive arts community that offers a variety of programs and events for residents of all ages and backgrounds.

Policy GSA 1.5 - Art in Public Places. Encourage the inclusion of art in public places, facilities, infrastructure, and within private developments, where appropriate, to enhance the community’s cultural vitality and vibrancy.

Policy GSA 1.6 - Cultural Diversity and Acceptance. Foster a more inclusive and equitable community by recognizing diversity and cultural acceptance through various art initiatives and programs.

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Cultivating more unique destinations and quality gathering spaces has been a common desire expressed by the community. Various types of destinations that the community wants to cultivate over time have been identified through this process and are articulated in greater detail by the Placemaking Guidelines in Chapter 4: Growth Framework. These guidelines provide the necessary policy guidance needed to ensure future public and private investments help foster the sense of place and desired character envisioned by the community.



Sculpture at Carpenter Recreation Center





Goal GSA 2: Ensure city amenities and recreation programs are inclusive of all ages and abilities.

Policy GSA 2.1 - Affordable Recreational Opportunities.

Create and expand upon existing city recreational programs and activities to establish additional affordable opportunities that meet the needs of residents of all ages, including families and youth.

Policy GSA 2.2 - Fill Service Gaps. Fill public service gaps and partner with other providers to expand or adapt recreation services and offerings to engage underrepresented groups and growing populations, such as teens, young adults, working families, seniors, and members of the Latino and other communities.

Policy GSA 2.3 - Inclusive Recreational Opportunities. Expand opportunities and make proper accommodations to ensure recreational programs are accessible and available to persons with disabilities and/or special needs.



Eastlake Heritage Trail

Goal GSA 3: Continue to expand and enhance the parks, recreation, open space, and trail system to meet the needs of a growing community.

Policy GSA 3.1 - Interconnected System. Continue to expand, enhance, and provide linkages between the city's parks, trails, and open space system to establish a well-connected greenway system.

Policy GSA 3.2 - Connections to New Development. Ensure new developments and redevelopments adjacent to open space or public lands provide public access points to existing and planned trails of the city, and that these improvements are aligned with the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Policy GSA 3.3 - Access to Amenities. Work with community partners and other agencies to ensure that a broad range of accessible parks, open space and recreational facilities are equitably distributed throughout Thornton.

Policy GSA 3.4 - Regional Connections and Coordination. Work with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure connections to regional trails are provided.

Policy GSA 3.5 - Support a Variety of Users. Provide accommodations for a wide variety of users to meet the changing needs of our population.

HERITAGE TRAILS

The idea of the Heritage Trails was first conceived in the city's 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The goal is to convey Thornton's character and uniqueness by integrating a diverse spectrum of regional themes and stories, which pertain to Thornton's history, culture, and environment. Greater detail is provided in the Heritage Trail Concept Plan which was subsequently incorporated into the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. A total of eight Heritage Trail loops have been identified, each with its own theme. The Eastlake Heritage Trail is the first to be constructed by the city and contains many unique features reflecting the history of the Eastlake neighborhood such as a silo and a historic train caboose built in 1920.

Goal GSA 4: Continually seek opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of city operations.

Policy GSA 4.1 - City Services and Facility Needs.

Employ best practices and data-driven decision making to monitor city services and facility needs.

Policy GSA 4.2 - Organizational Efficiency. Seek opportunities to improve coordination within the city organization as a means to avoid the duplication of efforts, establish clear roles and responsibilities, reduce overhead, and partner to fill potential gaps in public services.

Policy GSA 4.3 - Government Transparency.

Share information regarding city services and continually strive to make public processes and decision making more transparent and accountable to the community. Examples of this would include streaming City Council meetings, publishing the budget, and updating Thornton's GIS open data catalogue.

Policy GSA 4.4 - Budgeting. Continue to produce a budget that facilitates the delivery of high-quality city services, supports community priorities established in this and other city plans, and is fiscally sustainable.



Road resurfacing





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VISION THEME: FOSTERING ECONOMIC VITALITY (EV)



Fostering Economic Vitality aims at cultivating small business support, educational opportunities, and options to “live, work, and play” in Thornton. Community members acknowledged the need for increased retail to support the city’s tax base, and were interested in the city pursuing a greater variety of restaurant and retail options, particularly small businesses.

They also expressed a desire for the city to attract more high quality jobs that are well-compensated and allow people to live near where they work.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

“I want more shopping and family-owned restaurants.”

“Biggest challenges in Thornton: Number one concern is work-force development and attraction and retention; attainable housing and education.”

“Thornton should be a city where residents can live, work, and play.”



EV GOALS



EV 1. Create, attract, and retain employers that provide high-quality and well-compensated jobs.



EV 2. Support the development and growth of small businesses.



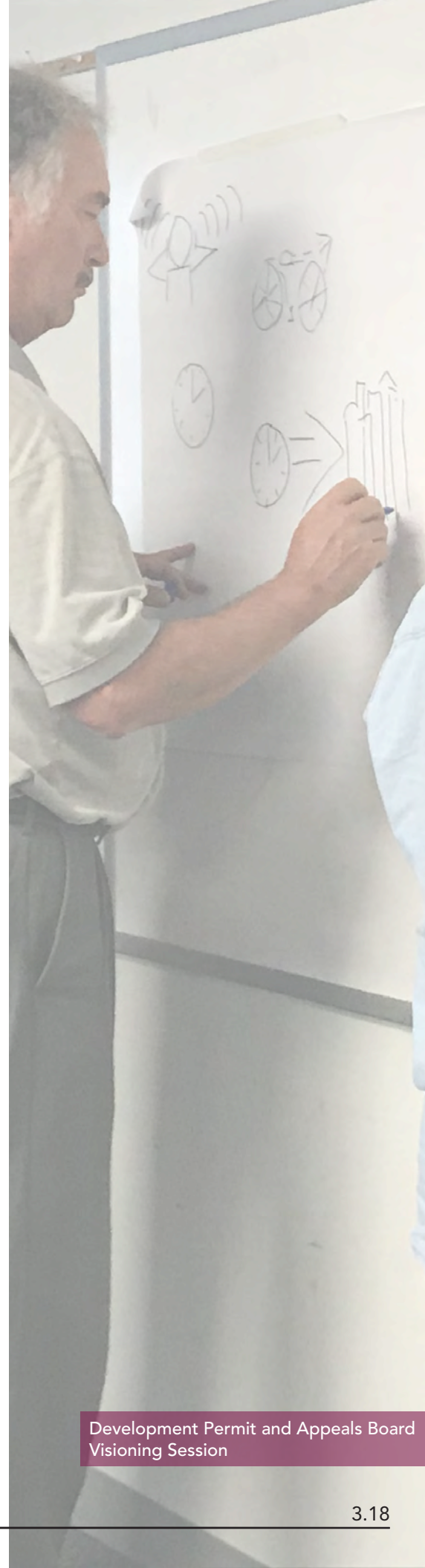
EV 3. Preserve and enhance our retail sales base.



EV 4. Preserve our land capacity for businesses and accommodate for future employment growth.



EV 5. Support a skilled and well-educated workforce.



Goal EV 1: Create, attract, and retain employers that provide high-quality and well-compensated jobs.

Policy EV 1.1 - Economic Development

Strategy. Periodically update the city's Economic Development Employment Strategic Plan to identify target industries that advance the city's priorities and values, and key strategies that will raise Thornton's competitive edge in economic development and transform the community into a more compelling destination for primary employers.

Policy EV 1.2 - Diversity of Employment

Opportunities. Attract and support the growth of a variety of primary employment opportunities by providing a diversity of employment spaces for businesses.

Policy EV 1.3 - Employment Centers. Plan, promote, and incentivize the development of high-quality employment centers and make proactive investments to enhance the attractiveness of these areas in coordination with public and private partners, when possible.

Policy EV 1.4 - Business Retention and Expansion. Support and encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses through various programs.

JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

An even balance of jobs and housing in a community is an important part of fiscal health and economic sustainability. Thornton's growth over the past couple decades has been primarily residential. City Council passed a resolution in 2017 setting a long-term goal of 0.75 jobs per housing unit as an ongoing effort to balance the mixture of jobs and housing in the community.

The Growth Framework and the economic vitality policies provide further direction for achieving this goal. This is accomplished by preserving land in the areas best suited for employment growth. The city is continually working toward this goal.

Policy EV 1.5 - Business Engagement. Provide guidance to businesses of all sizes and across all industries throughout the development process.

Policy EV 1.6 - Public-Private Partnerships. Encourage the formation of management entities, such as merchant associations and business improvement districts, to support the vitality and growth of important employment and commercial areas.



North Valley Tech Center



Goal EV 2: Support the development and growth of small businesses.

Policy EV 2.1 - Startup Assistance. Continue to assist small business owners with necessary permit and inspection processes, and any additional city requirements necessary to start their new business.

Policy EV 2.2 - Access to Resources. Work with local and regional partners to connect small businesses in Thornton to resources available to support their creation and growth.

Policy EV 2.3 - Business Network. Create various network opportunities to facilitate interactions and potential collaborations between new and existing businesses and entrepreneurs.

Policy EV 2.4 - Flexible Workspaces. Promote the creation and reinvestment in smaller and flexible workspaces that support the growth of small businesses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Department provides many services and programs to support economic growth in the community. To support local businesses, the city created business improvement grants (BIG Grant) to offset a portion of the capital improvements businesses make, which are intended to increase revenues and expand their employment.

The city also provides a South Thornton Area Revitalization (STAR) Grant program that provides funds to new and expanding businesses in the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.

To support the attraction of primary employers, the city has an incentive program and the ability to expedite the development approval process for Projects of Economic Significance.



Allegro Coffee Company, Thornton

Goal EV 3: Preserve and enhance retail sales tax base.

Policy EV 3.1 - Commercial Land Supply. Plan for and/or maintain a sufficient supply of commercial land in undeveloped or underserved areas to meet the long-term needs of the community. Protect commercial land from conversion to land uses with limited contribution to the fiscal health of the city, such as housing.

Policy EV 3.2 - Mixed-Use Centers. Promote the development and maintenance of healthy, sustainable, and viable commercial and mixed-use centers over time. Ensure that proactive investments and strategies are implemented to support the long-term vibrancy and viability of these centers.

Policy EV 3.3 - Commercial Revitalization. Encourage reinvestment in old and underperforming shopping centers by allowing additional uses, including residential uses where appropriate.

FISCAL HEALTH

Retail sales tax accounts for the majority of revenue to fund municipal services and programs. Ensuring the city maintains and grows its retail sales tax base is an essential element of fiscal health for the community. The Policies and Future Land Use Map provide guidance for areas that are important to maintain as commercial, allowing for the growth of sales tax generating businesses.

The Plan provides flexibility for new uses and limited high-density residential in certain areas that include more commercially-zoned property than the market can absorb. The intent is to attract investment, allowing them to evolve and continue to serve the community.

Of note, the growth of online shopping and e-commerce and the rise in demand for more experience-based retail offerings means that Thornton's shopping areas must adapt and evolve to remain viable.



Goal EV 4: Preserve land capacity for businesses and accommodate for future employment growth.

Policy EV 4.1 - Land for Employment-Oriented Uses. Identify and maintain portions of the I-25 and E-470 corridors solely for employment-oriented uses.

Policy EV 4.2 - Jobs-Housing Balance. Proactively support job growth to increase the number of jobs available to Thornton residents. Monitor the ratio of jobs to housing units as new developments are proposed to track the impact of efforts to create a more balanced growth pattern.

Policy EV 4.3 - Live, Work, Play Opportunities. Support a mix of employment uses with entertainment, shopping, dining, housing, and other complementary uses in targeted locations.

Policy EV 4.4 - Distribution Warehousing. Accommodate large-scale warehouses and distribution facilities in targeted locations near major transportation routes and where there are limited impacts to residential uses. They should not be located in areas better suited for more job-intensive uses. Support the transition of distribution warehousing uses to more job-intensive uses as the market evolves.

Goal EV 5: Support a skilled and well-educated workforce.

Policy EV 5.1 - Workforce Training. Partner with educational institutions and economic development organizations to align educational offerings with the city's target industries. Support workforce training programs that will encourage upward mobility and meet the needs of local businesses. Explore the possibility of including supporting services such as childcare and other related services that may make the training and classes more viable and accessible for residents.

Policy EV 5.2 - Lifelong Learning. Work with local educational institutions and other community partners to provide lifelong learning opportunities for residents of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds.

Policy EV 5.3 - Community-Based Learning. Identify opportunities to expand community- and work-based learning opportunities to get students directly engaged with the community to apply their unique skills and knowledge in a "real world" setting.



Job Hunters Boot Camp



VISION THEME: PROVIDING RESOURCES AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS (RR)



Providing Resources and Building Relationships

emphasizes a need for increased community support for youth, seniors, and others in need. Community members noted the importance of improved communication about healthcare, education, housing, and job support. They saw the city as a leader in building partnerships and connecting people with resources.

The community also highlighted a need for the city to provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue and public input. There was particular concern in the lack of variety of messaging and language services.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Thornton youth need easy access to therapy to prevent suicide, addiction, and violence."

"The city should work together with more nonprofits."

"We want more information on the city's plans, developments, and decisions. We have no idea how or where to get the information we are looking for."



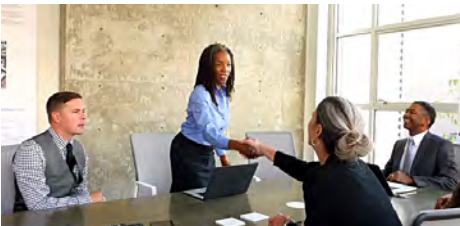
RR GOALS



RR 1. Connect people with health and human service facilities that meet the different needs of our community.



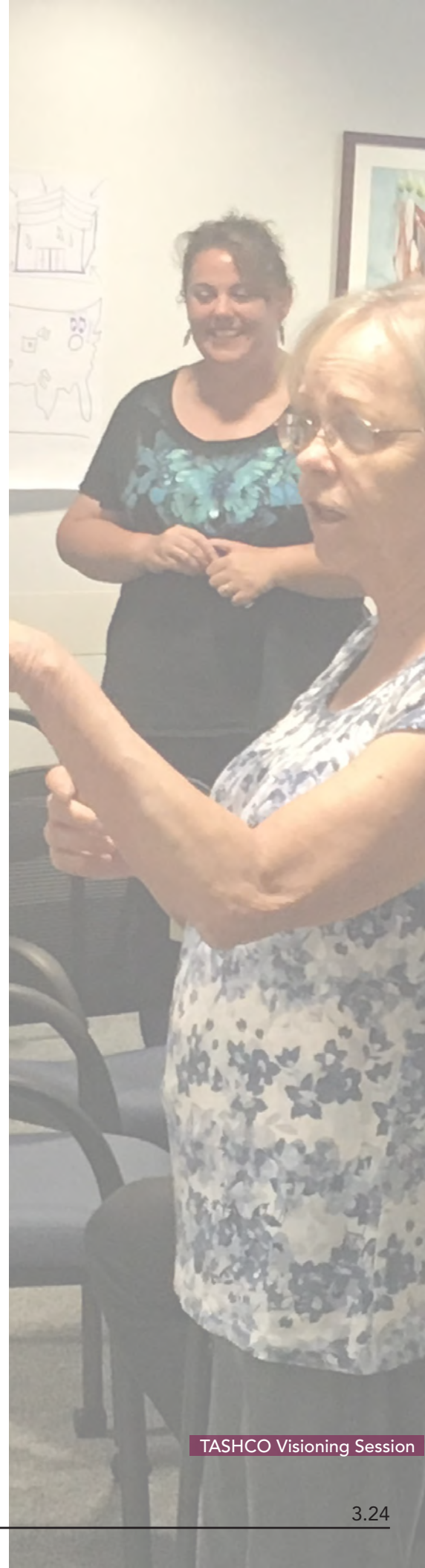
RR 2. Provide an equitable distribution of city services and facilities throughout the community.



RR 3. Develop and support leadership and representation that reflects the diversity of the community.



RR 4. Build and strengthen relationships with educational and other organizations that provide services to the community.



Goal RR 1: Connect people with health and human service facilities that meet the different needs of our community.

Policy RR 1.1 - Education and Awareness. Continue to use a variety of platforms to educate residents and connect them to service providers, programs, and other resources, recognizing that each individual will have unique needs and challenges.

Policy RR 1.2 - Collaborative Approach. Collaborate with Tri-County Health Department, senior service providers, and other health and human services providers to enhance working relationships, fill service gaps, connect residents to resources, and better understand how the city can best support the efforts of these organizations.

Policy RR 1.3 - Coordinated Strategy. Collaborate with local school districts, libraries, and community organizations to ensure that information regarding available services reaches those in need.

Goal RR 2: Provide an equitable distribution of city services and facilities throughout the community.

Policy RR 2.1 - Distribution of Facilities. Monitor and evaluate the different types of public improvements made over time to ensure that these investments are distributed across the city and meet the needs of the community.

Policy RR 2.2 - Maintenance and Monitoring. Monitor, maintain and improve the condition of existing facilities throughout Thornton to address changing demands and community needs.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS DIVISION

The Community Connections Division was created to assist Thornton community members in need. Bilingual English/Spanish staff provide resources for emergency shelter, food access, water assistance, employment, education, housing, home repair programs, and more.

Community Connections uses a 24/7 publicly accessible online platform called “Thornton Cares” to connect community members to the division’s resources as well as regional programs and services.

Community Connections regularly works with Adams County, schools, nonprofit, and faith-based partners in efforts to address homelessness, poverty, health equity, affordable housing, and other issues important to our community.



Goal RR 3: Develop and support leadership and representation that reflects the diversity of the community.

Policy RR 3.1 - Boards and Commissions. Provide a welcoming environment and encourage diversity (e.g., age, ethnicity, geography) within Thornton's city boards and commissions to reflect the unique perspective of Thornton's diverse community.

Policy RR 3.2 - Community Partnerships. Partner and collaborate with community groups and organizations to embrace Thornton's diversity, reduce discrimination, and engage underserved populations.

Goal RR 4: Build and strengthen relationships with educational and other organizations that provide services to the community.

Policy RR 4.1 - Partner Organizations. Partner with local service providers to ensure Thornton residents have access to the health and human services they need – including, but not limited to, homelessness services and food access.

Policy RR 4.2 - New Partnerships. Seek out new partnerships, external resources, and funding to provide the resources and services necessary to meet the changing needs of our community.

ADAMS COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Adams County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is an advisory body comprised of elected and appointed officials created to address systemic criminal justice issues. Their mission is to provide an ongoing forum for leaders from justice agencies, local government offices, and community partners to discuss and prioritize public safety and criminal justice reform in the most evidence-based, effective and equitable ways possible. Thornton's Police Chief and one additional city staff member sit on the board.

ADAMS 12 VETERANS MEMORIAL AQUATIC CENTER

The Adams 12 Five Star Schools Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center (VMAC) is a collaborative effort between Adams 12 Five Star Schools and the city of Thornton. The city donated the land for VMAC, cares for the landscaping, and contributed funding towards the site work, parking, landscaping and irrigation. The VMAC is operated by the school district and the city utilizes some space for programming. Inside, VMAC includes a 50-meter Olympic-sized pool, and outside is the Thornton Veterans Memorial.



Cultural mural



VISION THEME: CREATING QUALITY AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS (QDN)



Creating Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods is aimed at creating affordable and balanced housing options and quality neighborhoods for the diverse populations throughout the city of Thornton.

Community members were particularly interested in creating walkable neighborhoods that would be inclusive to residents of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and income levels, and in the revitalization of established neighborhoods.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Inclusionary, accessible, affordable housing."

"Learn to appreciate high-density housing and balance it with growth and green spaces."

"Integrated diversity of population and appreciation of that diversity."



QDN GOALS



QDN 1. Encourage a mix of housing options to meet the needs of residents of varied ages, abilities, and income levels throughout the city.



QDN 2. Promote revitalization and reinvestment in established neighborhoods.



QDN 3. Promote the development of new neighborhoods that offer a range of lifestyle options and amenities.



QDN 4. Advance the creation of walkable neighborhoods.



Central Park, Denver, CO

Goal QDN 1: Encourage a mix of housing options to meet the needs of residents of varied ages, abilities, and income levels throughout the city.

Policy QDN 1.1 - Diversity of Housing Options.

Provide opportunities for a diversity of rental and ownership housing options that promote varying lot sizes, types, and densities.

Policy QDN 1.2 - Geographic Distribution.

Plan for an equitable distribution of housing options (e.g., affordable/workforce housing, senior housing, executive housing) throughout Thornton. Concentrate higher-density housing options near existing services and amenities, where established infrastructure exists and/or where high-frequency transit exists or is planned.

Policy QDN 1.3 - Age-In-Place Opportunities.

Ensure residents can remain in Thornton as their housing needs change over time by providing a diverse mix of housing from entry-level to senior care facilities.

Policy QDN 1.4 - Affordable and Workforce Housing.

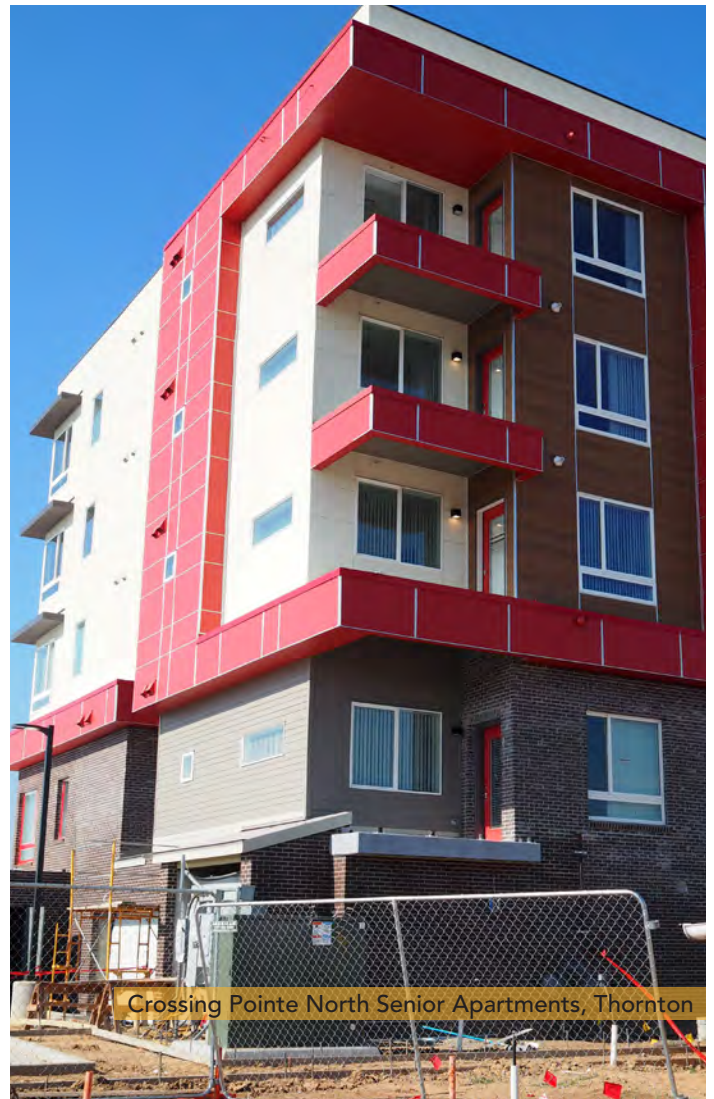
Encourage the development of affordable and workforce housing based on the identified housing needs and recommendations of the city's Housing Needs Assessment.

Policy QDN 1.5 - Accessible Design. Encourage the integration of universal design and visitability principles in new development—particularly in areas that are proximate to existing/planned high frequency transit—to expand the number of homes in Thornton that are accessible to the specific needs of seniors and persons with disabilities.

BALANCED HOUSING TASK FORCE

In 2017, a Balanced Housing Task Force was created to advise City Council on issues and potential strategies the city could explore to address affordability concerns. The ultimate goal of the task force was to develop a set of realistic recommendations to increase the amount of housing for low and moderate-income residents north of 120th Avenue and executive housing for high income earners south of 120th Avenue. Recommended actions included:

- Creating a streamlined planning process for affordable housing projects;
- Adding amenities or infrastructure needed to inspire unique or desired businesses in the established areas of Thornton; and
- Reviewing the city's design standards and revising the ones that add unnecessary cost to the project.



Crossing Pointe North Senior Apartments, Thornton





Goal QDN 2: Promote revitalization and reinvestment in established neighborhoods.

Policy QDN 2.1 - Partnerships. Engage neighborhood residents and partner organizations to create and implement strategies that promote neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. Look to previous efforts and identify lessons learned for future initiatives.

Policy QDN 2.2 - Retention of Existing Housing Stock. Encourage ongoing maintenance and promote reinvestment and improvements in established neighborhoods that are not governed by management associations, such as HOAs. Work with residents, manufactured home community owners, neighborhood organizations, and non-profit organizations with the goals of bringing substandard housing and vacant lots into compliance with city codes, improving the energy efficiency of older homes, and improving overall conditions.

Policy QDN 2.3 - Neighborhood Assessments. Monitor the impact of the city's neighborhood revitalization policies and programs on established neighborhoods over time, making adjustments to address potential gaps and needs as they arise.

Policy QDN 2.4 - Code Compliance. Work with property owners to address code violations, blighted properties, and other maintenance-related issues. Place the highest priority on properties with multiple violations or a history of repeat complaints.

NEIGHBORHOODS WITHOUT PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

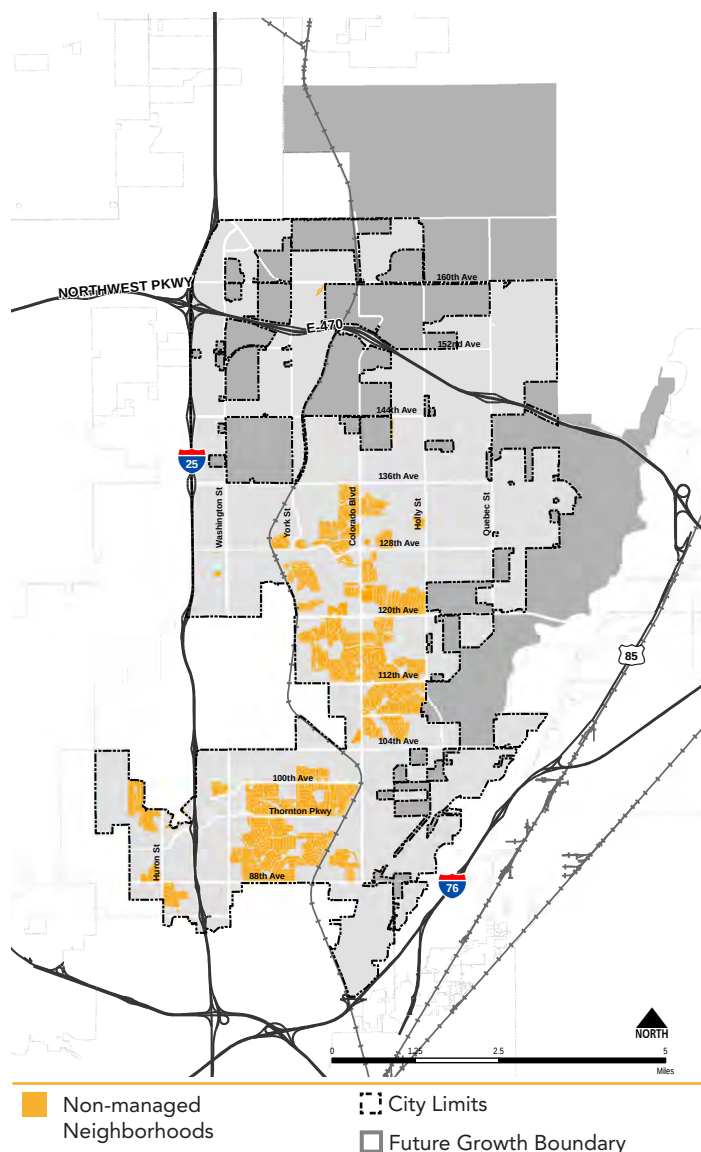


Figure 3-2: Map of Non-managed Neighborhoods

Goal QDN 3: Promote the development of new neighborhoods that offer a range of lifestyle options and amenities.

Policy QDN 3.1 - Neighborhood Services. Ensure that residents of all new residential neighborhoods have access to existing or planned commercial services, recognizing that the full buildout of commercial services in newly developing areas will take time.

Policy QDN 3.2 - High-Quality Neighborhoods. Encourage design and development that contributes to the long-term stability and desirability of its neighborhoods. Encourage the use of materials and practices that reduce long-term maintenance needs and improve energy efficiency.

Policy QDN 3.3 - Community Amenities. Encourage the integration of various facilities and services such as recreational amenities, community gardens, community gathering spaces, etc. that promote more engagement between residents and establish a stronger sense of community.

Policy QDN 3.4 - Mix of Housing. Discourage the creation of new neighborhoods that are dominated by a single type of home or dwelling unit. To the extent feasible, align the mix of housing options provided in new neighborhoods to address the housing gaps that exist in the surrounding area.

Policy QDN 3.5 - Transit-Oriented Development. Encourage high-density housing and mixed-use development in areas served by, or planned for, high frequency transit, as appropriate based on the immediate neighborhood context.

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Complete neighborhoods include a range of housing options and convenient access to high quality services and amenities, such as schools, parks, jobs, and shopping areas. They are supported by an interconnected network of streets and sidewalks and multimodal transportation options that accommodate people of all ages and abilities. These characteristics were highly desired and favored by the community throughout the outreach process.



Goal QDN 4: Advance the creation of walkable neighborhoods.

Policy QDN 4.1 - Sidewalk and Trail

Improvements. Prioritize and invest in sidewalk and trail improvements that reduce or eliminate targeted gaps in the city's sidewalk and trail system. Place a particular focus on areas that increase access to the citywide system in underserved areas of the city.

Policy QDN 4.2 - Access to Services and Amenities

Amenities. Provide safe and direct pedestrian/bicycle connections to commercial services and amenities from adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy QDN 4.3 - Neighborhood Connections.

Establish seamless connections between new and existing neighborhoods through the development and integration of sidewalks, shared use paths, bicycle lanes, trails, parks, and other improvements.

COMPLETE STREETS

The City has embraced the concept of Complete Streets and incorporated it into city codes and processes. Complete Streets is a design approach that accommodates all users of the street right-of-way. The city implements this concept in many ways. For example, when a new development is proposed, the development is required to have shared use paths, bike lanes, connections to shared use paths and sidewalks, and street design in residential areas that slows vehicular traffic.

In existing residential areas, the city offers its i-Watch™ Speed Reduction Program and adds bicycle lanes where appropriate. Citywide programs include adding through bicycle lanes on arterial streets; sidewalk, trail, and shared-use path maintenance including repairs and snow removal; and providing bus shelters and bus benches.



Neighborhood trail



VISION THEME: GROWING SMARTER AND GREENER (SG)



Growing Smarter and Greener

emphasizes a need for development that is environmentally and economically sustainable. Community members desired good stewardship of the city's natural resources and open spaces, and wanted more education and opportunities for recycling, water conservation, and becoming a more "green" community.

There was also a desire to become a "smart city" that uses innovation and technology to provide greater services.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Promote the use of solar and other sustainable energy sources."

"We need proportional parks and recreation growth as compared to population growth."

"I would like to see more trees, plants, and reserves for animals and plants in the community of Thornton."



SG 2. Encourage infill and redevelopment in established areas of Thornton.



SG 3. Promote the use of sustainable development practices.



SG 4. Leverage new technology and innovation to foster a "Smart City."



Comments from the Thornton Community

3.34

Goal SG 1: Support a fiscally-responsible growth pattern and annexation policy to maintain and improve existing levels of service for current and future residents.

Policy SG 1.1 - Balanced Development. Prioritize the retention of areas designated for employment uses. Monitor the city's supply of non-residential and residential land over time to ensure adequate capacity to meet future demands for a balance of housing and employment is maintained.

Policy SG 1.2 - Fiscally-Responsible Growth. Encourage growth in areas where infrastructure and services exist and can be readily provided. Avoid permitting new growth that will create a fiscal burden to the city unless it achieves other major city goals.

Policy SG 1.3 - Fiscal Capacity. Monitor service levels citywide, and within different geographic areas of the city, to gauge and better understand the fiscal impacts of proposed annexations and potential changes to the Future Land Use Map over time.

Policy SG 1.4 - Regional Coordination. Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, local and regional service providers, partner agencies, and others as applicable to plan for and manage growth and development-related issues.

Policy SG 1.5 - Adequate Public Facilities. Ensure that public facilities and infrastructure are provided in a timely, orderly, and efficient arrangement to support the existing and planned land use pattern of the city.

Policy SG 1.6 - Future Growth Area. Continue to use the Future Growth Area as a tool to guide and manage the city's long-term vision for future growth and urbanization in collaboration with adjacent communities and the region as a whole.



Goal SG 2: Encourage infill and redevelopment in established areas of Thornton.

Policy SG 2.1 - Mix of Uses. Encourage horizontally and vertically mixed-use development in established areas as a way to improve access to services and amenities, expand housing options, and support the revitalization of existing, single-use commercial centers over time. Distinguish areas where mixed-use development is desirable from areas where single-use development is preferred on the Future Land Use Map.

Policy SG 2.2 - Reinvestment and Revitalization. Employ a range of tools to support the revitalization of vacant, deteriorating, or otherwise underutilized structures, buildings, and properties in established areas of Thornton, such as, but not limited to:

- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings;
- Infill of underutilized surface parking lots;
- Public/private partnerships;
- Regulatory incentives;
- Consolidation and assemblage of properties to coordinate the redevelopment of blocks or segments of corridors where individual property configurations would otherwise limit redevelopment potential; and
- Other tools as applicable.

Policy SG 2.3 - Priority Areas for Infill and Redevelopment. Prioritize infill and redevelopment in designated urban renewal areas, as well as in areas designated as Transit-Oriented Development, Community Mixed-Use, Commercial and/or Regional Mixed-Use on the Future Land Use Map.

Policy SG 2.4 - Neighborhood Compatibility. Ensure that infill and redevelopment projects are designed to be sensitive and compatible with adjoining neighborhoods by providing appropriate transitions in height/scale, massing, and intensity along the shared street frontage or lot line(s).

URBAN RENEWAL AREAS (URAs)

Urban renewal areas (URAs) are established by the the city to remove blight and promote the revitalization of Thornton. URAs enable the use of urban renewal funds to be used for the redevelopment of commercial property. Thornton has three urban renewal areas as highlighted below on the map.

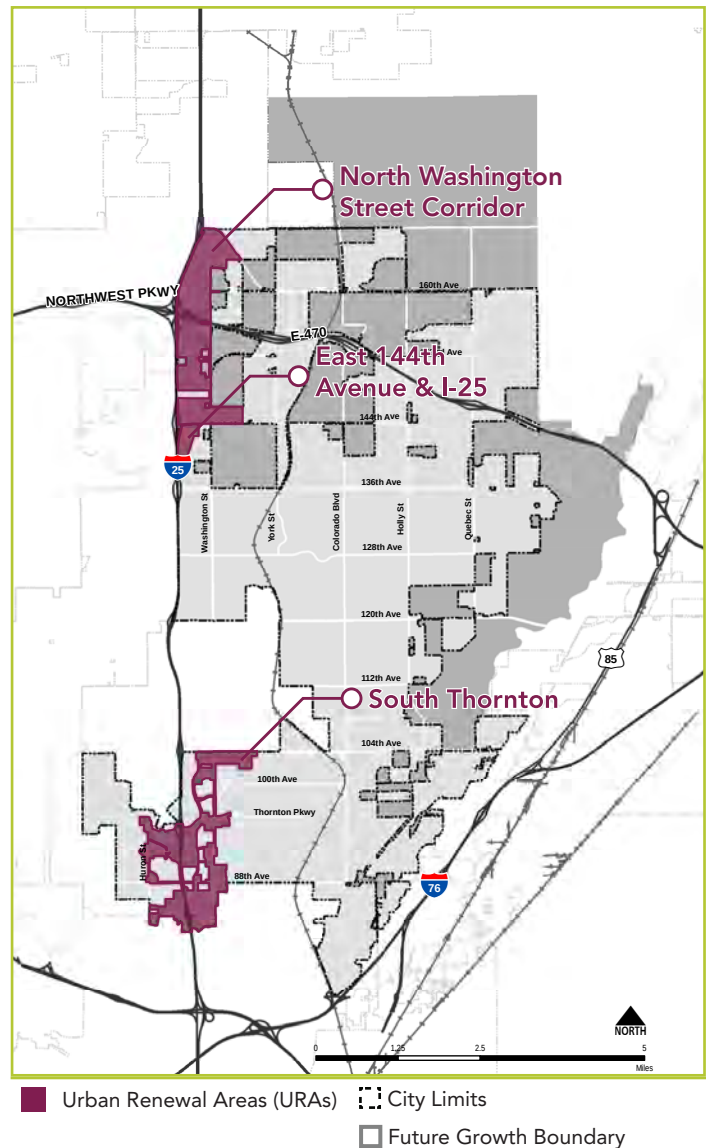


Figure 3-3: Map of Urban Renewal Areas

Goal SG 3: Promote the use of sustainable development practices.

Policy SG 3.1 - Low-Impact Development.

Encourage site and building design practices that promote the city's water quality and conservation goals.

Policy SG 3.2 - Water Conservation. Continue to pursue short- and long-term strategies, programs, and partnerships in accordance with the city's 'Water Efficiency Plan' and 'Drought Management Plan'.

Policy SG 3.3 - City Operations and Facilities.

Continue to seek new opportunities to incorporate energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy into city operations and facilities.

Policy SG 3.4 - Sustainable Development Practices.

Promote the use of sustainable development practices in the construction of new buildings, and in the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and sites.

WATER CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The city's 'Water Efficiency Plan' establishes long-term water efficiency goals that encourage efficient use of available water resources and reduction in the amount of additional water needed to serve existing and future customers, while maintaining a high-quality urban environment. As a result, Thornton has historically maintained one of the lowest residential daily per capita water consumption rates among cities along the Front Range.

Thornton has also adopted a 'Drought Management Plan' to complement the 'Water Efficiency Plan' to provide guidance on short-term water savings during water supply shortages brought on by a drought.

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

The city has multiple programs in place to protect and enhance the social, economic, and environmental welfare of the community. Thornton offers a number of programs that target sustainability and provide multiple benefits. These programs range from the various social programs that are offered through the Thornton Cares program, to business improvement grants, and composting and recycling services. Thornton has also used a portion of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to sponsor solar panel installations for multiple Thornton households.



Goal SG 4: Leverage new technology and innovation to foster a "Smart City."

Policy SG 4.1 - Initiatives and Programs. Explore opportunities for new citywide initiatives, programs, and pilot studies that aim to integrate information and communication technologies into Thornton's day-to-day operations and long-term strategic planning.

Policy SG 4.2 - Public-Private Partnerships. Support future partnerships with private and nonprofit entities to implement "Smart City" initiatives and programs within the city as opportunities arise.

SMART CITY

A "Smart City" incorporates the use of technology and information to monitor and enhance the quality and efficiency of city services over time. Through strategic partnerships and actions, communities across the world, nation, and State of Colorado have engaged in various innovative projects to capitalize on current and emerging technologies. Colorado Smart Cities Alliance, a state-wide alliance of public, private, federal research, and academic and business sector leaders, was formed in 2017 to accelerate the adoption of Smart Cities projects and initiatives throughout Colorado. Through this organization, multiple projects have been initiated in Colorado ranging from on-demand microtransit services in Lone Tree in partnership with Uber to "CityNow," a large-scale investment of Smart City infrastructure in Denver in partnership with Panasonic.



Bull Canal Bridge



VISION THEME: CONNECTING COMMUNITY, PEOPLE, AND PLACES (CPP)



Connecting Community, People, and Places aims to increase the effectiveness and equity of Thornton's community services, transportation networks, and connectivity. It emphasizes the need to collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to develop an effective multi-modal transportation system for residents, businesses, and visitors to the city of Thornton.

Community members also highlighted a need for greater accessibility to services, and a desire for greater engagement in civic affairs. Improving community connectivity through more equitable access to internet and smart technologies was a common concern.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Thornton needs transportation that is accessible and affordable."

"We want neighborhoods that you can walk and bike in and not drive everywhere."

"Technology and the internet need to be accessible, easy to use, and affordable for everyone."



CPP GOALS



CPP 1. Work with partners to develop an effective and equitable multi-modal transportation system that serves all residents, businesses, and visitors.



CPP 2. Seek opportunities for smart technology to improve community connectivity, equity, and decision making.



CPP 3. Collaborate with local, regional, and state entities and service providers on issues of mutual significance.



Goal CPP 1: Work with partners to develop an effective and equitable multi-modal transportation system that serves all residents, businesses, and visitors.

Policy CPP 1.1 - Balanced System. Consider and strive to balance the needs of all transportation modes—driving, walking, cycling, and taking transit—in development review, and other day-to-day and long-range decision making.

Policy CPP 1.2 - Emerging Technologies and Modes. Monitor trends and emerging technologies in transportation—such as, but not limited to, autonomous vehicles, drone delivery, and personal scooters—to anticipate and address potential issues and opportunities.

Policy CPP 1.3 - Land Use and Transportation Integration. Plan for and align investments in the multi-modal transportation system, including the type and timing of those investments, with population and growth projections and the city's Future Land Use Map to help leverage available resources.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY MASTER PLAN

The Transportation and Mobility Master Plan (TMMP) provides the long-term multi-modal transportation vision for the city and serves as an important tool to guide future decision-making and investments regarding the city's multi-modal transportation system. The TMMP is periodically updated to ensure that the city's multi-modal transportation system accommodates the wide-ranging mobility needs of Thornton's growing and changing population. Furthermore, the TMMP provides important linkages to the city's Future Land Use Map. This allows the city's land use and transportation systems to be better integrated with one another in order to improve the efficiency of travel, manage growth, and contain infrastructure costs.

N LINE

Phase 1 of the N Line (also referred to as the North Metro rail line) will soon connect Thornton to RTD's rail system, providing connections to Denver's Union Station and many points beyond. The first 13 miles of the proposed 18.5 mile commuter rail line and a total of six commuter rail stations, three of which are located in Thornton, are anticipated to be fully operational in 2020. The city has taken a proactive role with the creation of various Station Area Master Plans (STAMP) which establish a planning framework that will guide future development and redevelopment that is complementary to these major mobility hubs. Likewise, many opportunities exist throughout the city to enhance existing and create new mobility hubs that will enhance the city's overall multi-modal transportation system while providing opportunities for creating more quality gathering spaces for the community to enjoy.

Policy CPP 1.4 - First and Last Mile Connections. Strengthen first and last mile connections to/from existing and planned high frequency transit stops by providing safe and continuous bicycle and pedestrian routes, and exploring other programmatic solutions, such as shared mobility programs.

Policy CPP 1.5 - Public Transportation. Continue to work with local and regional partners to plan for and incrementally expand the number of areas within the city of Thornton that have access to timely and efficient transit service.

Policy CPP 1.6 - Access to Services. Continue to coordinate among transportation providers and other human services and nonprofit organizations to provide affordable services and programs that better serve populations with special transportation needs including seniors, persons with disabilities, and other transit-dependent populations.





Goal CPP 2: Seek opportunities for smart technology to improve community connectivity, equity, and decision making.

.....

Policy CPP 2.1 - City Services and Facility Needs.

Monitor emerging technologies and best practices, and adopt those that are best suited to Thornton's needs.

Policy CPP 2.2 - Government Transparency.

Continually strive to make public processes and decision-making more transparent and accountable to the community.

Policy CPP 2.3 - Digital Engagement. Employ a range of tools to enhance the way the city communicates and interacts with the community. Aim to provide residents with the information technology capacity needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

Goal CPP 3: Collaborate with local, regional, and state entities and service providers on issues of mutual significance.

.....

Policy CPP 3.1 - Regional Transportation Initiatives. Continue to partner with regional transportation agencies and surrounding local governments to strengthen regional transportation connections and capitalize on multi-modal transportation opportunities.

Policy CPP 3.2 - Cooperative Planning. Actively engage with neighboring jurisdictions, school districts, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), special districts, and other regional and state partners to develop cooperative solutions to regional issues and planning challenges.

Policy CPP 3.3 - Health Services. Strengthen the city's partnership and maintain ongoing coordination with the Tri-County Health Department and other health and human service providers to create more awareness of and provide effective services.

PARTNERSHIPS

Creating and nurturing community partnerships has been a key factor contributing towards maintaining Thornton's high quality of life. Partnerships with public and governmental agencies, non-profits, and private/corporate organizations allow the various stakeholders to consolidate resources and leverage their unique expertise to advance the shared interests and goals of the different stakeholders. These community partnerships allow Thornton to better advance the community's goals and priorities.



Eastlake Station on the North Metro Line



VISION THEME: BUILDING A SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY (SHC)



Building a Safe and Healthy Community reflects the high value community members place on promoting a safe and healthy lifestyle. Community members expressed a desire for safe, crime resistant neighborhoods throughout the city of Thornton, both in form of adequate public safety employees and in designing safe environments.

There was also interest in promoting long-term resiliency to potential hazards. For health, community members identified a need for greater access to healthy, affordable food, and amenities that allow all residents the opportunity to lead an active lifestyle.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"We could have health food stores closer to residential communities so healthy living could be easier."

"Visible police presence, very friendly and helpful."

"Provide more opportunities for classes about health information, prevention, and nutrition."



SHC GOALS



SHC 1. Foster a safe community.



SHC 2. Promote access to healthy, affordable food.



SHC 3. Provide opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to lead active and healthy lifestyles.



SHC 4. Identify and mitigate natural and other potential hazards.



Goal SHC 1: Foster a safe community.

Policy SHC 1.1 - Emergency Services. Coordinate closely with all public safety and emergency service providers to ensure their capacity to provide effective services is in line with the increasing population growth and demand of the community.

Policy SHC 1.2 - Coordination for Future Improvements. Partner with Thornton's emergency service providers, facilities, and other organizations to provide a coordinated approach to improving community safety.

Policy SHC 1.3 - Traffic Calming. Encourage and evaluate the use of speed reduction programs as well as physical traffic calming measures such as roundabouts, speed cushions, or others as appropriate to discourage speeding and excessive traffic in neighborhoods.

Goal SHC 2: Promote access to healthy, affordable food.

Policy SHC 2.1 - Local Food Production. Support community gardens, small-scale agriculture, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), the raising of some animals for food purposes, and other efforts to expand local food production in Thornton.

Policy SHC 2.2 - Community Partnerships. Work with local and regional partners to address the community's nutrition needs and expand access to healthy, affordable food for all Thornton residents.

SPECIAL POLICING PROGRAMS

Law enforcement across the nation has taken various initiatives to update their traditional policing model by changing the way the community and police interact. This includes community policing and other community-oriented development programs that aim to use partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address public safety issues.

The Thornton Police Department offers a Citizens Police Academy for community members who are interested in learning more about the department's role in the criminal justice system and the daily work that police officers are tasked with every day. The city also offers a free Dog Walker Watch training program which teaches residents how to recognize suspicious behavior and be vigilant and observant while walking their dogs and to not hesitate to call the police upon seeing concerning activities.

Policy SHC 2.3 - Educational Opportunities.

Support educational opportunities that teach residents about the benefits of a healthy diet, nutrition, food production, food waste reduction, and other related topics.

Policy SHC 2.4 - Food Security. Work with local and regional partners to connect residents to available local, state, and federal food aid programs, and to improve the food security of local families and individuals in the community.



Thornton Fire Department





Goal SHC 3: Provide opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

Policy SHC 3.1 - Interconnected System. Support active lifestyles among residents of all ages and backgrounds by developing and maintaining a well-balanced system of trails, parks, open space, and other recreational facilities.

Policy SHC 3.2 - Education and Outreach. Work with community partners including schools and other health and wellness organizations to increase awareness about the benefits of active lifestyles and resources that are available to the community.

Policy SHC 3.3 - Programs and Facilities. Align city programs and facilities with the specific needs of different parts of the community, allowing for adaptation over time as demographics change.

Goal SHC 4: Identify and mitigate natural and other potential hazards.

Policy SHC 4.1 - Hazard Mitigation. Continue to use the Thornton, Federal Heights, and Northglenn Hazard Mitigation Plan as a framework for identifying and prioritizing the city's actions for future hazard mitigation projects.

Policy SHC 4.2 - Flood Prone Areas. Identify and protect areas that have a high risk of flooding by directing future growth and public/private investments away from these areas with the exception of those that serve hazard mitigation and/or ecological restoration purposes.

Policy SHC 4.3 - Emergency Preparedness. Educate residents about the natural and man-made hazards that pose a potential threat to the community, and ensure that the city and its emergency service providers are well-prepared to respond and recover from these disasters and other emergency events.

Policy SHC 4.4 - Local and Regional Partnerships. Sustain a high level of cooperation and coordination with local and regional agencies in the face of disasters and other emergency events.

COMMUNITY WALKS PROGRAM

The city of Thornton's Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs Department organizes a free monthly walk to provide the community with an opportunity to be active, socially engaged, and enjoy Thornton's trails. These walks vary by distance and offer opportunities to explore different Thornton trails every month.

THORNTON, FEDERAL HEIGHTS, AND NORTHGLENN NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

In 2017, the cities of Thornton, Federal Heights, and Northglenn partnered to develop an up-to-date Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan to help the communities progress towards a more resilient future. A Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) tool was used to identify, assess, and profile each city's overall risk to natural hazards. This assessment served as a foundation for helping identify and prioritize the cities' mitigation goals and their specific action strategies. Through the adoption of this plan, Thornton, Federal Heights, and Northglenn are able to develop more strategic and functional solutions by identifying both long-term goals and near-term actions of the cities to mitigate future hazards. The city of Thornton has committed to actively maintaining the Hazard Mitigation Plan by coordinating a periodic review across city departments of all mitigation actions.

GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Thornton is expected to add approximately 50,000 to 65,000 new residents by 2040. Accommodating this growth will require between 17,000 and 23,000 new homes, as well as a range of jobs and services. The timing, location, and type of growth that occurs in different parts of the community all play a role in the economic health of the city, and in the quality of life of current and future Thornton residents. Established areas of the community have, and will continue to have, very different needs than emerging growth areas from an infrastructure and services standpoint. The types of development and mix of uses that are appropriate in different parts of Thornton will also vary.

A fiscal impact analysis, included as Appendix C, was used as a tool to explore these geographic variables and to “test” potential tradeoffs associated with different land use choices. The resulting analysis was evaluated in the context of the extensive community and stakeholder input received as part of the Comprehensive Plan rewrite process.

The Future Land Use Map, which is a key component of the Growth Framework, reflects an approach that seeks to balance fiscal considerations with forecast housing and employment demand, City Council priorities, and community preferences on the policy focus areas discussed in this chapter.



Chapter 4

4.1 HOW TO USE THE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides a framework to guide future growth and investment so that it enhances the overall quality of life for current and future residents. The Growth Framework helps translate the key concepts embedded in the Vision Themes, Goals, and Policies outlined in Chapter 3: Policy Framework into the land uses and types of places that the community envisions and desires for the future. Based on the Policy Framework, specific Policy Focus Areas relevant to land use choices are outlined in this chapter. The key directions of these focus areas became the Building Blocks upon which two key components of the Growth Framework are based:

- **Future Land Use Map (FLUM).** The Future Land Use Map is comprised of the map in Figure 4-3 and the associated Future Land Use Category descriptions on pages 4.15-4.28 which are used to provide guidance on the type, intensity, and mix of uses that are desired in different parts of the city. The FLUM is also used by city staff to evaluate rezoning requests.
- **Placemaking Guidelines.** The Placemaking Guidelines indicate the city's preferences, but are not requirements. They are used in conjunction with the FLUM as a tool to convey nuanced aspects of individual Future Land Use Categories as they apply to varied community contexts and site considerations in different areas throughout the city. For example, these guidelines can be used when exploring how the mix of uses in a Community Mixed-Use area might be applied in an established area versus an emerging growth area. These guidelines also provide an additional level of guidance about the desired character, mix of uses, anticipated amenities, and look and feel of places.

The Growth Framework should be used as a tool to help city staff, elected and appointed officials, property owners, residents and others plan for, anticipate, evaluate, and make consistent decisions regarding the location, intensity, type and design of development in Thornton. It should also be used to inform planning for infrastructure and public services needed to serve Thornton's growing population, encourage innovative public and private investments over time to enhance the city's image and identity, and create quality spaces for residents to enjoy.



Eastlake at 124th Station



4.2 GROWTH POLICY BACKGROUND

As Thornton has developed and matured over the last 60+ years, the opportunities and challenges associated with the city's growth and development have evolved. The Growth Framework of the 2020 Plan is focused on building a strong foundation for implementation of the Policy Focus Areas determined during Phase 2 of the planning process that are relevant to guiding development in the city throughout the upcoming years: Economic Health, Balanced and Diverse Neighborhoods, Revitalization, and Create and Enhance Destinations.

Eight Building Blocks, identified in the sidebar, were derived from the Policy Focus Areas that hone the decisions guiding future development. These Building Blocks are reflected in the Plan's updated Future Land Use Map and Future Land Use Categories.

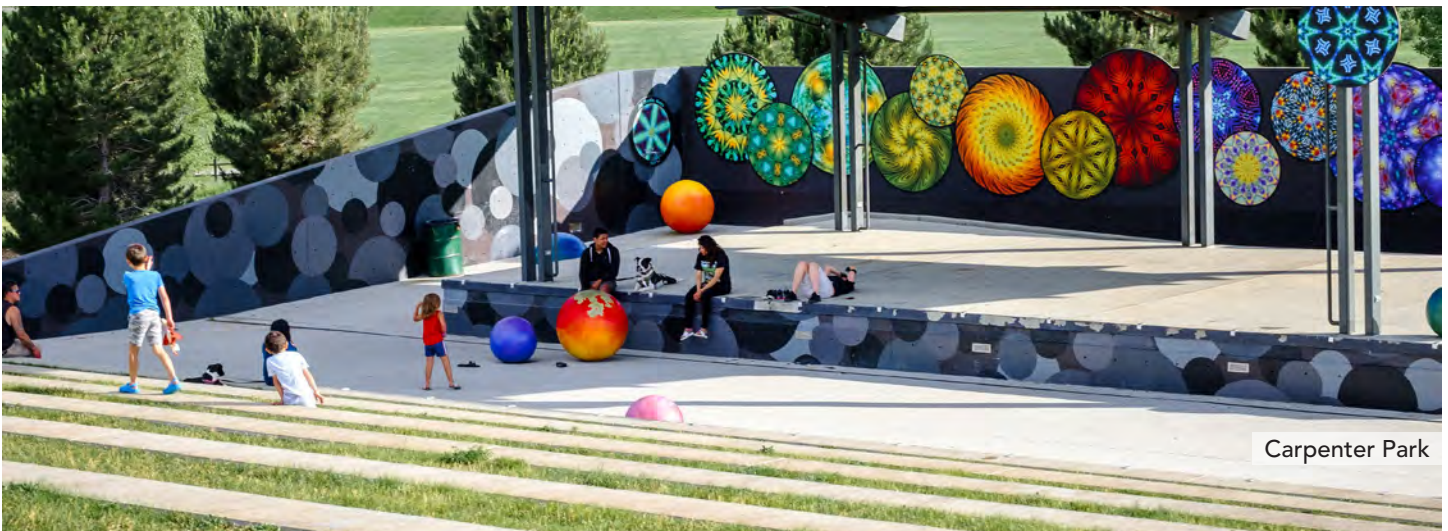
A brief overview of each Policy Focus Area and the associated directions and Building Blocks that are embedded throughout the Comprehensive Plan is provided on the following pages.

Underpinning all the updates to the Growth Framework from the city's previous Comprehensive Plan is the desire to provide both increased predictability and flexibility for property owners, developers, city staff, and elected officials as decisions surrounding growth are made on a daily basis. This balance is achieved by more clearly distinguishing where flexibility will be encouraged in Thornton through the use of mixed-use land use categories, and where the city is seeking to maintain near-term and medium-term opportunities for commercial and employment.

BUILDING BLOCKS

The following "Building Blocks" reflect the direction received from City Council and the community that informed key policy directions and changes to the Future Land Use Map:

1. Retain employment centers to help preserve and create a diversity of jobs in Thornton.
2. Preserve land in prime locations for commercial use in order to support the fiscal health of the city.
3. Re-balance commercial uses with residential uses where necessary.
4. Create Complete Neighborhoods in suitable areas that create local destinations where residents can live, work, and play.
5. Identify areas around existing and future train stations that can support a greater choice of housing, employment, retail, and/or walkable neighborhoods.
6. Expand housing choices and help implement the recommendations of Thornton's 2019 Housing Needs Assessment by allowing different types of housing to be built in more parts of the city.
7. Help ensure the vision of Thornton's 2017 Parks and Open Space Master Plan by designating sufficient recreation opportunities throughout the city on the Future Land Use Map.
8. Development intensity should taper as it approaches the South Platte River and the Riverdale Road scenic byway.



Carpenter Park

POLICY FOCUS AREA - ECONOMIC HEALTH



Dynamic Metal Fabricators, Thornton

Why it is Important

The city of Thornton has traditionally been a predominately residential community with supporting retail and service jobs. In recent years, the city set out to not only proactively attract retail businesses, but to grow employment in primary industries and attract additional entertainment and cultural assets to diversify the economy and create more opportunities for residents to live, work, and play in the community.

In 2017, the city adopted a jobs-to-housing ratio goal of 0.75 to support the preservation of employment land. This policy has been tested in recent years through an increase in requests to convert commercial and employment land to residential uses. However, expanding employment opportunities and creating a balance of residential and non-residential uses in Thornton remain a priority.

Key Directions

The Growth Framework provides opportunities for a mix of employment and commercial services in Thornton by:

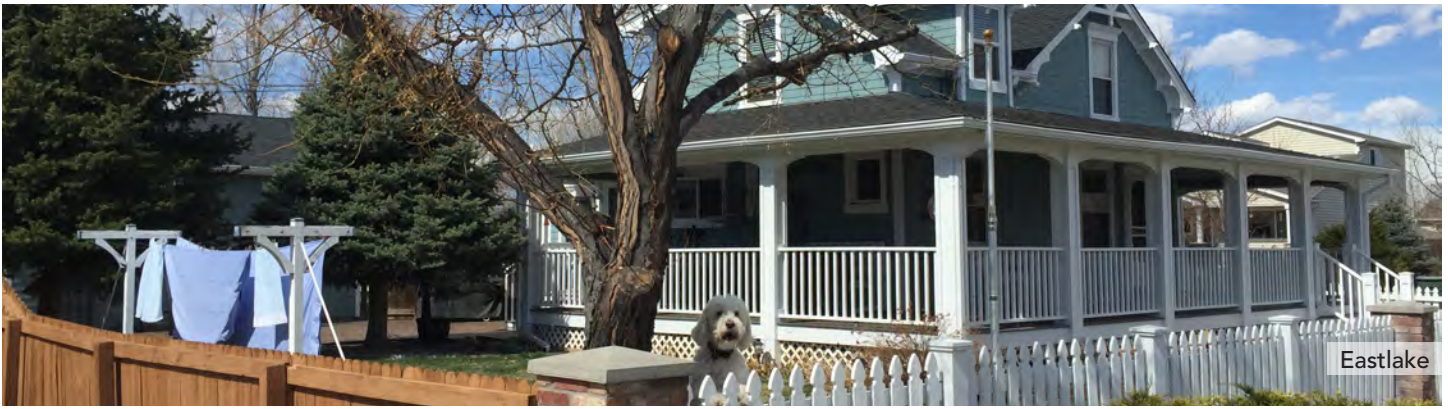
- Maintaining distinct categories for employment uses (no residential) to protect long-term opportunities.
- Continuing to allow large distribution warehouses as a subset of Employment Centers in targeted locations to be responsive to near-term demand, while supporting the transition of these uses to more job intensive employment uses (e.g., office) as the market evolves.
- Establishing a hierarchy of mixed-use categories to clearly define where the flexibility to provide live, work, play opportunities will be supported, and at what scale.
- Shifting some established commercial areas to Community Mixed-Use to encourage revitalization, while retaining a more traditional commercial-only designation (no residential) in other areas where long-term retention is desired.

RELEVANT BUILDING BLOCKS

1. Retain employment centers to help preserve and create a diversity of jobs in Thornton.
2. Preserve land in prime locations for commercial use in order to support the fiscal health of the city.
3. Re-balance commercial uses with residential uses where necessary.



POLICY FOCUS AREA - BALANCED AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS



Why it is Important

Single-family detached homes have accounted for the vast majority of the city's residential growth. In recent years, Thornton has seen more diverse housing types, such as townhomes and condos, and desires to continue this trend.

Consistent with the larger Denver Metropolitan Area, the cost of housing has risen significantly in Thornton. Housing affordability was a common concern heard throughout the outreach process. To accommodate changing demographics and market demands, increasing housing diversity throughout Thornton is a key priority for the community.

Key Directions

The Growth Framework helps advance this priority by:

- Expanding the range of densities and housing types that are accommodated in Single-Family Neighborhoods, Mixed Residential Neighborhoods, and Mixed-Use Neighborhoods.
- Incorporating pockets of high-density residential development as an integrated part of mixed-use designations rather than as standalone apartment complexes.
- Clearly defining where residential will be supported as part of commercial centers and aligning these areas with opportunities to promote revitalization, support transit, and create/enhance placemaking.
- Incorporating guidance for key Community Destinations, Complete Neighborhoods, and Activity Centers to address variations in the overall mix of uses, density, and other characteristics.
- Including guidance for non-managed residential areas to improve or maintain the neighborhood quality.

RELEVANT BUILDING BLOCKS

4. Create Complete Neighborhoods in suitable areas that create local destinations where residents can live, work, and play.
5. Identify areas around existing and future train stations that can support a greater choice of housing, employment, retail, and/or walkable neighborhoods.
6. Expand housing choices and help implement the recommendations of Thornton's 2019 Housing Needs Assessment by allowing different types of housing to be built in more parts of the city.

POLICY FOCUS AREA - REVITALIZATION



Thornton Shopping Center

Why it is Important

Nearly two-thirds of Thornton's Future Growth Area is occupied by existing development, and many of these areas are more than fifty years old. As a result, future growth in Thornton will be accommodated through infill, redevelopment, and greenfield development. Maintaining the quality of established areas is also an important consideration as many areas need infrastructure and other improvements, lack services and amenities, and are generally in need of reinvestment.

The city has designated urban renewal areas, adopted area-specific plans, and taken many other steps to encourage revitalization in some of the established areas of the city, but infill and redevelopment activity to date has been limited. Revitalization of established areas of the community continues to be a key priority, as does the need for better transit access, sidewalk and trail enhancements, access to arts and cultural/educational programs and amenities, and new/improved community space.

Key Directions

The Growth Framework seeks to encourage revitalization of commercial property and guide public improvements throughout the city by:

- Developing supporting Policies and implementation Strategies to encourage/incentivize desired improvements in specified areas.
- Creating area-specific plans to support urban renewal areas where needed.
- Design guidelines
- Modified development standards in redevelopment areas

RELEVANT BUILDING BLOCKS

1. Retain employment centers to help preserve and create a diversity of jobs in Thornton.
2. Preserve land in prime locations for commercial use in order to support the fiscal health of the city.
3. Re-balance commercial uses with residential uses where necessary.



POLICY FOCUS AREA - CREATE AND ENHANCE DESTINATIONS



Why it is Important

The purpose of placemaking is to create destinations and enhance Thornton's identity as a great place to live. This is a common desire and topic of interest that resonates with many community members.

Destinations provide residents with recreation, social gathering, and entertainment options near their homes. Some destinations draw people from surrounding communities. Many types of gathering spaces and destinations exist in the community today and have the potential to be further enhanced.

Key Directions

The Growth Framework seeks to create new, and enhance existing, destinations in Thornton by:

- Identifying different opportunities for placemaking.
- Encouraging the flexibility needed to foster creativity and incentivize private investment.
- Clearly communicating the characteristics that contribute to a successful destination.

RELEVANT BUILDING BLOCKS

4. Create Complete Neighborhoods in suitable areas that create local destinations where residents can live, work, and play.
5. Identify areas around existing and future train stations that can support a greater choice of housing, employment, retail, and/or walkable neighborhoods.
7. Help ensure the vision of Thornton's 2017 Parks and Open Space Master Plan by designating sufficient recreation opportunities throughout the city on the Future Land Use Map.
8. Development intensity should taper as it approaches the South Platte River and the Riverdale Road scenic byway.

4.3 FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

The Future Land Use Map encompasses the Future Land Use Map on Figure 4-3 and the associated Future Land Use Categories described on pages 4.15-4.28. The FLUM serves as a tool to guide future development within the city and its Future Growth Area by communicating a shared vision about how and where the city will grow over the next 10 to 20 years. It is also used to convey the different types of places and land uses that are envisioned in various parts of Thornton as well as unincorporated land in Adams and Weld Counties.

The FLUM identifies where it is desirable to:

- Retain existing uses,
- Preserve or create opportunities for specific types of uses in the future, and/or
- Reinforce and enhance the character of an existing area.

The FLUM encourages a mix of uses to support the community's goals related to housing diversity, access to services, placemaking, neighborhood revitalization, and other quality of life considerations.

Each Future Land Use Category includes an intent statement that identifies the desired characteristics of the area and Primary and Supporting Uses.

Primary Uses. Within each Future Land Use Category, the Primary Uses are intended to be predominant. Primary Uses reflect either existing or desired land uses (or both) and are based on considerations such as location, adjacent uses, and other factors. These uses define and enhance the built character of an area.

Primary Uses reflect the need to maintain a focus on responsible planning for a balanced mix of uses throughout Thornton, particularly to account for the fiscal impacts of land use decisions as the city approaches buildout.

Supporting Uses. Supporting Uses contribute to the overall vitality and functionality of Thornton's neighborhoods, centers, and corridors. These uses are not intended to be the predominant use in any Future Land Use Category. The amount of area devoted to Supporting Uses (and the overall mix of uses) will vary by location and category. Not all of the identified Supporting Uses will be viable or appropriate on a given property. Rather, they should be considered within the broader community context

HOW TO USE THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map should be used by elected and appointed officials and city staff to inform decisions regarding future development within the city and its growth area. The FLUM is used in conjunction with the Thornton Development Code to evaluate development applications, such as zoning requests. Where necessary, the city's Development Code and other city standards will need to be evaluated and amended to conform to the desired characteristics of the land use categories and placemaking criteria.

The Future Land Use Map should guide future investment in public facilities and infrastructure, and be used to evaluate the fiscal impacts of future land use decisions. The goals and policies set forth in Chapter 3: Policy Framework are intended to support the Future Land Use Map. These may provide supplemental policy guidance to ensure future decisions are aligned with the core visions and values of the community.

and specific site conditions. Supporting Uses are designated for the following purposes:

- Coordinate with Primary Uses to enhance the built character of an area and help achieve broader community goals consistent with the intent of a particular land use category
- Acknowledge the presence of existing uses in a given area

Locational criteria, compatibility with adjacent uses, access to services and amenities, and other considerations may apply. Refer to the criteria of the specific Future Land Use Category. The Placemaking Guidelines also provide guidance, where appropriate, on the desired mix of uses and intended character for certain mixed-use areas.

Other considerations.

- Places of worship and K-12 schools are allowed in all Future Land Use Categories as regulated by state and federal law.
- Development within the floodplain is governed by Thornton's floodplain ordinance.
- Accessory dwelling units are allowed per the Thornton Development Code.



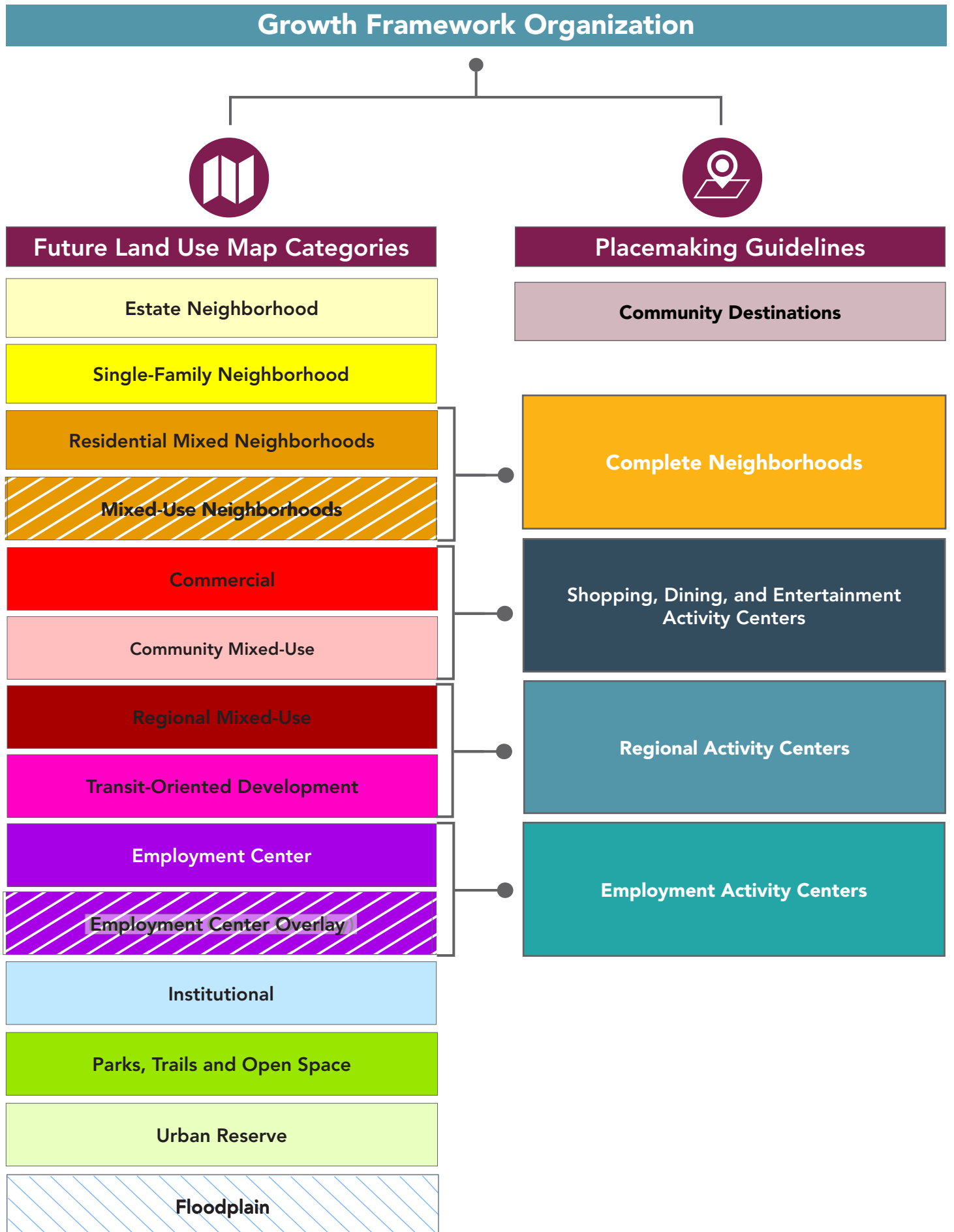


Figure 4-1: Parts of the Growth Framework

Land Use*	Intent	Uses
Estate Neighborhoods (EN)	Reserve low intensity areas in the city for larger lot residential development and agricultural uses to preserve the rural environment and natural areas. In some cases, the intent is to preserve scenic vistas along the South Platte River and protect wildlife habitat.	Primary Uses: Single-family detached homes, agricultural uses Density: 1 du/acre or lower
Single-Family Neighborhoods (SFN)	Provide areas for low density residential development with recreational amenities.	Primary Uses: Single-family detached homes and duplexes Supporting Uses: Associated recreational amenities and parks Density: Typically 1-8 du/acre, existing development may be higher
Mixed Residential Neighborhoods (MRN)	Expand the range of housing densities and types within this category to increase residential choices for the community. These areas should provide a mix of predominantly medium to high density housing types that are well-integrated, walkable, and connected with close proximity to services and amenities.	Primary Uses: Duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, multifamily, senior housing, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices, and existing manufactured housing communities. Also included are small single-family detached units (9 du/acre or higher) Supporting Uses: Single-family detached (less than 9 du/acre) and associated recreational amenities Density: Typically 5-18 du/acre (higher may be allowed with Council approval), existing development may be higher
Mixed-Use Neighborhoods (MUN)	Expand the range of housing densities and types in close proximity to commercial uses to increase lifestyle options within the community. These areas should provide a mix of predominantly medium to high density housing types with close proximity to services and amenities and with well-placed commercial uses that are well-integrated, walkable, and connected.	Primary Uses: Duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, multifamily, senior housing, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices, and existing manufactured housing communities. Also included are small single-family detached units (9 du/acre or higher) Supporting Uses: Small-scale commercial (required), single-family detached (less than 9 du/acre), and associated recreational amenities Density: Typically 5-18 du/acre (higher may be allowed with Council approval), existing development may be higher
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)	Create a vibrant mix of uses in a compact and pedestrian-oriented environment that take advantage of transit options and enable these areas to function as gathering spaces for surrounding residents and visitors to the area.	Primary Uses: Varies by location, but includes a mix of pedestrian-scale commercial, office, employment, retail, and residential uses Supporting Uses: Cultural facilities, gathering spaces, and community-oriented uses Density: Vary by location, generally transit-supportive densities
Community Mixed-Use (CMU)	Create primarily commercial areas to provide products and services to surrounding areas, while in certain circumstances providing opportunities for the integration of residential uses. The intention is to support the revitalization of established areas of Thornton through infill, redevelopment and adaptive reuse, and to improve access to services and amenities for surrounding neighborhoods.	Primary Uses: Commercial uses such as supermarkets, restaurants, retail, offices, medical facilities, service providers, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices Supporting Uses: The following uses only with Council approval: townhomes and multifamily. Supporting uses cannot exceed 25% of the total land area of the site proposed to be developed. Density: Vary by location
Commercial (COM)	Create places throughout the city where commercial uses can be located to provide products and services to surrounding areas. This category is intended to preserve opportunities for commercial uses over the long-term to maintain the fiscal viability for the city.	Primary Uses: Commercial uses such as supermarkets and big-box retail, restaurants, offices, service providers, medical facilities, and nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices
Regional Mixed-Use (RMU)	Develop areas that attract people from Thornton and the surrounding region. These should include large format office, retail, services, and recreational attractions. High density residential is intended as a supporting use in order to help activate these areas throughout the day.	Primary Uses: Large and smaller format retail, office, medical, auto sales, hotels, restaurants, and indoor and outdoor entertainment uses that attract visitors from around the city and region Supporting Uses: Multifamily and other residential uses greater than 15 du/acre, senior housing, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices, and supporting non-residential uses Density: Vary by location
Employment Center (EC)	As Thornton grows, an expanding and diverse range of employment options are vital to the balanced growth of the city. It is necessary to provide areas where primary employers can be located. These should complement and enhance the image and identity of the city. This category is not intended to respond quickly to the market, but instead to reserve land for current and future employers to locate in Thornton.	Primary Uses: Business parks, corporate campuses, and light manufacturing that accommodates a mix of office types and sizes, as well as private schools or universities and other similar uses that provide employment Supporting Uses: Supporting retail uses such as hotels, restaurants, and other small-scale commercial uses
Employment Center - Warehousing Overlay (EC-W)	In select locations, land has been set aside to accommodate the need for large distribution warehouses where potential impacts on surrounding areas are minimal.	Primary Uses: Business parks, corporate campuses, and light manufacturing that accommodate a mix of office types and sizes, as well as private schools or universities and other similar uses that provide employment. Additionally, large distribution warehouses Supporting Uses: Supporting retail uses such as hotels, restaurants, and other small-scale commercial uses
Institutional (INS)	Provides locations for city-related uses and public libraries	Primary Uses: Government, civic, and other community facilities such as libraries and public safety facilities
Parks, Trails and Open Space (PTO)	Provide places for people to recreate, interact with nature, and attend public events.	Primary Uses: Public and private parks, trails, swimming pools, golf courses, open space, public recreation centers, and reservoirs Supporting Uses: Libraries, public performing arts centers, and other recreational uses
Urban Reserve (UR)	To provide an interim land use designation for the portions of southwestern Weld County that are located within Thornton's Future Growth Area. The intent would be to continue the Big Dry Creek regional trail and open space corridor northward.	
Floodplain (FP)	To acknowledge designated floodplains and reduce associated risks	Primary Uses: Areas that are prone to periodic flooding and require additional site analysis and mitigation actions/strategies Supporting Uses: Trails and other recreational uses, agriculture

Figure 4-2: Future Land Use Categories

*See specific Future Land Use Categories (pages 4.15-4.28) for full details.





FUTURE LAND USE

Adopted by Thornton City Council: July 15, 2020

Revised by Administrative Directive C.D. 2026-001, Approved 8/3/26

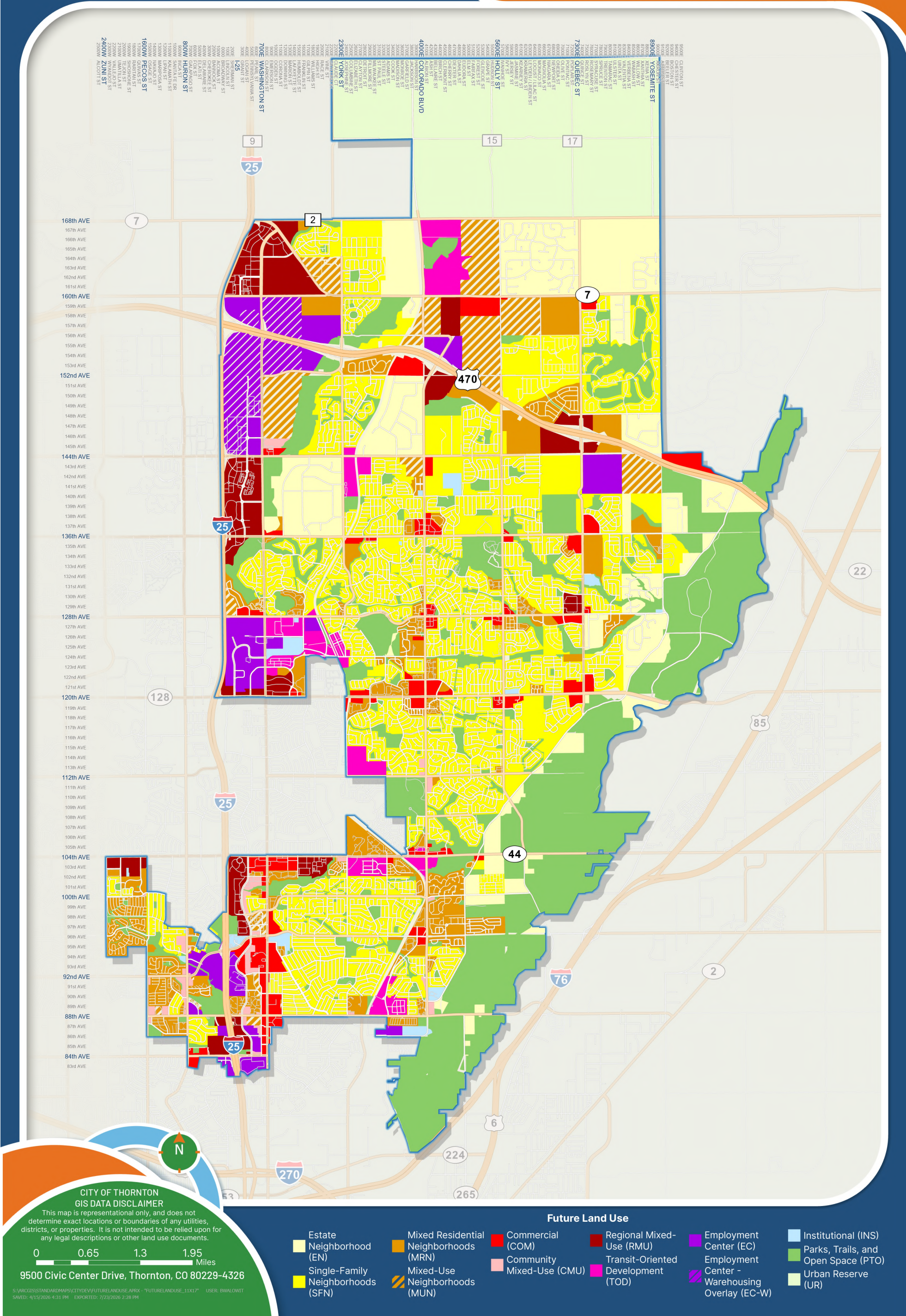


Figure 4-3: Future Land Use Map



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Estate Neighborhoods (EN)



Intent: Reserve low intensity areas in the city for larger lot residential development and agricultural uses to preserve the rural environment and natural areas. In some cases, the intent is to preserve scenic vistas along Riverdale Road and the South Platte River corridor. This also serves to protect wildlife habitat in the area.

Primary Uses: Single-family detached homes, agricultural uses

Density/Scale: Lots shall be one or more acres in size and residential density shall be no greater than one unit per acre, not including Accessory Dwelling Units.

Characteristics:

- Includes a number of unincorporated enclaves in Adams County (e.g., Wadley Farms)
- Supports the conservation of open lands, floodplain and other sensitive natural areas, and agricultural land



Single-Family Neighborhoods (SFN)



Intent: Provide areas for low density residential development with recreational amenities.

Primary Uses: Single-family detached homes and duplexes

Supporting Uses: Associated recreational amenities and parks

Density/Scale: Typically 1-8 dwelling units per acre, although some pockets of existing development may be higher

Characteristics:

- Other dwelling types may be allowed as part of a Planned Development

Mixed Residential Neighborhoods (MRN)



Intent: Expand the range of housing densities and types within this category to increase residential choices for the community. These areas should provide a mix of predominantly medium to high density housing types that are well-integrated, walkable, and connected with close proximity to services and amenities.

The MRN category is not intended to respond quickly to the marketplace, but rather to create integrated land use developments with common landscaping, architectural, and design elements.

Primary Uses: Duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, multifamily, senior housing, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices, and existing manufactured housing communities. Also included are small single-family detached units (9 du/acre or higher).

Supporting Uses: Single-family detached (less than 9 du/acre) and associated recreational amenities

Density/Scale: Typically 5-18 dwelling units per acre, although some pockets of existing development may be higher. Higher densities may be allowed with City Council approval.

Characteristics:

- The site shall contain at least two (preferably three or more) distinct types of housing
- Developer should provide a broad land development plan that shows the location and interconnection of uses across adjacent MRN parcels to demonstrate how the area will achieve a well-integrated development and how, potentially, a mix of land uses is achieved
- Has a well-connected pedestrian, bike, and street network that connects within and throughout the neighborhoods
- Development, in particular higher density uses, should transition in scale, intensity and density toward surrounding lower density neighborhoods
- Exceptions to the required on-site mix of uses will be considered for small infill development sites, primarily in the southern part of the city, adjacent to other existing housing types, services and other uses. This is not intended to apply to greenfield sites because these areas do not have the same existing mix of uses, services and amenities as older parts of the city.

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Refer to pages 4.38-4.45 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development qualities that are envisioned for different types of Complete Neighborhoods.



Mixed-Use Neighborhoods (MUN)



Intent: Expand the range of housing densities and types in close proximity to commercial uses to increase lifestyle options within the community. These areas should provide a mix of predominantly medium to high density housing types with close proximity to services and amenities and with well-placed commercial uses that are well-integrated, walkable, and connected.

The MUN category is not intended to respond quickly to the marketplace, but rather to create integrated land use developments with common landscaping, architectural, and design elements.

Primary Uses: Duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, multifamily, senior housing, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices, and existing manufactured housing communities. Also included are small single-family detached units (9 du/acre or higher).

Supporting Uses: Small-scale commercial (required), single-family detached (less than 9 du/acre) and associated recreational amenities

Density/Scale: Typically 5-18 dwelling units per acre, although some pockets of existing development may be higher. Higher densities may be allowed with City Council approval.

Characteristics:

- Commercial component is required
- In addition to the commercial, the site shall contain at least two (preferably three or more) distinct types of housing
- Developer should provide a broad land development plan that shows the location and interconnection of uses across adjacent MUN parcels to demonstrate how the area will achieve a well-integrated development and how, potentially, a mix of land uses is achieved
- Has a well-connected pedestrian, bike, and street network that connects within and throughout the neighborhoods
- Development, in particular higher density uses, should transition in scale, intensity and density toward surrounding lower density neighborhoods
- Exceptions to the required on-site mix of uses will be considered for small infill development sites, primarily in the southern part of the city, adjacent to other existing housing types, services and other uses. This is not intended to apply to greenfield sites because these areas do not have the same existing mix of uses, services and amenities as older parts of the city.

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Refer to pages 4.38-4.45 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development qualities that are envisioned for different types of Complete Neighborhoods.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)



Intent: Create a vibrant mix of uses in a compact and pedestrian-oriented environment that takes advantage of transit options and enables these areas to function as gathering spaces for surrounding residents and visitors to the area.

Primary Uses: Varies by location, but includes a mix of pedestrian-scale commercial, office, employment, retail, and residential uses

Supporting Uses: Cultural facilities, gathering spaces, and community-oriented uses

Density/Scale: Transit-supportive densities vary by location, but generally are higher intensity in nature

Characteristics:

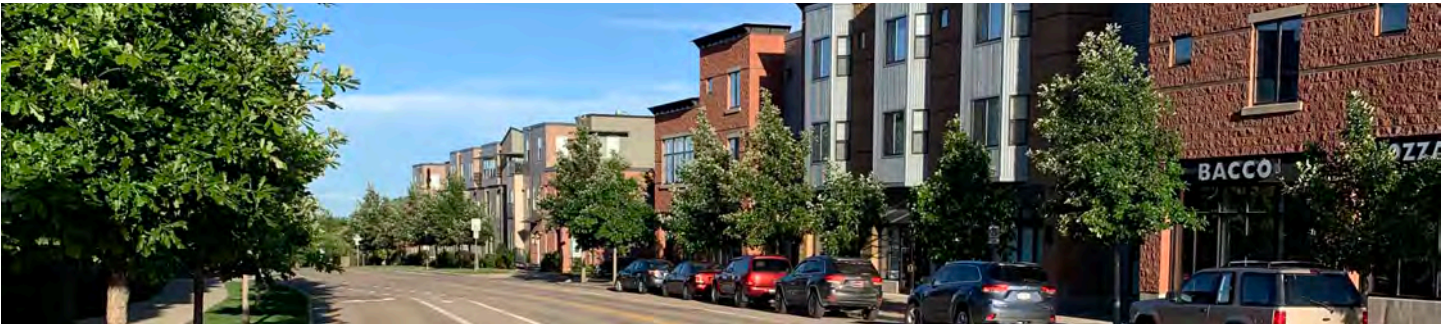
- Developer should provide a broad land development plan that shows the location and interconnection of uses across adjacent TOD parcels to demonstrate how the area will achieve a well-integrated development and how, potentially, a mix of land uses is achieved. Refer to the Station Area Master Plans (STAMP) or Subarea Plans, if available, for more detailed guidance. In locations where a STAMP or Subarea Plan has not been adopted, the developer should provide a broad land development plan and refer to the Placemaking Guidelines in this Comprehensive Plan
- Concentrations of retail, office, restaurant, educational, civic, and entertainment uses encourage pedestrian activity
- Vertical integration of uses is strongly encouraged adjacent to rail and BRT stations
- Transitions in density and intensity are required adjacent to established single-family neighborhoods
- Could be located in areas without train service, but where there are other strong transit connections

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Refer to pages 4.46 and 4.59-4.66 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development qualities that are envisioned for different types of Regional Activity Centers.



Community Mixed-Use (CMU)



Intent: Create primarily commercial areas to provide products and services to surrounding areas, while in certain circumstances providing opportunities for the integration of residential uses. The intention is to support the revitalization of established areas of Thornton through infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse, and to improve access to services and amenities for surrounding neighborhoods. The CMU category is not intended to respond quickly to the marketplace, but rather to create integrated land use developments with common landscaping, architectural, and design elements.

Primary Uses: Commercial uses such as supermarkets, restaurants, retail, offices, medical facilities, service providers, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices

Supporting Uses: The following uses only with Council approval: townhomes and multifamily. These supporting uses cannot exceed 25% of the total land area of the site proposed to be developed. Residential uses that closely follow the Placemaking Guidelines are more likely to be considered appropriate in the CMU category.

Density/Scale: Densities will vary by location with higher intensity developments located closer to major thoroughfares, tapering down towards surrounding, less-intensive developments; buildings heights will typically be between 2 and 5 stories.

Characteristics:

- Developer should provide a broad land development plan that shows the location and interconnection of uses across adjacent CMU parcels to demonstrate how the area will achieve a well-integrated development and how, potentially, a mix of land uses is achieved
- Targeted infill and/or redevelopment is encouraged as a way to reduce surface parking lots, introduce complementary uses, and promote a more pedestrian-oriented environment
- Preserve prominent corners and other highly visible intersections for retail and other commercial uses that will encourage high-level ground floor activity
- No supporting use may be established before a primary use is built. However, based on extenuating circumstances (for example environmental, topographic, site configuration, historic, or other physical limitations), City Council may approve or conditionally approve a supporting use to be built first if the intent of this category is met and assurance is given that the primary uses will be built within a certain period of time
- Buffering, screening, and tapering intensity are required adjacent to residential neighborhoods

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

See pages 4.46-4.52 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development qualities that are envisioned for different types of Shopping, Dining, Entertainment Centers.

Commercial (COM)



Intent: Create places throughout the city where commercial uses can be located to provide products and services to surrounding areas. This category is intended to preserve opportunities for commercial uses over the long-term to maintain the fiscal viability for the city.

Primary Uses: Commercial uses such as supermarkets, big-box retail, restaurants, offices, service providers, medical facilities, and nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices.

Characteristics:

- Provides safe and direct pedestrian/bicycle connections throughout the center and to adjacent neighborhoods
- Buffering, screening, and tapering intensity are required adjacent to residential neighborhoods

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

See pages 4.46-4.52 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development qualities that are envisioned for different types of Shopping, Dining, Entertainment Centers



Regional Mixed-Use (RMU)



Intent: Develop areas that attract people from Thornton and the surrounding region. These should include large format office, retail, services, and recreational attractions. High density residential is intended as a supporting use in order to help activate these areas throughout the day.

Primary Uses: Large and smaller format retail, office, medical, auto sales, hotels, restaurants, and indoor and outdoor entertainment uses that attract visitors from around the city and region

Supporting Uses: Multifamily and other residential uses greater than 15 du/acre, senior housing, nursing homes, convalescent homes and hospices, and supporting non-residential uses

Density/Scale: Densities will vary by location. Building heights will typically be between 2-6 stories, but may be higher for proposed projects that provide a major opportunity for enhancing the city's image and identity.

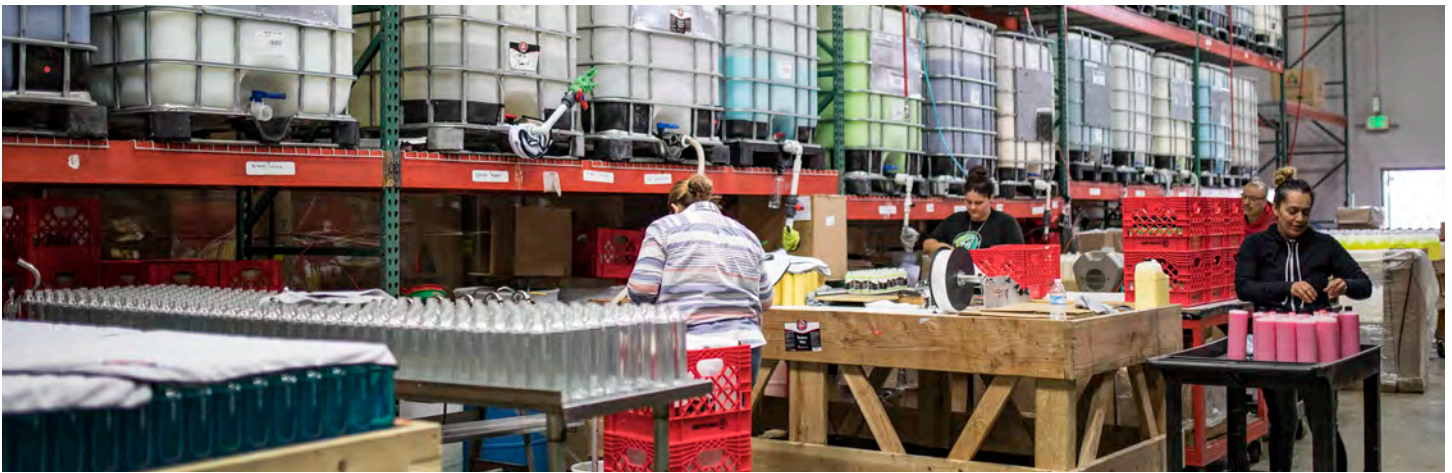
Characteristics:

- High visibility from I-25 and E-470
- Developer should provide a broad land development plan that shows the location and interconnection of uses across adjacent RMU parcels to demonstrate how the area will achieve a well-integrated development and how, potentially, a mix of land uses is achieved
- Targeted infill and/or redevelopment is encouraged in older centers as a way to reduce surface parking lots, introduce complementary uses, and promote a more pedestrian-oriented environment
- Preserve prominent corners and other highly visible intersections for retail and other commercial uses that will encourage high-level ground floor activity
- No supporting use may be established before a primary use is built
- Buffering, screening and tapering intensity to surrounding uses required

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Refer to pages 4.46 and 4.59-4.64 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development qualities that are envisioned for different types of Regional Activity Centers.

Employment Center (EC)



Intent: As Thornton grows, an expanding and diverse range of employment options are vital to the balanced growth of the city. It is necessary to provide areas where primary employers can be located. These should complement and enhance the image and identity of the city. This category is not intended to respond quickly to the market, but instead to reserve land for current and future employers to locate in Thornton.

Primary Uses: Business parks, corporate campuses, and light manufacturing that accommodates a mix of office types and sizes, as well as private schools or universities and other similar uses that provide employment

Supporting Uses: Supporting retail uses such as hotels, restaurants, and other small-scale commercial uses

Density/Scale: Will vary by location with higher intensity developments sited along I-25 and E-470

Characteristics:

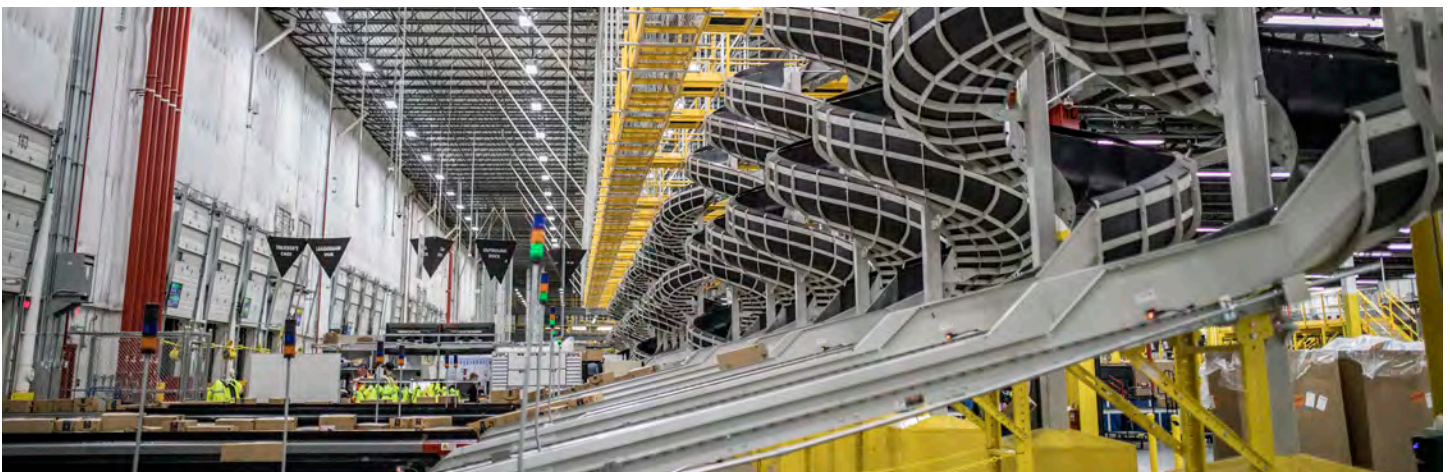
- Offer the largest concentration of employment within the city with access and visibility to major transportation routes (I-25/E-470)
- Supported by safe and direct pedestrian/bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods and supporting services
- Buffering, screening, and tapering intensity to surrounding uses required
- Does not allow large distribution warehouses

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Refer to pages 4.46 and 4.53-4.58 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development characteristics that are envisioned for Employment Centers.



Employment Center - Warehousing Overlay (EC-W)



Intent: In select locations, land has been set aside to accommodate the need for large distribution warehouses where potential impacts on surrounding areas are minimal.

Primary Uses: Business parks, corporate campuses, and light manufacturing that accommodates a mix of office types and sizes, as well as private schools or universities and other similar uses that provide employment. Additionally, large distribution warehouses are permitted as a primary use.

Supporting Uses: Supporting retail uses such as hotels, restaurants, and other small-scale commercial uses

Density/Scale: Will vary by location

Characteristics:

- Large distribution warehouses and light manufacturing uses should be located within close proximity of a major roadway corridor and provide good access and efficient movement for heavy truck traffic
- Truck terminals that are not specifically associated with a company's distribution warehouse building are not appropriate in this category
- Includes uses that typically require larger sites and have greater impact on surrounding areas/uses
- Buffering, screening, and tapering intensity to surrounding uses required
- Overlay is intended to serve near-term demand; however, the transition of distribution warehousing uses to more job intensive employment uses will be supported as the market evolves

PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

Refer to pages 4.46 and 4.53-4.58 for more detailed guidelines regarding the preferred mix of uses, building orientation/layout, connectivity, and other development characteristics that are envisioned for Employment Centers.

Institutional (INS)



Intent: Provides locations for city-related uses and public libraries

Primary Uses: Government, civic, and other community facilities such as libraries and public safety facilities



Parks, Trails and Open Space (PTO)



Intent: Provide places for people to recreate, interact with nature, and attend public events.

Primary Uses: Public and private parks, trails, swimming pools, golf courses, open space, public recreation centers, and reservoirs

Supporting Uses: Libraries, public performing arts centers, and other recreational uses

Size: Varies by location

Characteristics:

- Generally owned and managed by public agencies—primarily the city of Thornton and Adams County—but can also include privately owned areas
- These areas serve many functions including: providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, preserving scenic views, providing a buffer between uses, protecting wildlife habitat and corridors, and preserving the capacity and water quality of the storm drainage system

Urban Reserve (UR)



Intent: To provide an interim land use designation for the portions of southwestern Weld County that are located within Thornton's Future Growth Area. The intent would be to continue the Big Dry Creek regional trail and open space corridor northward.

Additional Information: The decision whether to expand into this area will be made at a later date. If this occurs, part of Weld County within Thornton's Future Growth Area is expected to be urban in nature with a mix of residential densities, supporting commercial uses, and employment. Fiscal implications will be considered when annexing into Weld County.



Floodplain (FP)



Intent: To acknowledge designated floodplains and reduce associated risks.

Primary Uses: Areas that are prone to periodic flooding and require additional site analysis and mitigation actions/strategies

Supporting Uses: Trails and other recreational uses, agriculture

Size: Varies by location

Characteristics:

- Supports the conservation of the South Platte River corridor, the Big Dry Creek Corridor and other river corridors, as well as the Riverdale Road Scenic Byway
- Provides opportunity to create additional linkages to the parks and open space system in Thornton and the surrounding region
- Additional site analysis and mitigation strategies may be required for existing and future development

4.4 PLACEMAKING GUIDELINES

This section is a supplement to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) that aids in fostering the sense of place that Thornton residents have articulated in their vision for the city of Thornton's future. Creating a unique identity and image in Thornton will require a focus on enhancing existing assets in the community, while also supporting the creation of new amenities and destinations. In this way, the community's vision can be realized through incremental changes in different parts of the city over time.

To support these objectives, this section addresses three different types of places: Community Destinations, Complete Neighborhoods, and Activity Centers. Opportunities for each are identified, along with a discussion of preferred characteristics. Concept diagrams are also provided for each type to help illustrate key concepts and convey the community's vision. This information should be used as a tool to inform public and private investment in different locations, and to guide future updates to the Development Code.

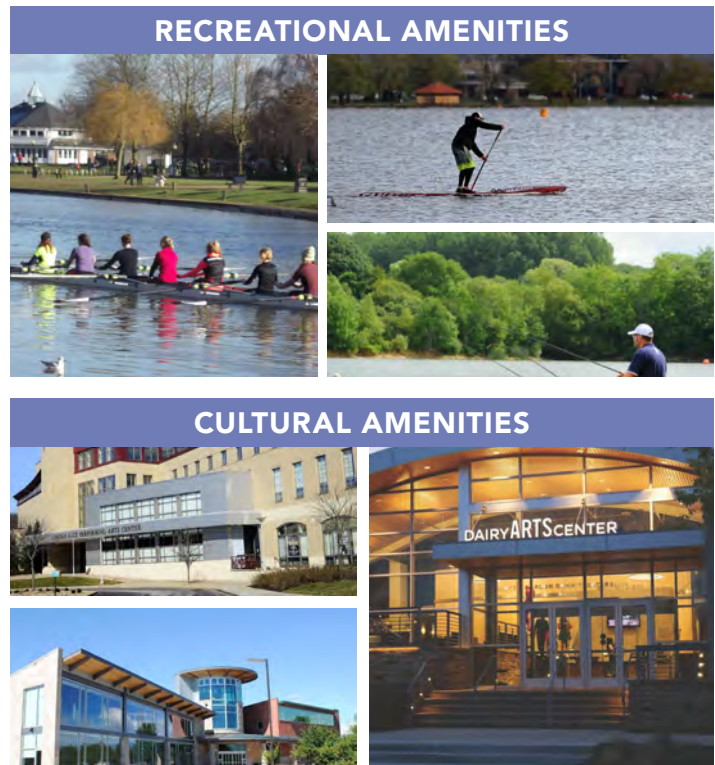
COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

During the Comprehensive Plan outreach process, the community identified recreational and cultural amenities as vital to their quality of life and a priority for future improvements. These amenities include accessible public spaces for users of all ages and abilities, places to uniquely engage with nature and the environment, and cultural hubs. It is in these types of places where local residents feel that uses and spaces are reflective of a uniquely Thornton identity and sense of place.

Thornton has been very successful in planning for and implementing high quality recreational amenities throughout the city. However, the need for additional focus on unique cultural and city facilities, such as a performing arts center or theater, was emphasized during the Comprehensive Plan rewrite process. These will enhance the quality of life of Thornton residents while also having the potential to draw visitors from elsewhere in the region.

However, it is recognized that there are other destination types throughout Thornton that are primarily driven by private investment, such as the outlet mall. These types of destinations are addressed later in this chapter. Identifying these destinations can inform the community of the range of amenities that are available. The Comprehensive Plan can also help encourage public investment in and expansion of these areas.

Locations of key recreational and cultural amenities are shown on Figure 4-4 on page 4.30.



► EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

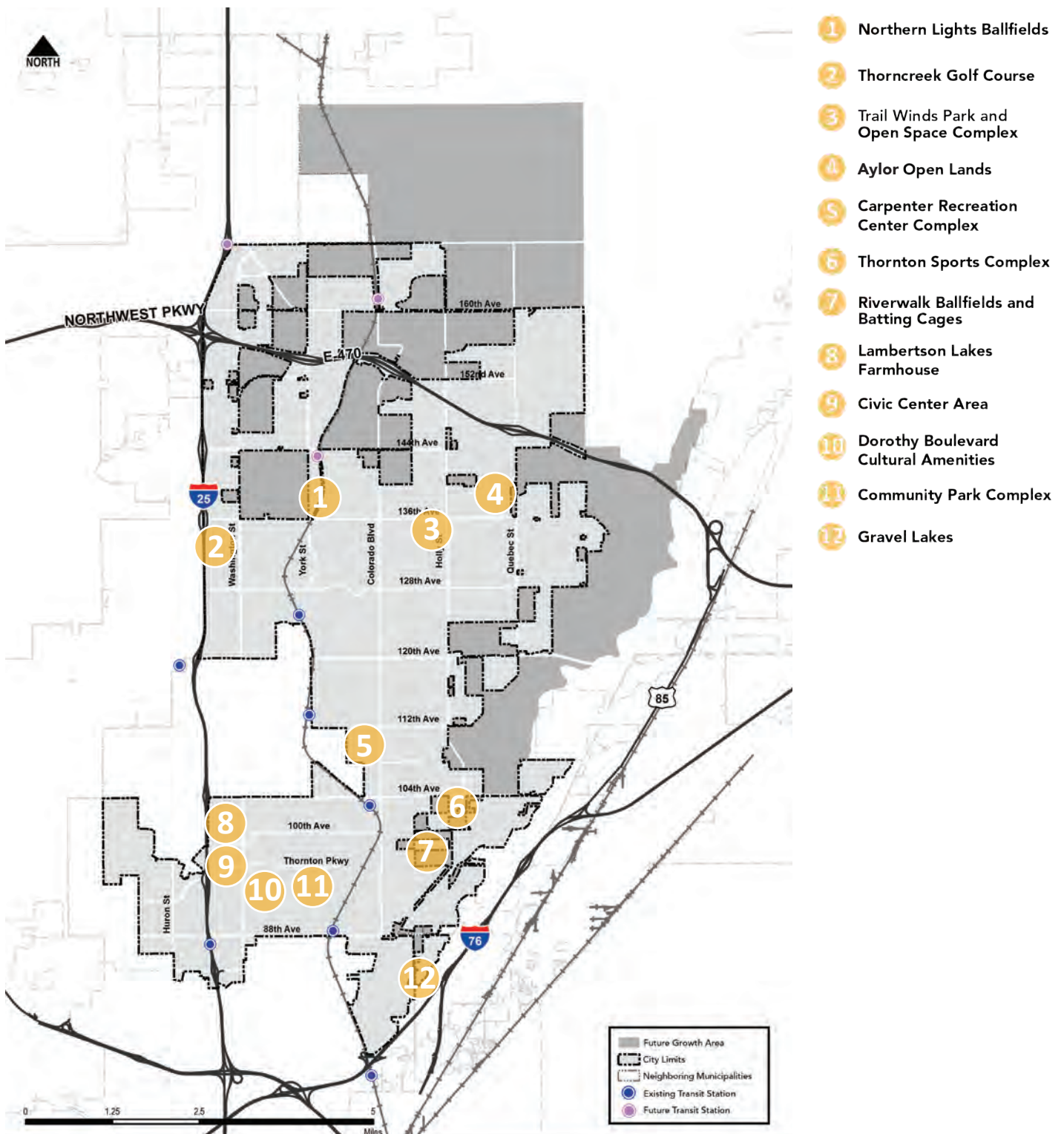


Figure 4-4: Existing and Future Community Destinations Map

EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

***Carpenter Recreation Center Complex***

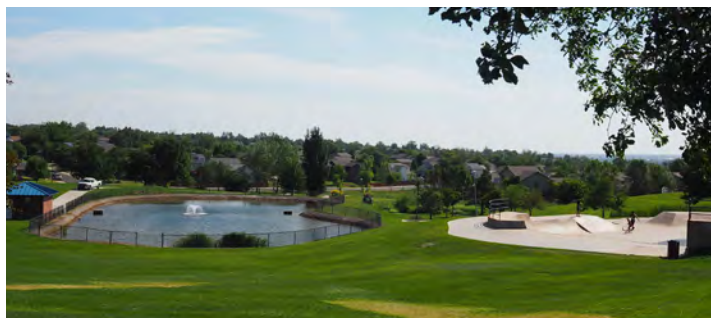
Description: This is a major, multifaceted focus destination for central Thornton. Many amenities are located in this complex including a full-service recreation center, an extensive trail network, multipurpose fields, outdoor amphitheater, Carpenter Ponds with paddle boat rentals, carousel, skate park, court sports including tennis, volleyball, basketball, and bocce ball courts, horseshoe pit, pavilions, universally accessible playground, splash pad, and a xeriscape demonstration garden. This is also a venue to display community artwork such as creatively designed benches and a Peace Wall. This complex provides many opportunities for community health and wellbeing as well as a venue for community events such as Thorntonfest, Winterfest, and Summer Concert Series.

Future Plans: Construction is underway on the new Active Adult Center, which will be located on the northeast corner of the site. Renovations are also planned to upgrade the aquatics portion of the center.

Community Park Complex

Description: Community Park is a multifaceted focus destination area for southeast Thornton. The original city recreation center located in this community level park now offers a number of more specific services including a teen center. The surrounding park currently provides many additional recreational amenities, including the Thomas J. Slocum Memorial Skatepark, City Pool, multipurpose fields and picnic areas. The historic Thornton Women's Club building is also located in this area. Of note, Harvest Fest takes place on the multipurpose fields every September.

Future Plans: There are plans to renovate and partly repurpose the Community Center. The northeast parking lot is the planned future location of Fire Station No.1. Planned park improvements include a skatepark replacement incorporating a pump track, new outdoor restrooms, and a basketball court replacement.



EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

Aylor Open Lands

Description: Aylor Open Lands are located in the northern part of the city and plans are underway to determine its destination focus. Presently this is a city-owned property. It's natural assets include unique elevation changes, view corridors (mountains, plains, and Denver), and natural areas that are not currently programmed or developed. No amenities are provided on this site at this time.

Future Plans: The city is in the process of determining what types of amenities should be master planned for this site. The plan will incorporate innovative, place-making ideas for a well-connected and inclusive recreational, cultural and educational area for all ages. It is anticipated that a portion of the site will be nature-based.



Sports Facilities

Description: The city has three major stand-alone sports destinations. These are the Riverwalk Ballfields and Batting Cages, Thornton Sports Complex, and the Northern Lights Ballfields. These facilities provide a variety of opportunities for team sports and are a regional attraction.

Future Plans: The city intends to maintain and program these fields according to current and future recreational needs.

EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS



Thorncreek Golf Course

Description: The Thorncreek Golf Course is a golfing destination in northeast Thornton, close to I-25. This city-owned and recently-renovated 18-hole course and clubhouse provides golfing opportunities for residents of Thornton and surrounding communities. The clubhouse provides an updated eating area, bar, room for small functions, and an expanded patio for additional event space.

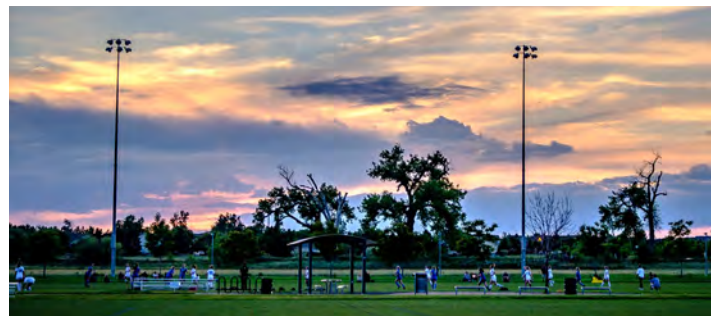
Future Plans: The golf course and clubhouse have both been recently renovated (2018) to enhance playability for all ages and abilities.



Trail Winds Park and Open Space Complex

Description: This is a major multifaceted destination in the northern part of Thornton. Major components include a new full-service recreation center, the Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center (owned by Adams 12 School District), outdoor sports fields, skatepark and a dog park. The complex also contains trails and open space.

Future Plans: The Trail Winds Park and Open Space Site Master Plan is expected to be updated in the near future to reflect the location of the newly-constructed recreation center and provide guidelines for future site amenities based on community needs.



EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

Lambertson Lakes Farmhouse

Description: This farmstead provides an opportunity for a historic and cultural destination in south Thornton. The rural homestead dates back to the late 1800's and is preserved with an iconic barn, grain silos, 1950s farm house, and other vestiges of Thornton's agricultural heritage. Abutting are several fishing ponds in Lambertson Lakes Park & Open Space including Grange Hall Creek Regional Trail. The site provides glimpses of local wildlife, an escape from the city, as well as a way to connect with Thornton's past.

Future Plans: Long-term plans include a heritage-based, living farm destination that will open the Lambertson Farmstead for visitors, tours, and school groups. Demonstration gardening, interactive programs, and community events will complement the passive recreational activities.



Gravel Lakes

Description: There is a great opportunity to create recreational-focused destination areas using some of the gravel lakes owned by the city located in the South Platte River corridor. These gravel lakes serve as water reservoirs but could provide a variety of water based recreational amenities. Currently, the West Gravel Lakes and West Sprat Platte Fishing Facilities offer recreational fishing and are also the location of a major trailhead to the regional multi-use South Platte River and Front Range Trail.

Future Plans: The city is in the process of identifying a number of the Gravel Lakes to be developed as recreational areas with potential opportunities for fishing, picnicking, water sports, wildlife viewing, and other amenities.

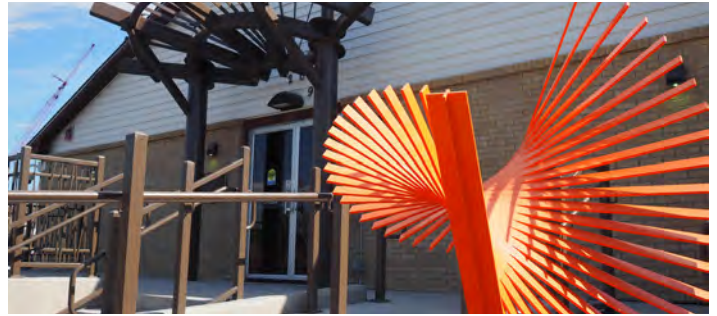


EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

Dorothy Boulevard Cultural Amenities

Description: This area is a distinctive destination for visual and performing arts with other surrounding uses. Located in Original Thornton along Dorothy Boulevard, this area includes the Thornton Arts and Culture Center (TACC), the current location of the Active Adult Center, and Lu Murray Park with playground, basketball court, walking loop, and shuffle board courts.

Future Plans: The Active Adult Center is being relocated to the Margaret W. Carpenter Park and Open Space Complex in late 2020, adjacent to the Carpenter Recreation Center. The existing center will be repurposed for the Community Connections one-stop resource shop. Presently, the city is investigating building a larger performing arts center, but it is expected that the TACC will continue to provide significant cultural amenities to the area.



Civic Center Area

Description: The primary function of the Civic Center Campus is the provision of municipal services. The Thornton Civic Center Campus consists of the City Hall, Thornton Police Facilities, Thornton Municipal Courts, as well as Civic Center Park, which includes Croke Lake that provides recreational fishing.

Future Plans: This destination has the potential to be expanded onto the land owned by the city's redevelopment authority south of Thornton Parkway. New development on this land could accommodate future city amenities with nearby complementary uses such as restaurants.



PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS - RECREATIONAL AMENITIES



Figure 4-5: Example of relationship between buildings, amenities, and public space

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS - CULTURAL AMENITIES



Cultural destinations help spur development in the surrounding area



Civic buildings should have a prominent frontage along a park or plaza space.



Parks and plazas should be designed to support a mix of formal and informal gatherings.



Entertainment uses such as a theater or museum can be a community-wide or even regional attraction.



The local context, history, and culture can be celebrated through art and programming.



Figure 4-6: Example of relationship between buildings, amenities, and public space



NEIGHBORHOODS**COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS****COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS**

Complete Neighborhoods are intended to provide quality living environments that offer a variety of housing choices and accommodate a wide range of lifestyles for Thornton residents. Complete Neighborhoods align most closely with the Mixed Residential Neighborhood and Mixed-Use Neighborhood Future Land Use Categories.

The information and examples that follow provide an additional level of guidance to help articulate the desired character, mix of uses, and community amenities that will be encouraged in existing and future Complete Neighborhoods.

These illustrative tools serve as a basis for expanding housing options, guiding neighborhood improvements, directing public or private investment, or shaping regulatory tools to facilitate more predictable, quality outcomes in Thornton's neighborhoods.

MIXED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS**

NEIGHBORHOODS

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Distinguishing Characteristics

Complete Neighborhoods align most closely with the Mixed Residential Neighborhood and Mixed-Use Neighborhood Future Land Use Categories. Complete Neighborhoods are intended to provide quality neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing choices and accommodate a wide range of lifestyles for Thornton residents. These neighborhoods are primarily residential in nature with some supporting community services and amenities, and small-scale retail uses that aim to enhance the overall walkability and accessibility of the neighborhood. They establish a well-connected street network that provides internal and external connectivity to provide convenient access to nearby mixed-use centers.

“LIVE/WORK/PLAY” Mix: Mixed Residential Neighborhood FLUM Category

Unless otherwise defined by other planning documents, these neighborhoods typically have a well distributed and diverse “Live” mix of uses. This type of neighborhood is most vibrant with uses that are complementary and varied in scale to foster activity throughout the day. While this type of neighborhood does not include a “Work/Play” mix directly within it as might be expected in a Complete Neighborhood, it accomplishes the intent by locating in close proximity to areas providing goods and services.

***“LIVE/WORK/PLAY” Mix: Mixed-Use Neighborhood FLUM Category***

These neighborhoods typically include up to 90% “Live” uses, with up to half of the area as “Work/Play” uses. The inclusion of commercial uses creates convenient, walkable access to goods and services and helps activate the area.



► EXISTING AND FUTURE COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

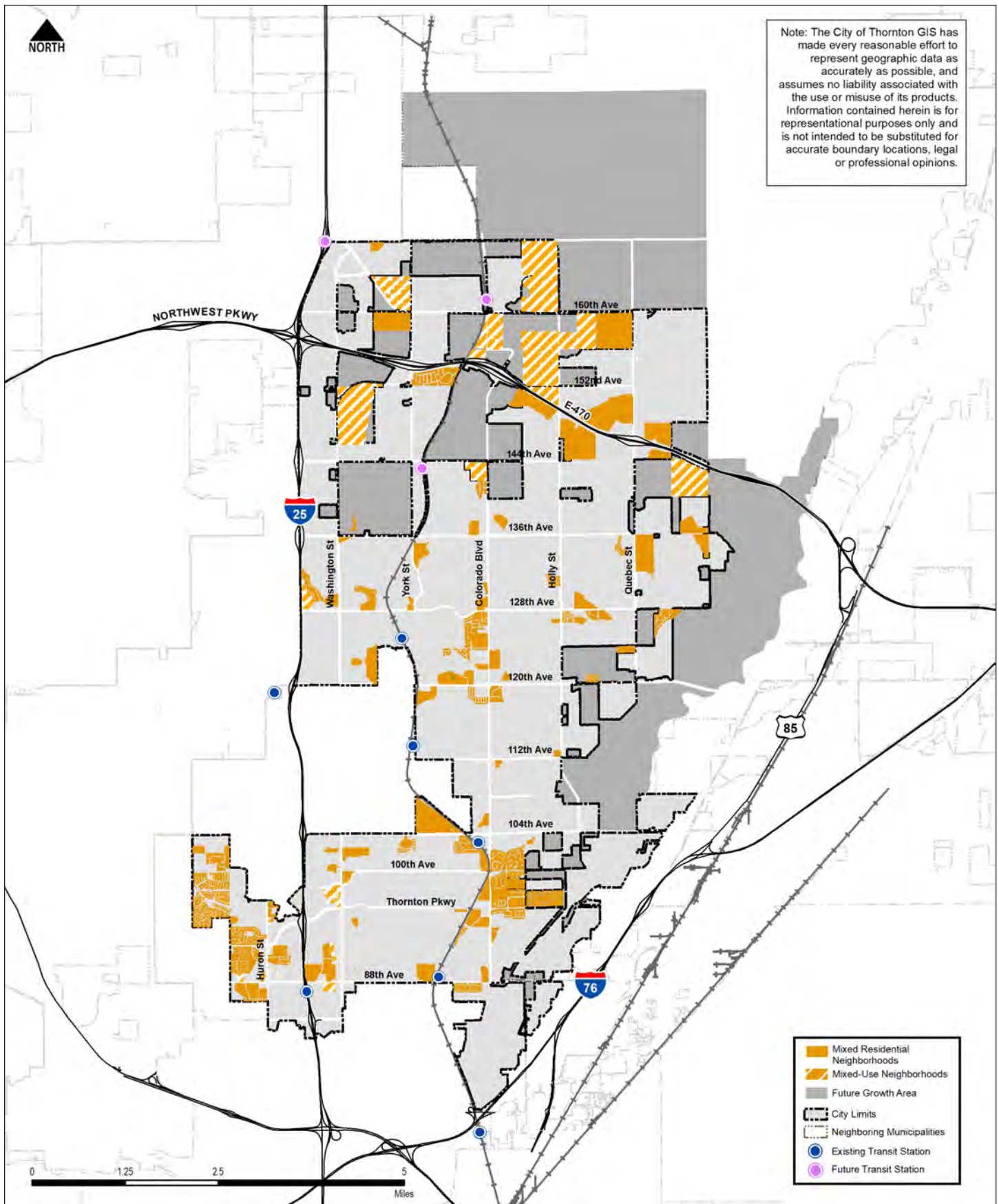


Figure 4-7: Future Land Use Categories that Support Complete Neighborhoods

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS



Figure 4-8: Example of relationship between buildings, amenities, and public space



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS: COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

- **Character**
 - Variety of housing options and lot sizes
- **Placemaking**
 - Distinct streetscape elements unique to the neighborhood
 - Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes along neighborhood streets
- **Connectivity**
 - Interconnected network of local streets with short, walkable block lengths
 - Pedestrian and bicycle pathways that provide direct access to and between neighborhoods and to nearby services
 - Bike racks and bike lanes or sharrows
- **Mix of Uses**
 - Primarily residential
 - The Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MUN) Future Land Use Category requires integrated commercial uses
 - Preferably 3 or more types of housing
- **Building Orientation/Layout**
 - Oriented to minimize the impacts of major streets
 - Variations in home orientation and site features
 - Commercial uses in MUN-designated areas should be situated along major roadways
- **Building Heights**
 - Varies by location and context of the neighborhood
- **Amenities**
 - Accessible parks, trails, open space, and community gardens
- **Transitions**
 - Appropriate transitions in building height and form between housing types of different intensities



Mixed-use: library and housing, Boulder, Colorado

INFILL/REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Figure 4-9 and Figure 4-10 show an example of how an existing residential neighborhood and an adjacent commercial development can be redeveloped to expand housing options, improve walkability, and enhance access to services.



Figure 4-9: Hypothetical existing infill site ("before" image)



Figure 4-10: Potential infill site enhancements that create a Complete Neighborhood ("after" image)

LEGEND

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>A Better integrating commercial and residential uses provides walkable amenities for residential developments.</p> <p>B Major intersections provide a prominent location for a node of commercial activity.</p> <p>C Large blocks can be divided with streets and pedestrian pathways to increase multi-modal connectivity.</p> | <p>D Small commercial nodes within or on the edges of the neighborhood can replace larger strip-style development.</p> <p>E Attached single-family can provide housing for a variety of residents and serve as a transition between detached single family and commercial or multi-family.</p> <p>F Public parks of various sizes provide an opportunity for recreation and community gathering.</p> | <p>Land Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed-Use with Active Ground Floors Multi-Family Residential/Office with Active Ground Floors at Key Intersections Residential Neighborhoods Attached Single-Family |
|--|--|---|



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS EXAMPLES: COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS



Mix of housing types in Central Park (Denver, Colorado)



Integrated neighborhood commercial (Longmont, Colorado)



Integrated community amenities and neighborhood commercial (Arvada, Colorado)



Pedestrian-oriented infill and redevelopment to expand mix of uses (Fort Collins, Colorado)



Pedestrian-oriented infill and redevelopment with active ground floor uses (Lafayette, Colorado)

PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS EXAMPLES: COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS



Neighborhood amenities (Boulder, Colorado)



Variations in housing type and design: small lot single-family detached homes (Broomfield, Colorado)



Quality streetscape with outdoor seating, South Pearl Street (Denver, Colorado)



Quality landscaping and direct, safe pedestrian connectivity (Boulder, Colorado)



Integration of different housing types with neighborhood-scale commercial. (Westminster, Colorado)



Local commercial use in a building that fits with neighborhood character (Basalt, Colorado)



ACTIVITY CENTERS

Activity Centers are places where people gather for a variety of live, work, and play opportunities. Activity Center opportunities in Thornton fall into three categories or types of centers:

Activity Centers	Associated Future Land Use Category
Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment Activity Centers	Commercial, Community Mixed-Use
Employment Activity Centers	Employment Center, Employment Center - Warehousing Overlay
Regional Activity Centers	Regional Mixed-Use, Transit-Oriented Development

While all three types of Activity Centers are intended to include a mix of uses, the actual mix of uses will vary based on the intended role of each center and the associated Future Land Use Category or categories, as depicted in the table above. Activity Centers are typically privately-owned and developed.

Each Activity Center in Thornton has unique considerations. The information and examples that follow provide an additional level of guidance and are not intended to reflect a literal representation or one-size-fits-all approach for Activity Centers. They are intended to articulate the desired character, mix of uses, and community amenities that will be encouraged in existing and future Activity Centers as they grow and evolve over time. These guidelines also encourage development and investment/reinvestment that more closely aligns with the community's vision.

These illustrative tools serve as a basis for inspiring new development, reimagining existing places, directing public or private investment, or shaping regulatory tools to facilitate more predictable, quality outcomes in the built environment.

SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS



EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS



REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS



ACTIVITY CENTERS**SHOPPING, DINING, AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS*****Distinguishing Characteristics***

Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment Activity Centers align most closely with the Commercial and Community Mixed-Use Future Land Use Categories as shown on Figure 4-11. Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment Centers play a key role in the community as vibrant places for residents and visitors to gather on weekends or outside of working hours during the week. This type of center can also provide convenient access to daily goods and services. For this type of Activity Center to foster truly unique places, they are best paired with meaningful public spaces, art, and diverse commercial uses that encourage users to linger, socialize, and build community interaction beyond the duration of their purchase, dining or entertainment experience. These places must be accessible, safe and comfortable for all users, with an emphasis on pedestrian amenities, including well-lit, active, and tree-lined streetscapes. Buildings and uses in these centers should have high degrees of transparency and be oriented toward public spaces and street frontages rather than parking lots, so that circulation within the center is enlivened with views of activity within the buildings as well as along the streetscape.

“LIVE/WORK/PLAY” Mix: Commercial FLUM Category

These centers typically have a distinct retail/commercial “Play” emphasis, but are most active and successful when supplemented by a complementary mix of “Work” uses.

***“LIVE/WORK/PLAY” Mix: Community Mixed-Use FLUM Category***

These centers typically have a distinct emphasis on retail/commercial “Play” and “Work” uses (up to 90% of the overall uses) but are most active and successful when supplemented by a complementary mix of “Live” (up to 25% of the overall uses, measured by land area).



► EXISTING AND FUTURE SHOPPING, DINING, AND ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS

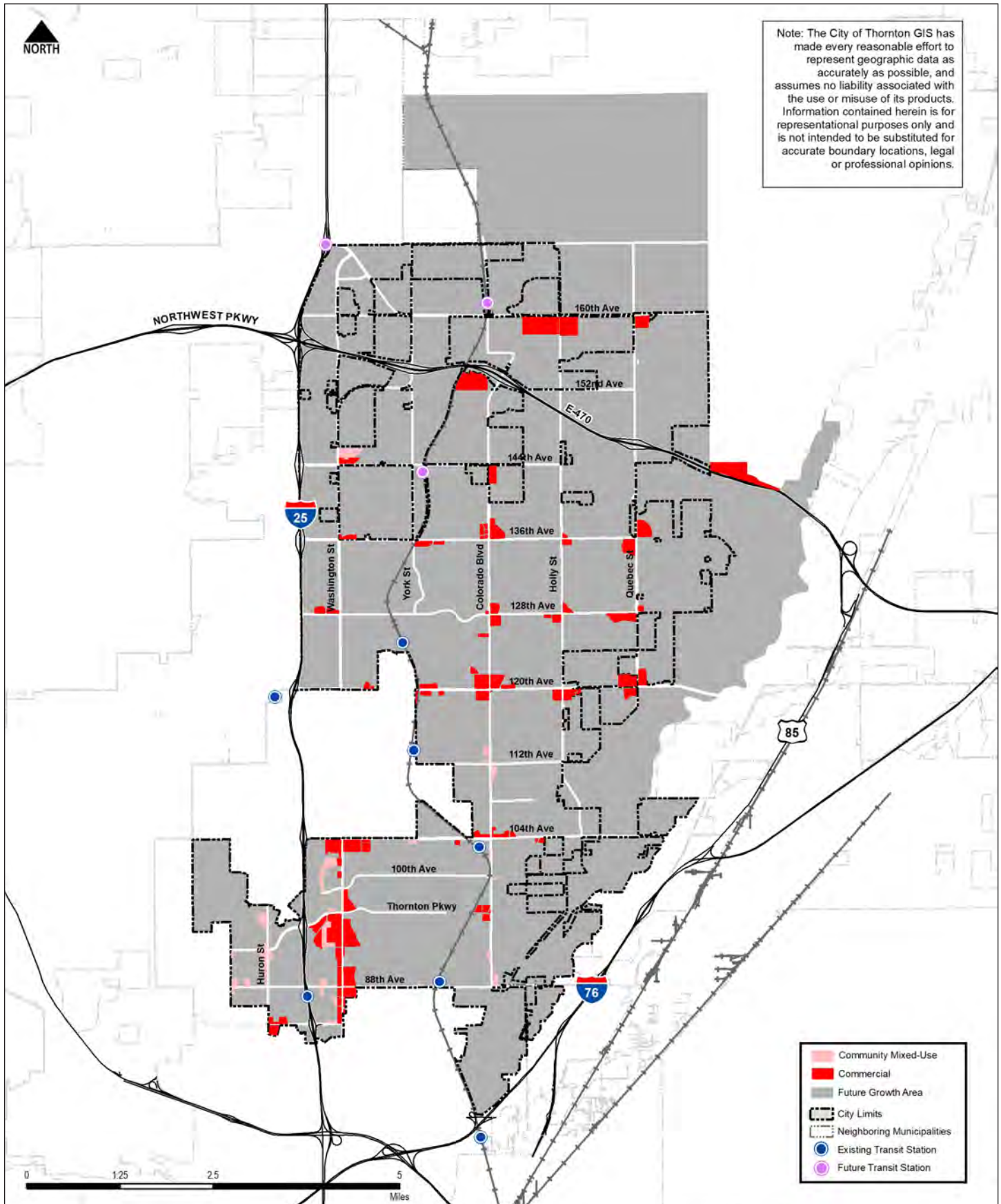


Figure 4-11: FLUM Categories that Support Shopping, Dining and Entertainment Activity Centers

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS



The creation of a “main street” provides a walkable environment with opportunities for small businesses. The “main street” should have an ample tree canopy and utilize green infrastructure techniques to make the area more pedestrian friendly.

Parking should be located on-street and behind buildings with plaza and breezeway connections.



It is important for this type of center to have an anchor retail or entertainment use to promote consistent activity within the center.



Plaza spaces provide public gathering opportunities and amenities and should be located adjacent to the active uses on the site.



Building frontages should help to define the street edge and have ground floors with high levels of transparency.

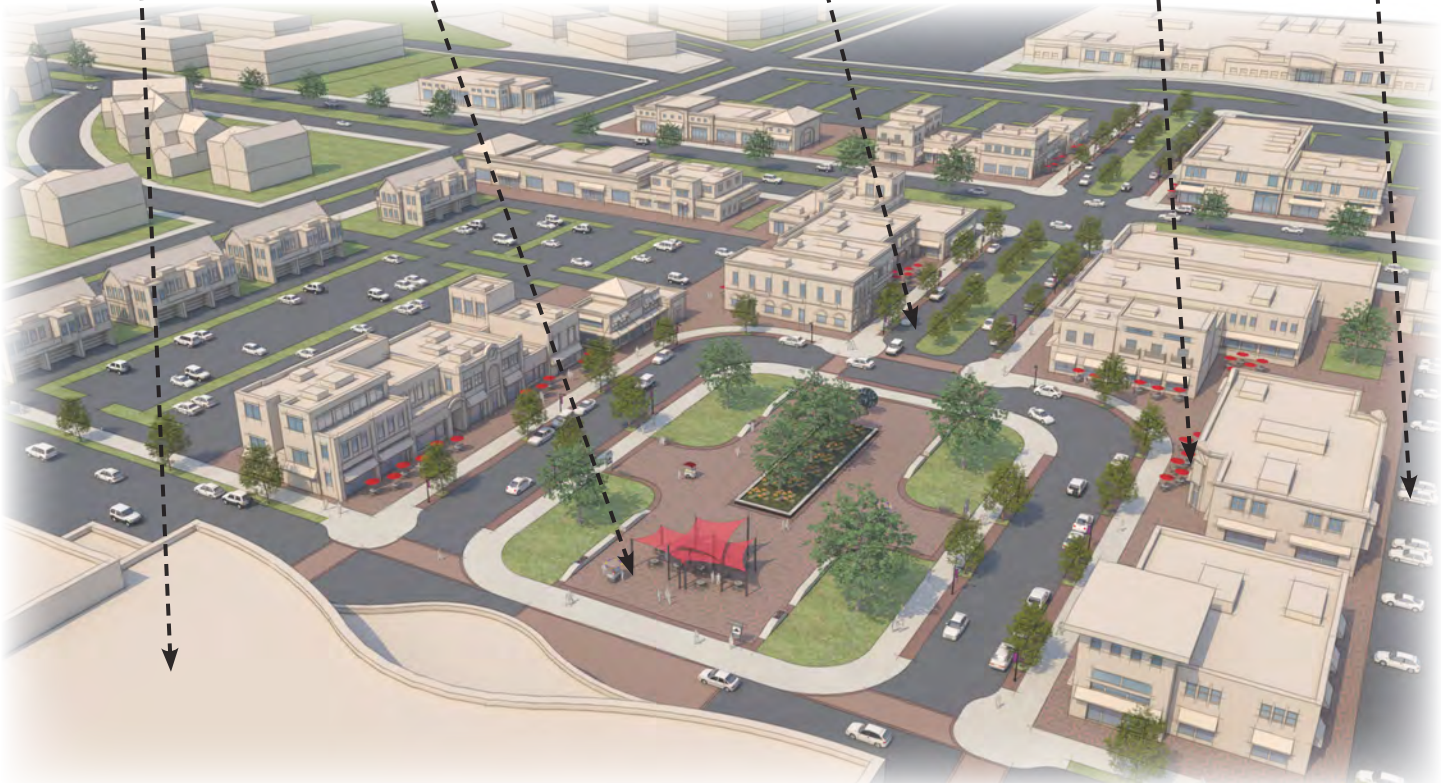


Figure 4-12: Example of relationship between buildings, amenities, and public space



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS: SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS

- **Character**
 - Destination for “play”
 - Gathering/meetup place
 - Hub for people of all ages
 - “Park once” walkable nodes
- **Placemaking**
 - Branding
 - Signage to draw in visitors
 - Unique public art
- **Mix of Uses**
 - Primarily commercial including retail, restaurant, bar, indoor/outdoor entertainment
 - Offices and other suitable commercial uses are encouraged above the ground floor
 - Residential uses above ground floor commercial (CMU only)
 - Vertical mixed-use at core, transitioning out to horizontal mixed-use/single uses
 - Well-integrated horizontal mixed-use
- **Building Orientation/Layout**
 - Buildings along and defining the street edge(s)
 - Alley/rear loading zone
 - Infill buildings should create a more pedestrian-focused environment
 - Transparent ground floor facades that engage streetscapes and public spaces
 - Visibility from major roads and highways
- **Building Heights**
 - Multi-story
- **Connectivity**
 - Strong internal connectivity and also connections to surrounding areas
 - Pedestrian experience is key
 - Slow vehicle speeds
 - Bike racks and bike lanes or sharrows
 - Mid-block crossings
 - Accessible via public transit
 - Easy pickup/drop-off for rideshares and public transit
- **Public Gathering Space**
 - Hardscape plazas with seating, shade, play opportunities, and public art
 - Entertainment uses should be mix of indoor and outdoor activities visible to the public
- **Activation**
 - Should be active throughout the day and evening, including weekends
 - Events/festivals in plazas and streets
- **Transitions**
 - Heights transition toward surrounding less-intensive development
 - Ensure back of buildings/loading zones aren’t directly abutting roadways and are screened
 - If surface parking is located along the edges of the development, it should be heavily screened with landscaping features to buffer it from adjacent development.



Southlands, Aurora, Colorado

INFILL/REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: SHOPPING, DINING, AND ENTERTAINMENT

Figure 4-13 and Figure 4-14 show an example of how a hypothetical existing infill Community Mixed-Use area can be transitioned into a more vibrant shopping, dining, and entertainment area through infill and redevelopment. It also illustrates the potential for the integration of higher-density residential over time.

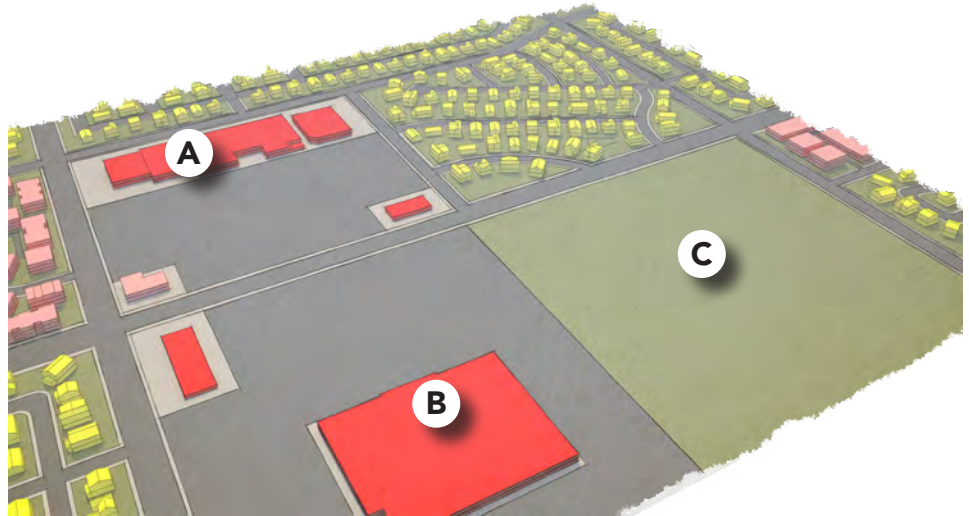


Figure 4-13: Hypothetical existing infill site ("before" image)

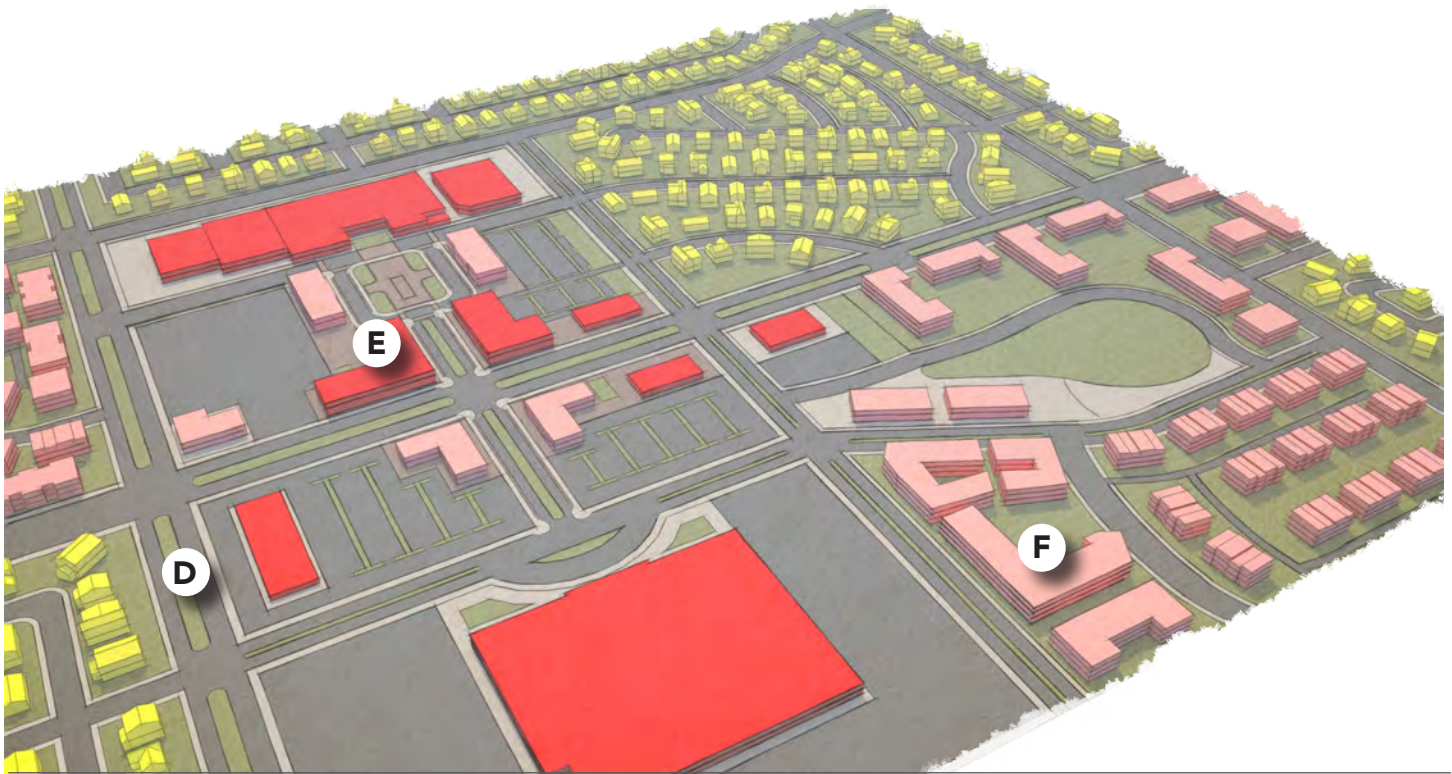


Figure 4-14: Example enhancements for Shopping, Dining, Entertainment Activity Centers ("after image")

LEGEND

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>A Infill buildings should be built to and define street edge and avoid expansive parking areas</p> | <p>D Street hierarchy can be achieved through internal streets and boulevards.</p> | <p>Land Use</p> <p> Commercial/Retail</p> |
| <p>B Big box stores can be preserved alongside small businesses.</p> | <p>E A "main street" serves as a walkable connection between existing retailers while breaking up large blocks.</p> | <p> Multi-Family Residential/Office with Active Ground Floors at Key Intersections</p> |
| <p>C Undeveloped land is an opportunity for increased density and connectivity.</p> | <p>F Residential density can be added with multi-family and mixed use buildings.</p> | <p> Residential Neighborhoods</p> |



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS EXAMPLES: SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS



An outdoor gathering space on the rear side of The District, a repurposed shopping center, creates a location for employee breaks and community events (Lafayette, Colorado)



Grocery store with adjacent housing at Willits Town Center (Willits, Colorado)



Wayfinding signage (Golden, Colorado)



Vertical mixed-use surrounding community gathering space in Central Park (Denver, Colorado)



Restaurant seating area (Boulder, Colorado)

ACTIVITY CENTERS

EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS

Distinguishing Characteristics

Employment Activity Centers align with the Employment Center Future Land Use Category, including the Employment Center - Warehousing Overlay as shown on Figure 4-15. Employment Activity Centers can redefine the character and sense of place of some of Thornton's major job concentration areas. Infusing these centers with select complementary uses and encouraging building designs that are more pedestrian-scaled can improve the quality of life of employees working within those centers. Wherever possible, buildings and uses in these centers should be encouraged to occupy smaller footprints and be coupled with shared public spaces and amenities to provide opportunities for moments of respite from the typical workday. Complementary uses within walkable proximity, such as dining and retail options for daily goods and services, can help reduce auto-dependency in these centers. This enables employees to lead a more active and healthier lifestyle. Care should be taken to minimize the impact to the surrounding developments, particularly with larger scale structures.

"LIVE/WORK/PLAY" Mix

These centers have a distinct "Work" emphasis (up to 90% of the overall uses) but are most active, and promote a safer and healthier environment when supplemented by a complementary mix of walkable "Play" uses (up to 30% of the overall uses). "Live" uses adjacent to an Employment Activity Center help to make these centers much more vibrant and accessible.



► EXISTING AND FUTURE EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS

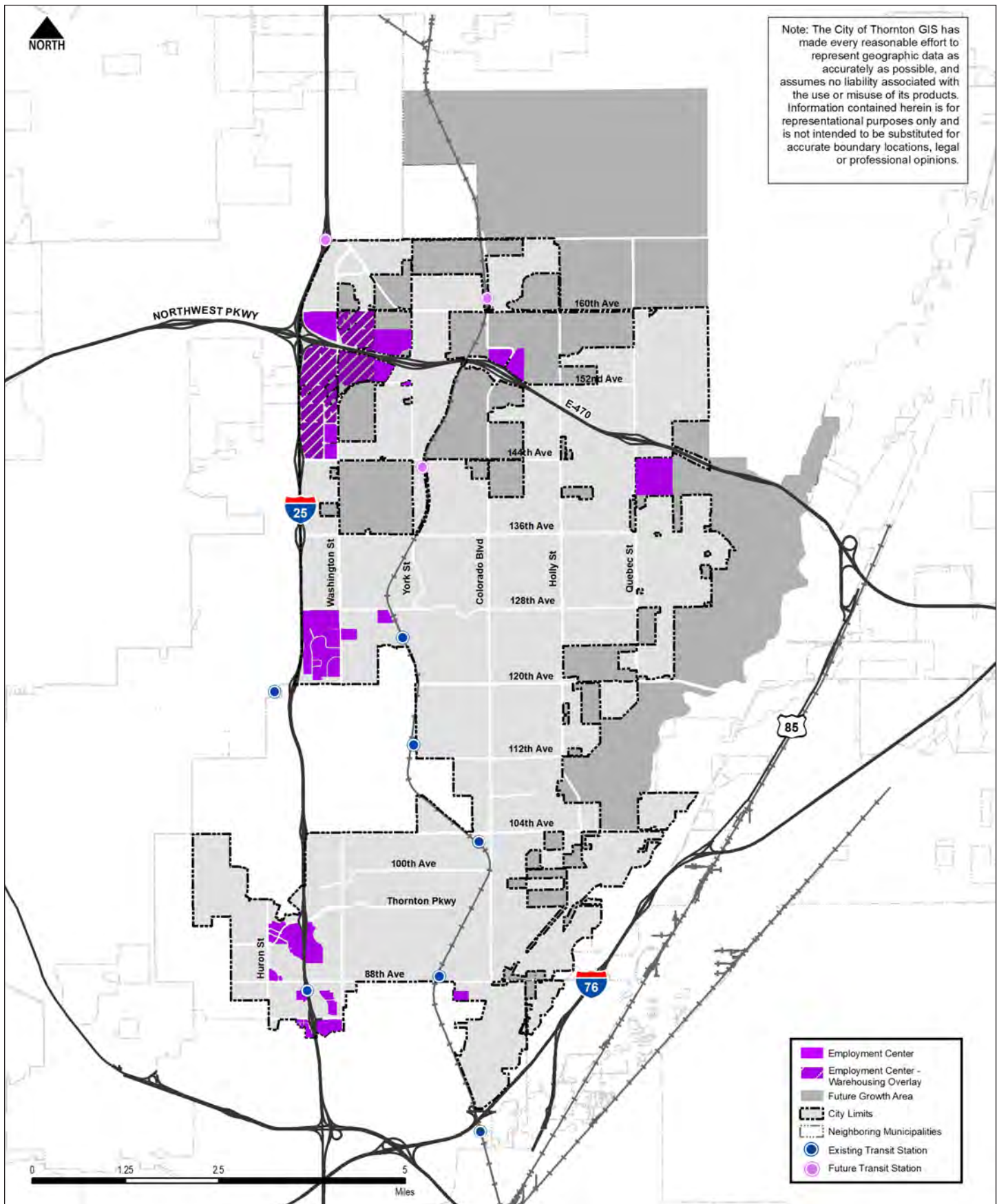


Figure 4-15: FLUM Categories that Support Employment Centers

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS



Small public parks can serve as a reprieve for employees during the work day.



Plaza spaces provide public gathering opportunities and amenities.



Shared structured parking can be wrapped with a variety of uses.



Locating employers along a corridor with buildings along the street edge creates a pedestrian-friendly environment.



Landscaped medians, safe crossings and mid-block crossings, are important along an employment corridor

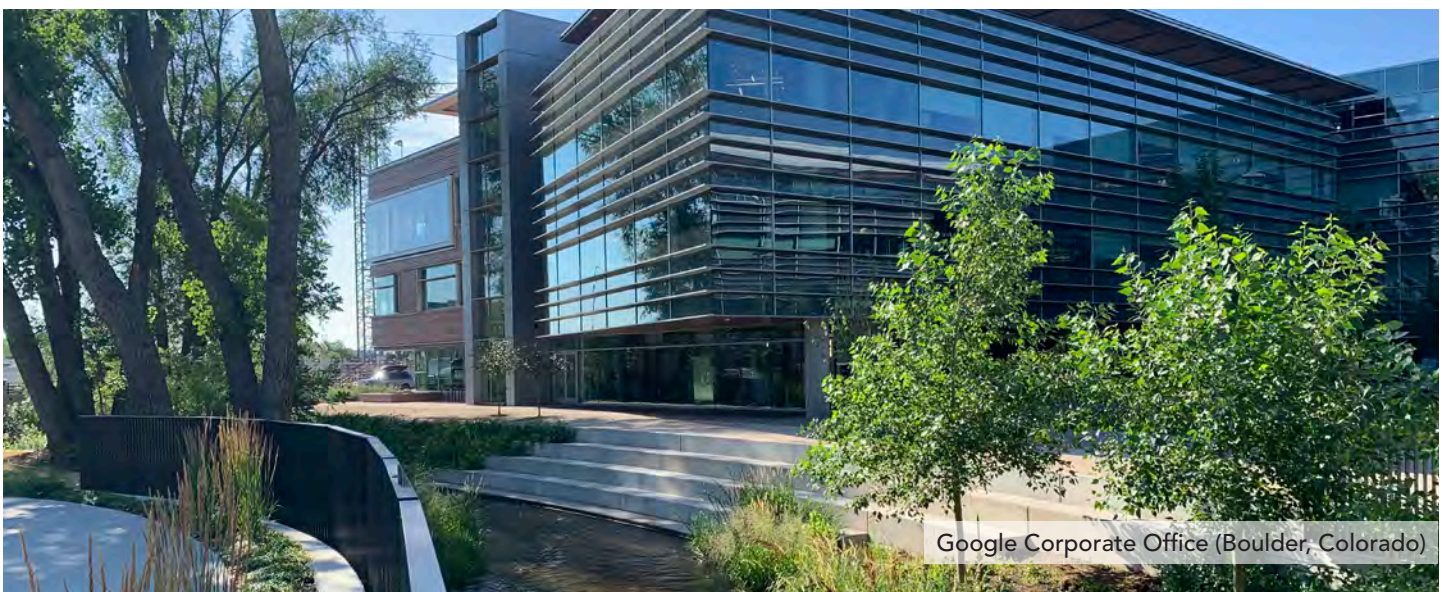


Figure 4-16: Example of relationship between buildings, amenities, and public space



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS: EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS

- **Character**
 - Innovation hub, maker/creative space, tech center, professional office space, etc.
- **Placemaking**
 - Identifying signage on buildings
 - Directional signage for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians
 - Publicly accessible spaces between buildings to create space for interactions
- **Mix of Uses**
 - Primarily office
 - Mixed scales including maker space, coworking spaces, small wifi cafes, larger offices, warehouse, and light industrial
 - Commercial to serve employment uses
 - Surrounding residential neighborhoods help to cultivate a proximate live-work mix
- **Building Orientation/Layout**
 - Large blocks should be broken up with internal streets
 - Buildings should be oriented toward roads or open spaces
 - Warehouse-type buildings should have a frontage on road and a transparent and/or articulated façade
- **Building Heights**
 - Varies based on location
- **Connectivity**
 - Mobility hub accessible by multiple modes of transportation
 - Prioritize pleasant pedestrian experience
 - Bike racks and bike lanes or sharrows
 - Easy pickup/drop-off for rideshares and public transit
- **Amenities**
 - Passive park-type spaces with walking paths
 - Plaza spaces with ample seating and shade opportunities
- **Activation**
 - Busiest during weekdays/business hours
 - Mix of uses allows for nearly continuous periods of activity
- **Transitions**
 - Mainly happens through change in uses
 - Parking lots should have screening/landscaping
 - Heights transition toward surrounding development
 - Ensure back of buildings/loading zones are oriented toward interior of site or heavily screened to minimize visibility from surrounding areas



Google Corporate Office (Boulder, Colorado)

INFILL/REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS

Figures 4-17 and Figure 4-18 illustrate how established employment areas can be enhanced by introducing supporting commercial/retail and how other services can be incorporated through infill and redevelopment over time.

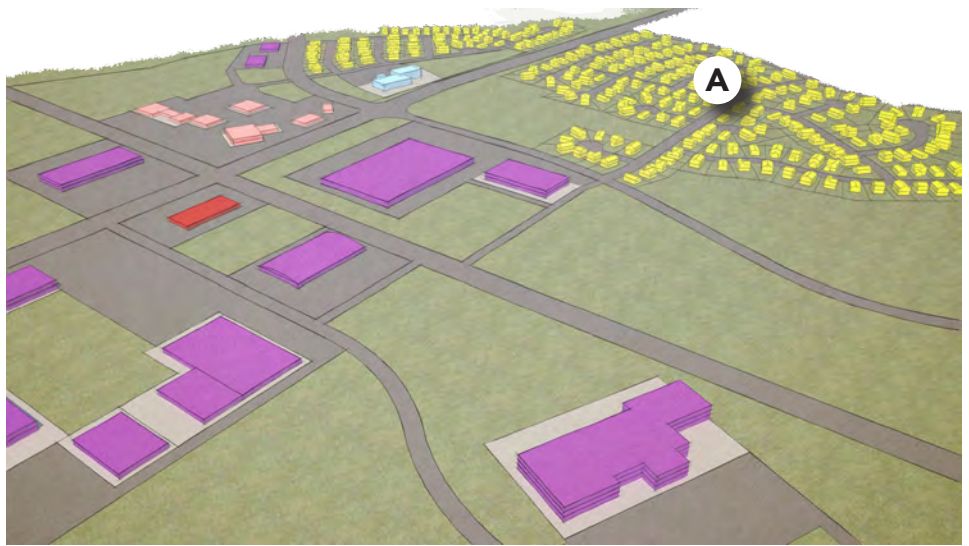


Figure 4-17: Hypothetical existing infill site ("before" image)

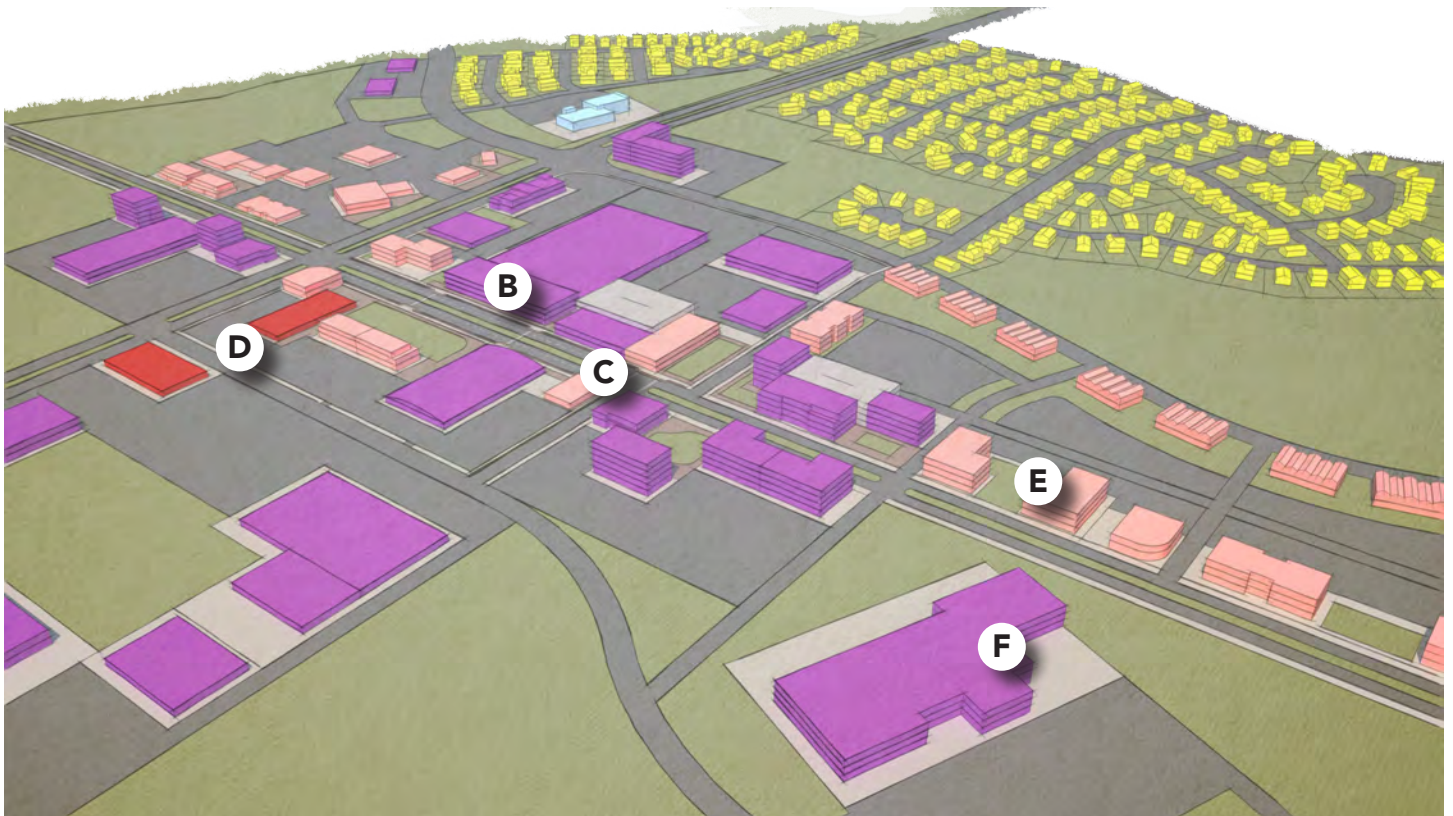


Figure 4-18: Example enhancements that create an Employment Activity Center ("after" image)

LEGEND

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>A Adjacent residential neighborhoods should be well-connected by multiple modes</p> <p>B Office uses, especially with active ground floor uses, can be added to the street side of a warehouse to create a street frontage.</p> <p>C A vibrant employment corridor can become a hub of innovation.</p> | <p>D Commercial uses should be provided nearby and in walkable locations to serve employees' daily needs.</p> <p>E The inclusion of supporting services encourages activity at all times of day.</p> <p>F Corporate offices are valuable to an Employment Center and should be built in an urban form when possible.</p> | <p>Land Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial/Retail Supporting Services with Active Ground Floors at Key Intersections Adjacent Residential Neighborhoods Office/Employment Civic/Cultural/Institutional |
|--|--|--|



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS EXAMPLES: EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY CENTERS



Industrial building with transparent facade (Colorado Springs, Colorado)



Supporting amenities (Dallas, Texas)



Prominent and accessible bike racks (Boulder, Colorado)



Screened loading area at Willits Design Center (Willits, CO)



Screened parking at Colorado Tech Center (Louisville, Colorado)



Signage at Willits Design Center (Willits, Colorado)

ACTIVITY CENTERS

REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

Distinguishing Characteristics

Regional Activity Centers align most closely with the Transit-Oriented Development and Regional Mixed-Use Future Land Use Categories as shown on Figure 4-19. Regional Activity Centers are intended to be the most vibrant and active of all of the types of centers and should have the potential to become destinations themselves, without a singular anchor or major tenant. These centers aim to foster an environment with a true “Live/Work/Play” mix of uses that can promote energy and activity throughout the center at all times of the day and into the evening. Regional Activity Centers are most successful when supplemented by frequent, multimodal transit options, allowing for users to have multiple choices to travel to and from the center. Buildings and uses within these centers should promote an active and compact streetscape environment, encouraging users to spend most of their time moving through the center via active transportation means.

“LIVE/WORK/PLAY” Mix: Transit-Oriented Development FLUM Category

Unless otherwise defined in other planning documents, such as adopted Station Area Master Plans or area-specific plans, these centers typically have a well distributed and diverse “Live/Work/Play” mix of uses. This type of center is most vibrant with uses that are complementary and varied in scale to foster activity throughout the day.

***“LIVE/WORK/PLAY” Mix: Regional Mixed-Use FLUM Category***

These centers typically include up to 90% “Work/Play” uses with up to 25% of “Live” uses. The inclusion of residential uses increases demand for retail services and activates the area throughout the day.



► EXISTING AND FUTURE REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

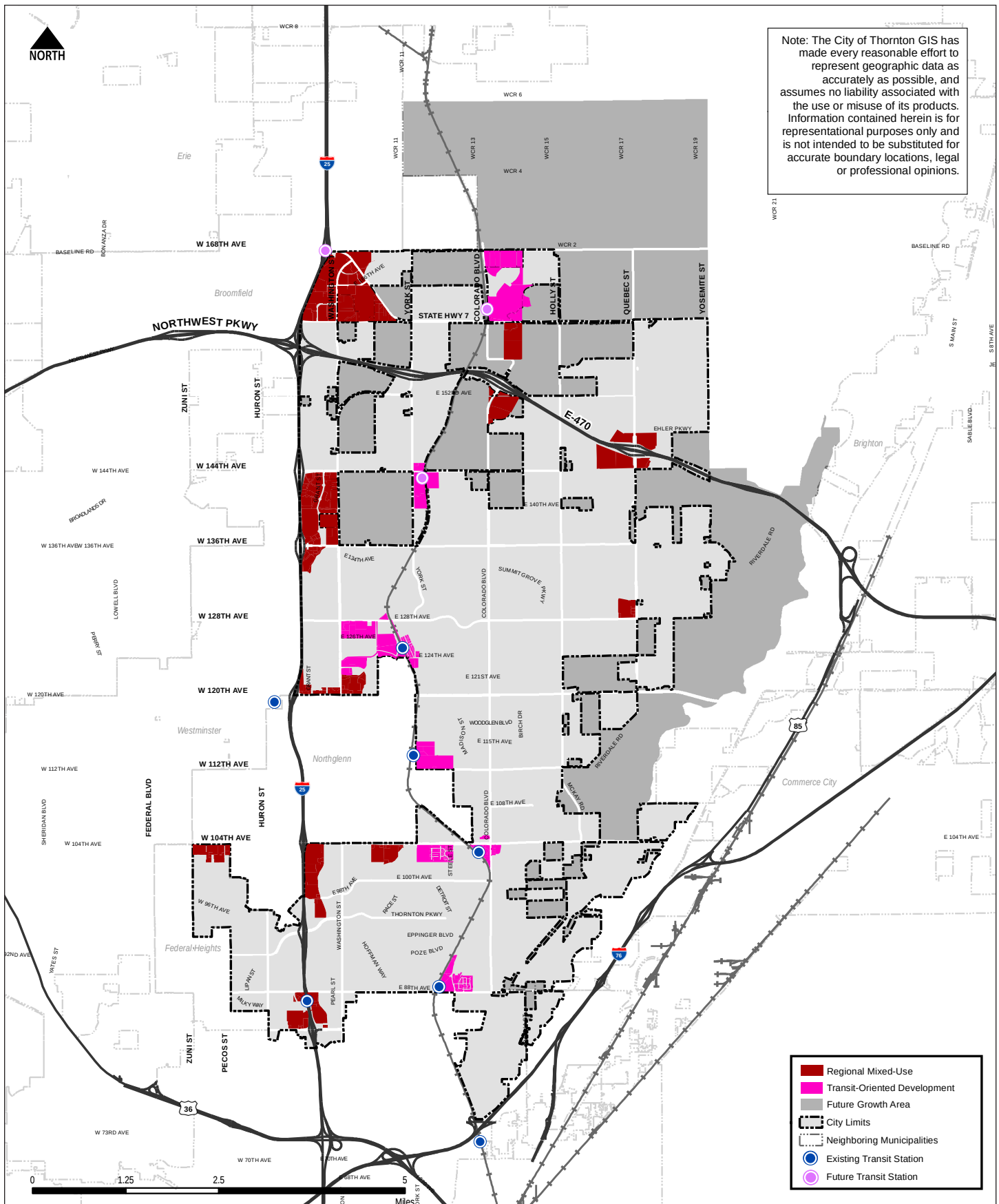


Figure 4-19: FLUM Categories that Support Regional Activity Centers

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS



Buildings should front a spine road to create a pedestrian-friendly environment and sense of place.



All buildings within the core of a Regional Activity Center should have active and transparent ground floor uses.



A Regional Activity Center should be located at a mobility hub with rail or regional bus service



Drop-off areas and short-term parking help complete first and final mile connections.



Structured parking allows for increased density and provides opportunities for users to "park once" and walk or bike to move around and through the center.



Figure 4-20 Example of relationship between buildings, amenities, and public space



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS: REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

- **Character**
 - Balance of live/work/play
 - Draw visitors from surrounding communities
 - Unique amenities and/or critical mass of activity
- **Placemaking**
 - Branding
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Known regional destinations
- **Connectivity**
 - Major mobility hub, ideally including rail or regional bus stations or stops
 - Bike racks and bike lanes or sharrows
 - May include Park-n-Ride use
 - Consider small lots dispersed throughout the center or a garage with retail lining and screening rather than large surface lots
- **Mix of Uses**
 - Mix of residential, office, and commercial
 - Entertainment and restaurant uses (both day and night-oriented)
 - Accessible parks/open space/amenities
- **Building Orientation/Layout**
 - Buildings define and are oriented towards street or open space
 - Grid layout with intentional breaks
- **Building Heights**
 - Typically more dense than surrounding context
 - Building heights can help define the “edges” of the Activity Center
- **Amenities**
 - Unique public amenities can attract visitors and give the space a special identity
- **Activation**
 - Large scale events
 - Busy at all times of day due to mix of uses
- **Transitions**
 - Heights and intensity transition toward surrounding, less-intensive development
 - Screening of parking lots, garages, and loading docks



Top Golf entertainment use (Thornton, Colorado)

INFILL/REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

The adjacent figures show a hypothetical example of how a major transit investment can help catalyze infill and redevelopment of an underutilized area into a Regional Activity Center over time.

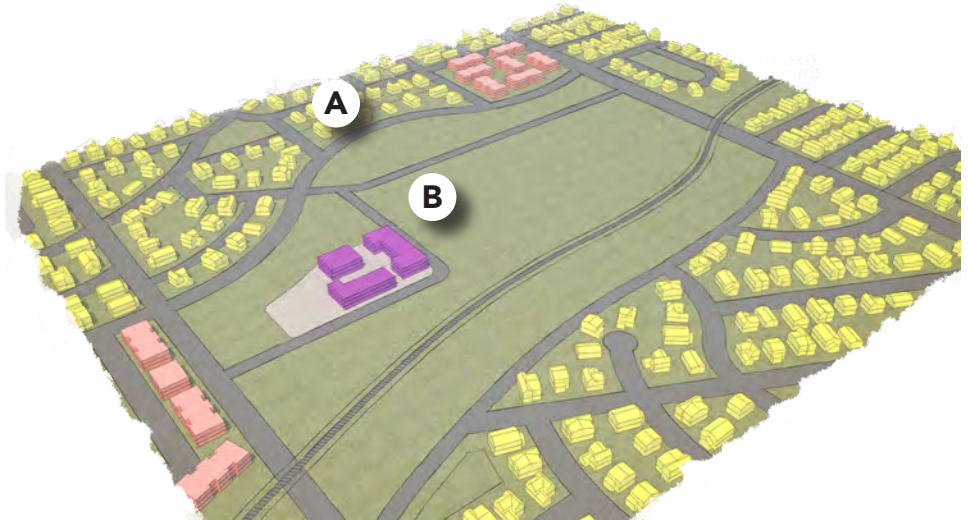


Figure 4-21: Hypothetical existing infill site ("before" image)

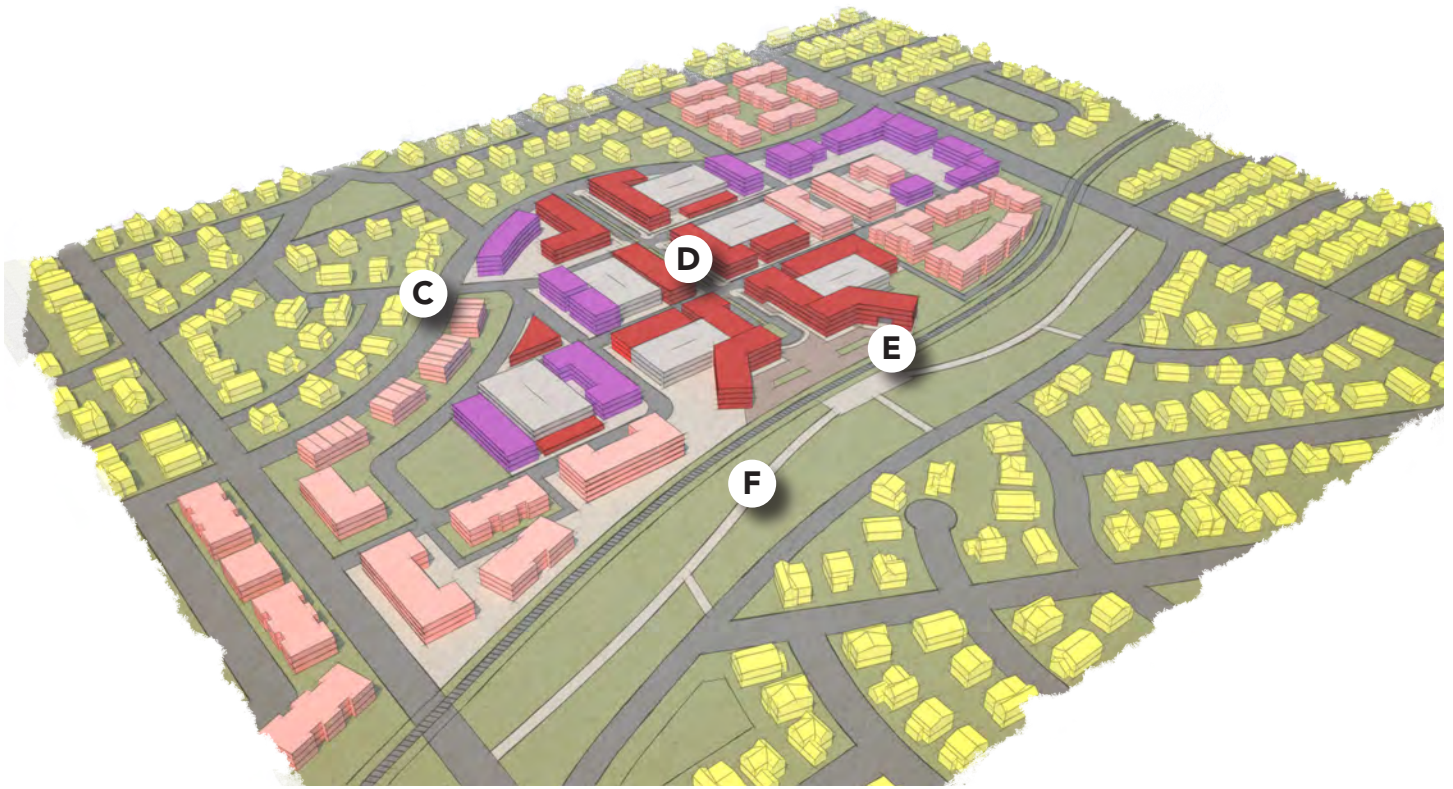


Figure 4-22: Example infill site enhancements that create a Regional Activity Center ("after" image)

LEGEND

- A** Introducing a mix of uses provides new **walkable amenities** for nearby residential developments.
- B** **Employment uses** benefit from increased connectivity to the surrounding region.
- C** **Transitions in height and use to surrounding development** should be carefully considered.

- D** A **spine road or main street** provides a core of activity within the center.
- E** Investments in rail should be complemented by **well-designed station areas**.
- F** Rail corridors also provide **opportunities for trails and open space**.

Land Use

- Mixed-Use with Active Ground Floors
- Multi-Family Residential/Office with Active Ground Floors at Key Intersections
- Residential Neighborhoods
- Office/Employment



PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS EXAMPLES: REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS



Transit-Oriented Development at Lamar Station Crossing along the 40 West Art Line and the W Light Rail Line (Lakewood, Colorado)



Pedestrian-oriented design with high density housing options (Lakewood, CO)



Performance area and open seating at The Orchards Town Center (Westminster, CO)



Wayfinding at Boulder Junction (Boulder, Colorado)



Live/Work units (Willits, Colorado)



Screened loading area (Willits, Colorado)

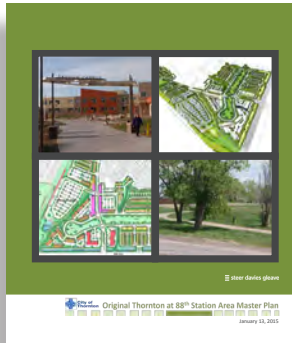
SUPPORTING PLANS: REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

EXISTING STATION AREA MASTER PLANS (STAMPs)

In 2004, residents of the Denver Metro Area voted to approve the FasTracks rail expansion which includes the commuter North Metro Rail Line (N Line) from Denver Union Station to Thornton. As of fall 2019, the first phase of the N Line, including stations up to Eastlake at 124th Station, is under construction and anticipated to begin providing passenger service in 2020. Future construction of the second phase of the N Line will extend service further northward to two additional Thornton stations, described on page 4.66. The city has adopted four Station Area Master Plans (STAMPs) for the under-construction stations in Thornton and Northglenn in order to provide a vision for vibrant, walkable, mixed-use Transit-Oriented Developments (TOD). The city will use these STAMPs to inform policy decisions, shape regulatory tools, and guide investment decisions for these areas.

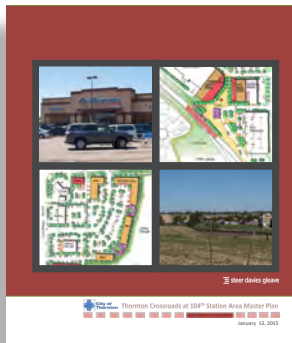
Original Thornton at 88th STAMP

Located near 88th Avenue and Welby Road, this is the southernmost N Line station in Thornton. As a transit gateway into Thornton, this station provides a unique opportunity to create a positive impression and image of Thornton to visitors and residents. This STAMP (adopted in 2015) provides a vision and planning framework for future private development and public investment in order to create a vibrant, walkable station area with convenient train access.



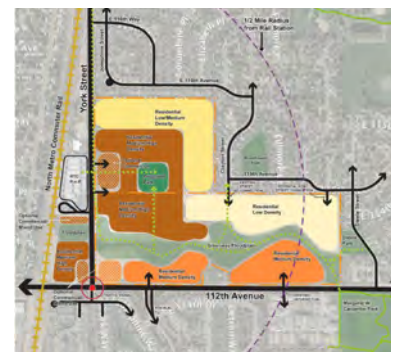
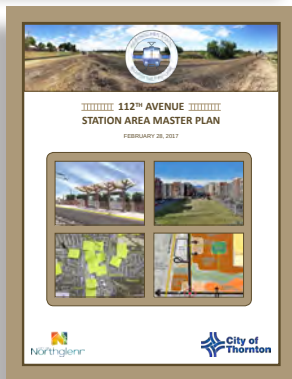
Thornton Crossroads at 104th STAMP

This STAMP for the area around the station at 104th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard was adopted in 2015. Within this area, land use alternatives were created for four opportunity sites that are particularly feasible for development or redevelopment. The plan focuses on creating a walkable station area with a rich mix of land uses within a half-mile walking distance of the station.



Northglenn at 112th STAMP

Although the station is located within Northglenn, much of the adjacent vacant land is located within Thornton. The two jurisdictions worked together on this STAMP that was adopted in 2017 by the Thornton City Council. The plan aims to create a mixed-use, walkable TOD.



Eastlake at 124th STAMP

The town of Eastlake was originally settled as a railway village in the early 20th century and incorporated into the city of Thornton in 1990. The 2015 Eastlake STAMP takes advantage of the existing mainstreet and small-lot grid creating an ideal environment for TOD. This station is the temporary end of line for the N Line.



FUTURE STATION AREA MASTER PLANS

Two stations north of the Eastlake at 124th Station have been identified as the final two stations on the N Line and will be planned and constructed in the future as RTD funding becomes available. These stations, the York at 144th Station and North Thornton at Hwy 7 Station, will extend service to more Thornton residents and lengthen an efficient and sustainable connection to Denver Union Station. For these two station areas, the Regional Activity Center and its corresponding characteristics, outlined previously in this section, can be utilized to help create a vision and planning framework for future private development and public investment that promotes TOD through an appropriate mix of land uses, connectivity, infrastructure and public amenities.

York at 144th Station Area

Existing Conditions: The future location of this station near York Street and E. 144th Avenue is currently adjacent to two major arterial roadways, undeveloped land, Rocky Top Middle School, the Northern Lights Ballfields, and single-family residential uses. The Future Land Use Map designates Transit-Oriented Development on both sides of the tracks, which could be expanded to create a TOD that includes the entire 1/4 mile or 1/2 mile station walkshed.

Vision: Community feedback for this location has indicated a desire for local businesses. Currently the nearest commercial centers are about two miles away and not along particularly walkable and/or direct routes. Additionally, the community indicated a desire for an accessible trail in this area that could connect to nearby development and existing trails. Higher density residential and an emphasis on supporting “Work” and “Play” uses would help this station area to become active at all times of day and establish itself as a unique center for Thornton.



North Thornton at Hwy 7 Station Area

Existing Conditions: Relatively undeveloped at present, the area around this station near State Highway 7 and Colorado Boulevard will serve as the end-of-line station for the N Line. This investment could be enhanced to promote a highly active, vibrant center serving residents in the northernmost portions of the city, while also drawing visitors from around the region. Incentivizing a major employer or retail tenant to locate here could catalyze the development of other housing types.

Vision: Based upon community feedback, the intersection of two major arterials, and the planned rail investment, there could be a future market here for commercial activity. Additionally, leveraging the adjacency of the Big Dry Creek Corridor, new residential could orient itself around a recreation-based set of amenities and add complementary uses along Highway 7, Colorado Boulevard, and the future rail line. The station area is currently largely undeveloped which is an asset in that it can provide ample opportunity to design a new, vibrant Regional Activity Center embodying the full suite of characteristics desired for this type of center, while taking into account existing agreements with other entities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This chapter contains recommended Strategies to help support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan as informed by City Council and community priorities, as well as near- and short-term department work programs. It is intended to provide a “big picture” view of the many cross-departmental efforts that will be undertaken or continued to help advance the Goals and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan. It is also intended to serve as a reference for community partners, community members, business and property owners, and others who play a role in supporting Plan implementation or are simply interested in tracking the city’s progress over time.

MARGARET W. CO. CENTER



Chapter

5

5.1 IMPLEMENTATION ORGANIZATION

This chapter should be used as a tool to guide future city department work programs, capital improvement planning, budgetary decisions, and the allocation of staff time and other city resources.

Actions are organized by the eight Vision Themes:

- Cultivating Identity and Image
- Providing Great Services and Amenities
- Fostering Economic Vitality
- Providing Resources and Building Relationships
- Creating Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Growing Smarter and Greener
- Connecting Community, People, and Places
- Building a Safe and Healthy Community

For each Strategy listed, anticipated responsibilities, timing, and resources are identified, as defined below. Many of the Strategies are cross-cutting, in that they support more than one of the Vision Themes and/or Goals and Policies. It is important to note that while each Goal generally has one or more corresponding Strategy, not every Policy is accompanied by a specific strategy. Rather, the intent of some Policies will simply be carried out through day-to-day decision making.

RESPONSIBILITY

Most of the Strategies identified in this chapter will

require collaboration among multiple departments within the city. For each Strategy, a 'lead' department is designated in addition to one or more departments that serve in a 'support' role.

Some of the Strategies will be implemented in partnership with others in the city or region, such as Adams County, RTD, or adjacent municipalities. In other cases, Strategies will reflect ongoing partnerships and initiatives that the city is already engaged in.

TIMEFRAME

An anticipated timeframe for the initiation of each Strategy is provided. Strategies may be implemented sooner than the timeframes identified if the opportunity arises (e.g., staffing or grant funding becomes available), or as community priorities change. While these Strategies will likely be initiated in the next few years, full implementation is a long-term process. Timeframes are defined as follows:

- **Near-term:** already underway or to be initiated within 1 year of Plan adoption.
- **Medium-term:** to be initiated between 1-3 years following Plan adoption.
- **Ongoing:** actions implemented by city staff as part of their routine job duties.



Construction of the new Water Treatment Facility



RESOURCES REQUIRED

The types of resources needed to implement each of the Strategies in this chapter are noted to inform the planning and budgeting process. Types of required resources include:

- **Staff Time.** All Strategies will require the dedication of staff time, therefore, staff time is not noted individually.
- **City Funds.** The city has multiple funds through which services are financed. These various funds are used to maintain and enhance the city's programs and services, and support capital improvement projects citywide.
- **Grant Funds.** Federal, state, county, and other outside grants help fund a wide range of public programs, services, and projects for the city. These grants help finance the critical programs and services needed to preserve the quality of life for Thornton residents and advance key projects for the city.
- **Partnerships.** Some of the Strategies may need to be implemented in partnership with other agencies, organizations, private sector investors, developers, or others. Typically, partnerships help implement major projects.

REPORTING ON PROGRESS

Monitoring and reporting progress is an important element of accomplishing the Comprehensive Plan's Goals. It is recommended that the Goals and Strategies found in the document be evaluated regularly to determine progress toward the community's vision. New implementation Strategies should be developed as circumstances change. Additionally, the Plan recommends that for each Goal, the applicable city departments determine their own performance measures for evaluation of Goal progress.



Street widening at 112th and Colorado Blvd



VISION THEME: CULTIVATING IDENTITY AND IMAGE (CII)

Strategies to cultivate identity and image seek to advance the city's branding, beautification, and other efforts designed to make Thornton an attractive and distinctive community. Strategies also support the protection and enhancement of the city's environmental and cultural resources. Strategies for this Vision Theme play a direct role in supporting the 'Fostering Economic Vitality' and 'Connecting Community, People, and Places' Vision Themes.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources Required
Strategy CII-a. Determine the strengths and weaknesses of Thornton's current branding to identify opportunities for future enhancements. Consider hiring outside expertise to assist in the establishment and enhancement of the city's image.	Lead: Communications Involve: All Departments	Medium-term	City Funds, Grant Funds
Strategy CII-b. Collaborate with partner organizations on strategic planning for potential catalyst projects that may help enhance Thornton's visibility and notoriety as a regional destination.	Lead: City Manager's Office Involve: City Development, Economic Development, Partner Organizations	Ongoing	Partnerships
Strategy CII-c. Promote the city's diverse selection of entertainment, artistic, and cultural offerings. Pursue performing arts opportunities as directed by City Council.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs, Other Departments Involve: Other departments and partner organizations	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy CII-d. Improve the city's image and identity through recognition of historic structures, sites and districts, as well as streetscape enhancements and public art projects and programs.	Lead: Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs Involve: City Development, City Manager's Office, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy CII-e. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Cultivating Identity and Image', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: Communications, Infrastructure, City Manager's Office, Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs	Ongoing	City Funds





VISION THEME: PROVIDING GREAT SERVICES AND AMENITIES (GSA)

Strategies to support the provision of great services and amenities are intended to continue investment in and expansion of the city's existing parks, open spaces, and other recreational amenities, while also expanding access to certain amenities and services that are less prevalent in Thornton today, such as arts and cultural resources. Many of the Strategies associated with this Vision Theme are supported by Strategies associated with the 'Cultivating Image and Identity' Vision Theme.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources Required
Strategy GSA-a. Periodically update the Parks and Open Space Master Plan to ensure inclusivity. Continue to focus on completion of the overall parks and open space system, and to identify gaps or underserved areas of the community.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, Infrastructure	Medium-term	City Funds
Strategy GSA-b. Continue to seek grants and establish a phased funding strategy for the completion of the seven remaining Heritage Trail loops identified as part of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, Infrastructure, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	Grant Funds
Strategy GSA-c. Convert directional and informational signage in city parks and open spaces and along trails to universal design symbols wherever possible (as existing signs are replaced or new ones added). Incorporate the latest in information technology.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, Infrastructure	Medium-term	City Funds, Grant Funds
Strategy GSA-d. Continuously review and update the connectivity requirements and alternative transportation options in the Transportation and Mobility Master Plan, Parks and Open Space Master Plan and the City Code to ensure clear, direct pedestrian and bicycle connections as part of future development.	Lead: City Development Involve: Infrastructure, Economic Development, partners	Medium-term	City Funds
Strategy GSA-e. Develop and determine funding for an Arts and Culture Plan to guide future investments and partnerships that enhance the city's cultural vitality, vibrancy, and landscape.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, City Manager's Office	Medium-term	City Funds
Strategy GSA-f. On a regular basis, conduct needs assessments or customer surveys to determine the adequacy and general satisfaction with, and inclusiveness of, city services and facilities. This evaluation should also consider the changing needs of the community.	Lead: Each operating department	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy GSA-g. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Providing Great Services and Amenities', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: City Manager's Office, Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs, City Development, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds



VISION THEME: FOSTERING ECONOMIC VITALITY (EV)

Strategies to foster economic vitality are intended to reinforce and increase awareness of the city's ongoing economic development efforts within the context of the Comprehensive Plan. Strategies for this Vision Theme directly support the 'Growing Smarter and Greener' and 'Connecting Community, People, and Places' Vision Themes.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy EV-a. Continue to protect commercially zoned and allocated land to ensure a strong economic future for the city.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy EV-b. Continue to implement strategies and work towards the Council adopted goal of 0.75 jobs-to-housing ratio.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy EV-c. Continue to facilitate the development of important employment sites.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: City Development, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy EV-d. Continue to increase awareness and actively market the benefits of investment in the Opportunity Zone in Thornton.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: Communications	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy EV-e. Develop a priority list of, and funding strategies for, infrastructure improvements and amenities needed to attract the most important employment center projects.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: Infrastructure, City Development, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy EV-f. Continue to seek out private sector partnerships who will implement Thornton Development Authority (TDA) improvements to reduce public sector costs for infrastructure and maximize urban renewal area (URA) investments.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: City Development, Infrastructure, City Manager's Office	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy EV-g. Review, evaluate, and if necessary, develop a new Economic Development Strategic Plan.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy EV-h. Review and assess Thornton's jobs-to-housing ratio based on changing trends, technology, etc.	Lead: Economic Development Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy EV-i. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Fostering Economic Vitality', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of strategic plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: Economic Development	Ongoing	City Funds





VISION THEME: PROVIDING RESOURCES AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS (RR)

Strategies to provide resources and build relationships are intended to reinforce the importance of partnerships and collaboration in the city's day-to-day operations and in the quality of life of Thornton residents. Strategies for this Vision Theme play a direct role in supporting the 'Connecting Community, People, and Places' Vision Theme.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy RR-a. Implement a resource center for the community located in the Community Connections Division.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: All departments	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy RR-b. Work with local agencies to monitor the human service needs of the community to establish a system for measuring, monitoring, and reporting changes in needs, outcomes, or the efficacy of programs and services over time.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: Police, Fire, City Development	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy RR-c. Support organized events and activities that embrace diversity and inclusion.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy RR-d. Consider inclusivity in the provision of all aspects of city governance and services. - Establish funding sources and conduct a needs assessment in consultation with residents and business owners who speak languages other than English to determine needs for translation and interpretation services. - In accordance with the results of the needs assessment, encourage publication of city documents, online information sources, and other resources in languages that reflect those that are used commonly throughout the city, as appropriate. - In accordance with the results of the needs assessment, support the provision of verbal interpretative services at city facilities and all public meetings hosted by the city, as necessary and appropriate. - Encourage diversity within the city's hiring and recruitment processes. - Increase awareness of the diverse resources and services that the city provides.	Lead: City Manager's Office, Management Services Involve: All departments	Near-term and Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy RR-e. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Providing Resources and Building Relationships', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds



VISION THEME: CREATING QUALITY AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS (QDN)

Strategies to create quality and diverse neighborhoods are intended to support the enhancement of established neighborhoods and guide the design and development of new neighborhoods. Strategies for this Vision Theme play a direct role in supporting the 'Fostering Economic Vitality', 'Growing Smarter and Greener', and 'Connecting Community, People, and Places' Vision Themes.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy QDN-a. Evaluate funding mechanisms and other tools to address gaps in affordable housing.	Lead: City Development Involve: Finance, Housing Partners	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy QDN-b. Periodically update the city's housing needs assessment and Housing Master Plan, as needed, to confirm and identify housing gaps in the community.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy QDN-c. Identify opportunities to attract and facilitate affordable and attainable housing projects north of 120th Avenue.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy QDN-d. Identify opportunities to attract and facilitate underrepresented housing types south of 120th Avenue.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy QDN-e. Provide residents with information regarding home repair resources, and water and energy efficiency upgrades and practices.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy QDN-f. Continue to use the CDBG Annual Action Plan as a mechanism to prioritize funding for qualifying projects.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: Infrastructure	Near-term and Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy QDN-g. Implement key recommendations identified as part of the city's DRCOG Boomer Bond initiative.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, DRCOG	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy QDN-h. Review and update the existing Thornton City Code, and other applicable city standards, to help implement the desired mix of housing types reflected on the Future Land Use Map and in the supporting Placemaking Guidelines and area plans.	Lead: City Development Involve: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs	Near-term	City Funds



Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy QDN-i. Identify opportunities to attract and encourage diverse housing types and residential price points in areas that are well-served by public transit and other services, and are identified within the Growth Framework chapter as Activity Centers or Complete Neighborhoods.	Lead: City Development Involve: Economic Development	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy QDN-j. Work with the community and explore ways to improve the exterior appearance of homes and surrounding properties within non-managed residential neighborhoods.	Lead: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy QDN-k. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Creating Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: City Development, Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs	Ongoing	City Funds



VISION THEME: GROWING SMARTER AND GREENER (SG)

Strategies to help Thornton grow smarter and greener are intended to promote the fiscal and environmental sustainability of the city organization, as well as to ensure development and infrastructure are planned and implemented in a way that helps advance the community's sustainability goals. Strategies for this Vision Theme play a direct role in supporting the 'Fostering Economic Vitality', 'Creating Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods', and 'Connecting Community, People, and Places' Vision Themes.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy SG-a. Regularly update the city's fiscal impact model to match major changes to the city's budget: - Track the growth of jobs and households by area to understand the impact of new development on expenditure factors; and - Modify the model as needed to better reflect the differences in revenue generation and expenditures from new development versus existing development. When appropriate, utilize the model to assess new development activity and land use changes.	Lead: Finance Involve: City Development, Economic Development, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy SG-b. Review the city's current codes, standards, and criteria used to ensure proposed developments meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and other long-range plans.	Lead: City Development Involve: Infrastructure, Parks, Recreation and Community Programs	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy SG-c. Advance the city's ongoing sustainability initiatives through the creation of a two-pronged Sustainability Action Agenda that establishes: - A formal sustainability program for the city organization; and - A framework for a community-wide sustainability effort.	Lead: Infrastructure Involve: City Development, City Manager's Office	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SG-d. Every five years, or as unique opportunities arise that are aligned with the city's goals, reevaluate the impacts of potentially expanding into Weld County.	Lead: City Development Involve: Finance, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy SG-e. Explore the feasibility of establishing an intergovernmental agreement with Weld County that expands the city's ability to review future development in the Weld County portion of the Future Growth Area.	Lead: City Development Involve: Legal, Infrastructure, City Manager's Office	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy SG-f. Consider developing alternative development standards for infill areas.	Lead: City Development Involve: Economic Development	Near-term	City Funds



Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy SG-g. Develop an integrated Utility Master Plan that combines the: • Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Master Plan • Raw Water Supply Master Plan • Water Treatment Facilities Master Plan	Lead: Infrastructure Involve: City Development	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy SG-h. Develop an Agricultural Stewardship Plan for the city's northern properties. As part of this effort, explore potential uses and management strategies to help maximize the long-term value of these properties for the city and their positive impact on the northern region.	Lead: Infrastructure Involve: City Development	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SG-i. Update zone districts in the Thornton City Code to facilitate the types and intensities of mixed-use development and other land uses contemplated in the Growth Framework.	Lead: City Development Involve: Economic Development, Infrastructure	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy SG-j. Develop a Fiber Master Plan for city facilities.	Lead: Management Services Involve: Economic Development, City Development, Infrastructure, partners	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy SG-k. Implement existing area plans and identify new area plans that are needed to further the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan, such as: • Eastlake Streetscape Plan • 144th Station Area Master Plan • Niver Creek Land Use and Connections Plan (pending funding availability)	Lead: City Development Involve: Infrastructure	Near-term and Medium-term	City Funds, Grant Funds
Strategy SG-l. Update city codes and requirements that regulate development around oil and gas facilities in Thornton as directed by City Council.	Lead: City Development Involve: City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Infrastructure	Near-term	City Funds
Strategy SG-m. Continue to evaluate opportunities to introduce Smart City initiatives into city operations.	Lead: Infrastructure, City Development Involve: City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy SG-n. Explore options for expanding solid waste diversion from the landfill by increasing recycling, composting, and waste reduction at special events.	Lead: Infrastructure, Involve: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs, partners	Ongoing	City Funds, Grant Funds

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy SG-o. Continue to prioritize water conservation measures at city facilities as well as promote water conservation among the city's water customers.	Lead: Infrastructure Involve: Communications, City Development, City Manager's Office, partners	Ongoing	City Funds, Grant Funds
Strategy SG-p. An impact assessment should be part of the consideration for a change in Future Land Use Map designation.	Lead: City Development Involve: Finance, Economic Development	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SG-q. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Growing Smarter and Greener', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: Finance, City Development, Infrastructure, Management Services, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds





VISION THEME: CONNECTING COMMUNITY, PEOPLE, AND PLACES (CPP)

Strategies to connect community, people, and places reinforce the importance of both physical and social connections. Strategies address the continued expansion of multimodal options, and the importance of nurturing inclusion and collaboration as a core community value. This Vision Theme is directly supported by Strategies in the 'Providing Great Amenities and Services', and 'Providing Resources and Building Relationships' Vision Themes.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy CPP-a. Update the city's Transportation and Mobility Master Plan to align with the Vision Themes and Goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Place a particular emphasis on: • A holistic view of an interconnected multimodal transportation network and mobility plan; • Expanding mobility options; • Improving land use and transportation connections; • Leveraging regional transportation investments through enhanced local connections; and • Exploring the role of emerging technologies and modes in Thornton's future.	Lead: City Development Involve: Infrastructure, Parks, Recreation and Community Programs, Economic Development, DRCOG and other regional partners	Near-term	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy CPP-b. Review the list of priority bike lane, trail, and sidewalk gaps as a part of the annual Capital Improvement Plan and budgeting process to identify feasible projects for completion, paying particular attention to: • First and last mile connections; • Gaps for mobility-challenged individuals; • Connections between established neighborhoods, nearby services and amenities, and other communities; and • Connect neighborhoods with access to a park and/or green space within a ten-minute walk of their residence.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Grant Funds, Partnerships
Strategy CPP-c. Maintain and pursue interagency partnerships. Update and add new IGAs with neighboring communities and service providers as necessary to facilitate regional collaboration.	Lead: City Manager's Office, other departments as needed Involve: Legal, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy CPP-d To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Connecting Community, People, and Places', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: City Development, Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds



VISION THEME: BUILDING A SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY (SHC)

Strategies to build a safe and healthy community are intended to address public safety, education, hazard mitigation, and the overall health and wellness of the community. This Vision Theme is directly supported by Strategies in the 'Providing Great Amenities and Services' and 'Connecting Community, People, and Places' Vision Themes.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources Required
Strategy SHC-a. Continue to provide safe and reliable drinking water to all water customers.	Lead: Infrastructure Involve: City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds, Grant Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SHC-b. Continue to collaborate with school districts, schools, and parent teacher organizations to improve student safety to and from school. Such collaboration may include seeking appropriate grants.	Lead: Police Involve: Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SHC-c. Make streets safer by: - Implementing the city's Complete Streets principles through updates to the Thornton City Code and other applicable standards and specifications; - Continuing programs such as the city's speed awareness program; and - Continuing cross-departmental collaboration on data-sharing and other strategies to promote efficient and effective speed enforcement and reduction of crashes.	Lead: Infrastructure Involve: City Development, Police	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships, Grant Funds
Strategy SHC-d. Continue to coordinate reviews of, and updates to, the Thornton, Federal Heights, and Northglenn Hazard Mitigation Plan, as adopted.	Lead: City Development Involve: All other departments	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SHC-e. Continue to explore the best way to ensure public safety services are adequately distributed throughout the city and can be provided in the most efficient and cost-effective manner as the city's population continues to grow.	Lead: Police, Fire Involve: All other departments	Ongoing	City Funds, Grant Funds
Strategy SHC-f. Continue to pursue the development of a new police training facility.	Lead: Police Involve: Infrastructure City Development, City Manager's Office	Ongoing	City Funds



Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources Required
Strategy SHC-g. Continue to evaluate the potential need for additional fire stations in north Thornton as the future land use patterns and long-term strategies for the Weld County portion of the Future Growth Area are defined.	Lead: Fire Involve: City Development	Ongoing	City Funds
Strategy SHC-h. Continue to support access to locally-produced healthy food by: • Attracting healthy food stores and restaurants in areas with limited food options • Where needed, amending the city's zoning and development standards. • Attracting farmer's markets and community gardens • Providing educational opportunities for backyard vegetable gardens	Lead: Economic Development, Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: City Development, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships, Grant Funds
Strategy SHC-i. Explore the use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) for • Review of new development projects • Design of parks, amenities, and facilities • Other city projects where appropriate	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs, City Development Involve: Police, Infrastructure	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships
Strategy SHC-j. Continue to collaborate with local and regional partners on initiatives that eliminate homelessness, substance abuse, and poverty.	Lead: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Involve: Adams County Human Services, other partner organizations	Ongoing	City Funds, Partnerships, Grant Funds
Strategy SHC-k. To assist in accomplishing the Vision Theme of 'Building a Safe and Healthy Community', applicable departments should create performance measures during the development of master plans, operational plans, and department budgets.	Lead: Infrastructure, City Development, Parks, Recreation and Community Programs, Police, Fire	Ongoing	City Funds





Appendix A: Community Profile

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Community Profile contains an analysis of trends and key issues that will impact the future of the city of Thornton. The purpose of this report is to help inform ongoing discussions with key stakeholders and the community at large as part of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process. The report is organized as follows:

Thornton at a Glance - captures overarching trends related to population growth and demographics.

Focus Areas - explores current conditions and trends in four focus areas that are anticipated to be of particular importance as part of the rewrite process:

- Growth and Development
- Housing Access
- Economic Vitality
- Health, Equity, and Inclusion

Each of the focus area sections includes a brief narrative along with maps, diagrams, and supporting graphics to highlight:

- **Where we are today.** Overview of current conditions and trends specific to this focus area.
- **Looking to the future.** Based on recent and emerging trends, and the existing policies and regulations we have in place today, what are the key issues and opportunities that need to be considered as part of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process?

DATA SOURCES

A variety of data sources were used to develop this Community Profile and are noted where applicable. Both the decennial census and ACS (American Community Survey) data from the U.S. Census Bureau are used in this report to explore Thornton's demographic trends and changes. Unlike the decennial census, the ACS estimates do not provide official counts of the population at a distinct point in time. Instead, the data is collected year-round and has a smaller sample size, which subjects itself to a larger sampling error than the decennial census. Although the ACS estimates have a larger sampling error, the 1-year ACS estimates are used in some instances to highlight more recent demographic trends and changes.

Data from Adams County and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) was also used for comparison purposes.

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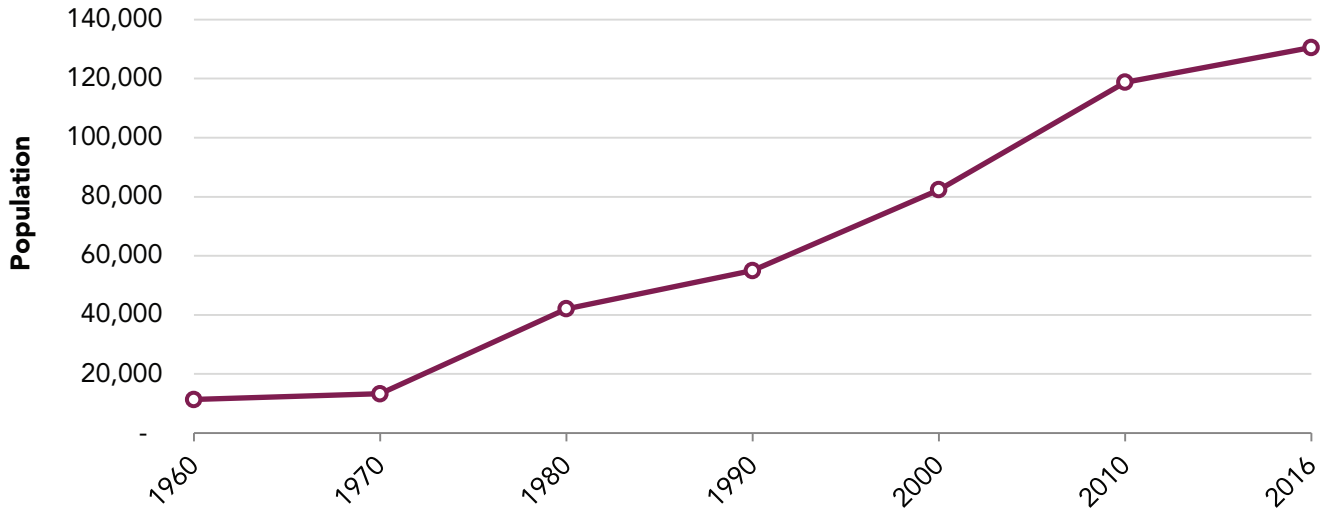
THORNTON AT A GLANCE



POPULATION GROWTH

Historic Growth

Source: Department of Local Affairs, 2016; Clarion Associates



Year	Thornton		Adams County	
	Population	Average Annual Growth*	Population	Average Annual Growth*
1960	11,353	-	120,296	11.6%
1970	13,326	1.6%	185,789	4.4%
1980	42,054	12.2%	245,944	2.8%
1990	55,031	2.7%	265,038	0.8%
2000	82,384	4.1%	363,857	3.2%
2010	118,772	3.7%	441,603	2.0%
2016	130,511	0.9%	479,977	0.8%
1960-2016	-	4.5%**	-	2.5%**

* Rates of growth reflect annual average growth that occurred over the previous 10 years.

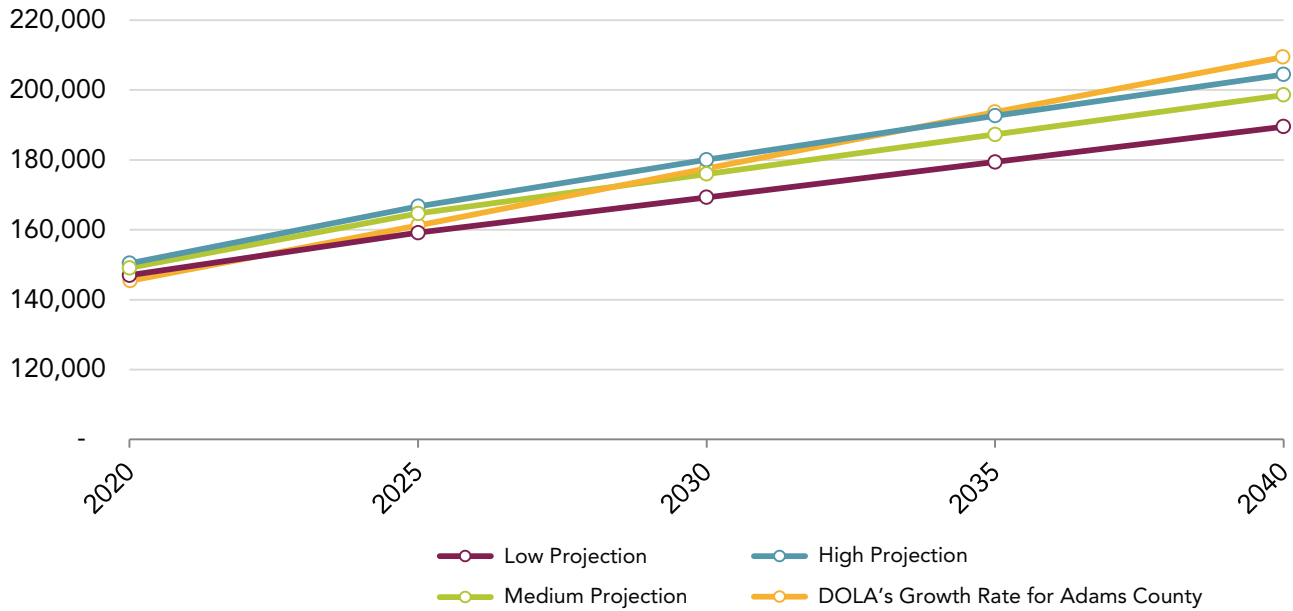
**Annual average growth rate is for the period from 1960 – 2016.

Thornton's population has grown steadily since the city was first incorporated in 1956. Since 1960, Thornton has maintained an average annual growth rate of about 4.5%, nearly double that of Adams County. The city experienced its biggest population growth between 1970 and 1980 when 12 mi² were annexed into the city. Since 1990, the city has maintained a steady, but more moderate, growth rate and remains Adams County's most populous city, accounting for 27% of Adams County's total population in 2016.



Population Growth Forecasts

Source: city of Thornton, 2018



Year	Population Projection			DOLA's Growth Rate for Adams County
	Low	Medium	High	
2020	147,000	149,100	150,400	146,100
2025	159,200	164,700	166,700	164,600
2030	169,300	176,000	180,000	177,400
2035	179,400	187,300	192,600	193,200
2040	189,500	198,600	204,500	208,600

Thornton is forecast to reach a population of between 189,500 and 204,500 by 2040. The projection above is based on variable growth and land use assumptions associated with Thornton's current and future development projects. Two different forecasts were generated below, for comparison purposes:

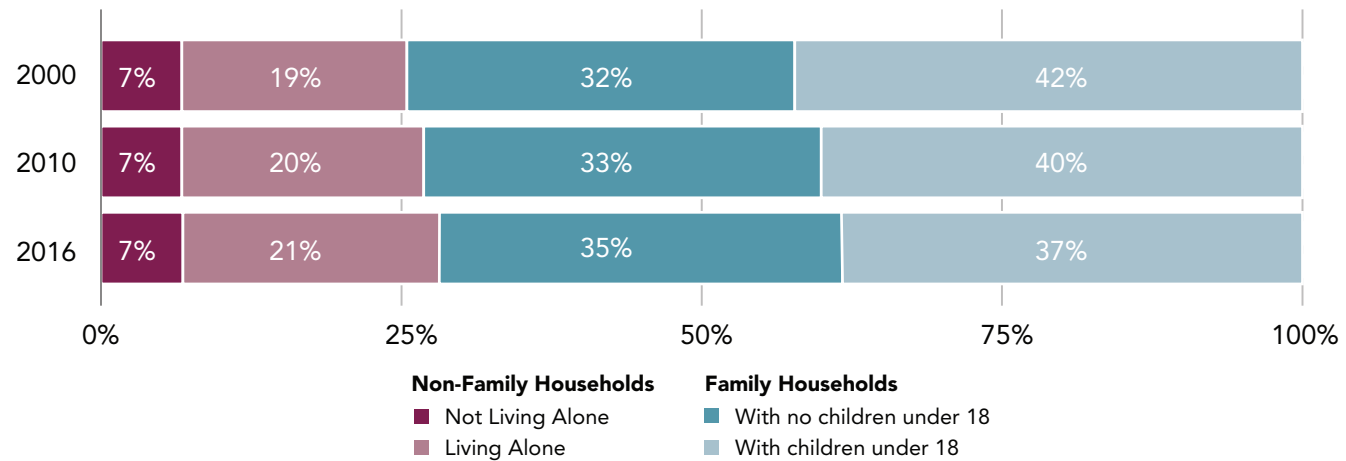
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs' (DOLA) Growth Rate for Adams County.** This forecast uses DOLA's future growth rates for Adams County and applies it to Thornton's population. If DOLA's growth rates for Adams County is applied to Thornton's current population, the community will reach a population of 208,600 by 2040.
- Continuation of average growth rate since 2000.** This forecast assumes that the average growth rate Thornton has seen for the last 17 years will continue (3%). If Thornton continues to experience an average annual growth rate of 3%, the community will reach a population of 271,300 by 2040.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Household Composition and Size

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates



Thornton has been and continues to be, a family-oriented community. Between 2000 and 2016, family households with no children under 18 decreased by 7% while family households with children increased by 3%. Non-family households decreased by 3% during the same period. Family households are defined by the U.S. Census as a group of two or more people who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption; they may also include unrelated people. Non-family households consists of people who live alone or who share their home with unrelated people.

Average Family Size

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census;
U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates



Average Household Size

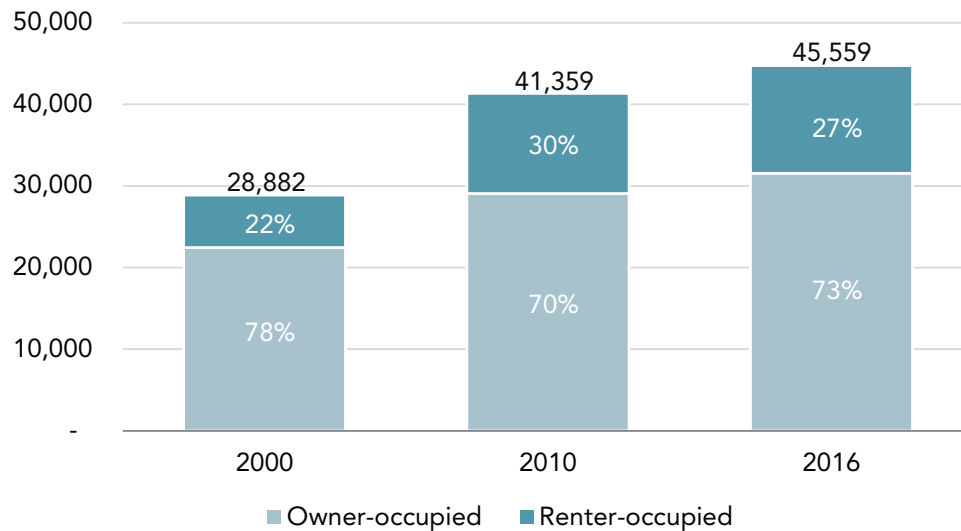


Average family and household size has increased over time. Between 2000 and 2016, the average family size in Thornton increased from 3.25 to 3.49 people. This trend is also reflected in the average household size, which increased from 2.83 to 2.99. Nationally, the average household size decreased from 2.62 to 2.53 between 2000 and 2016.



Household Tenure

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

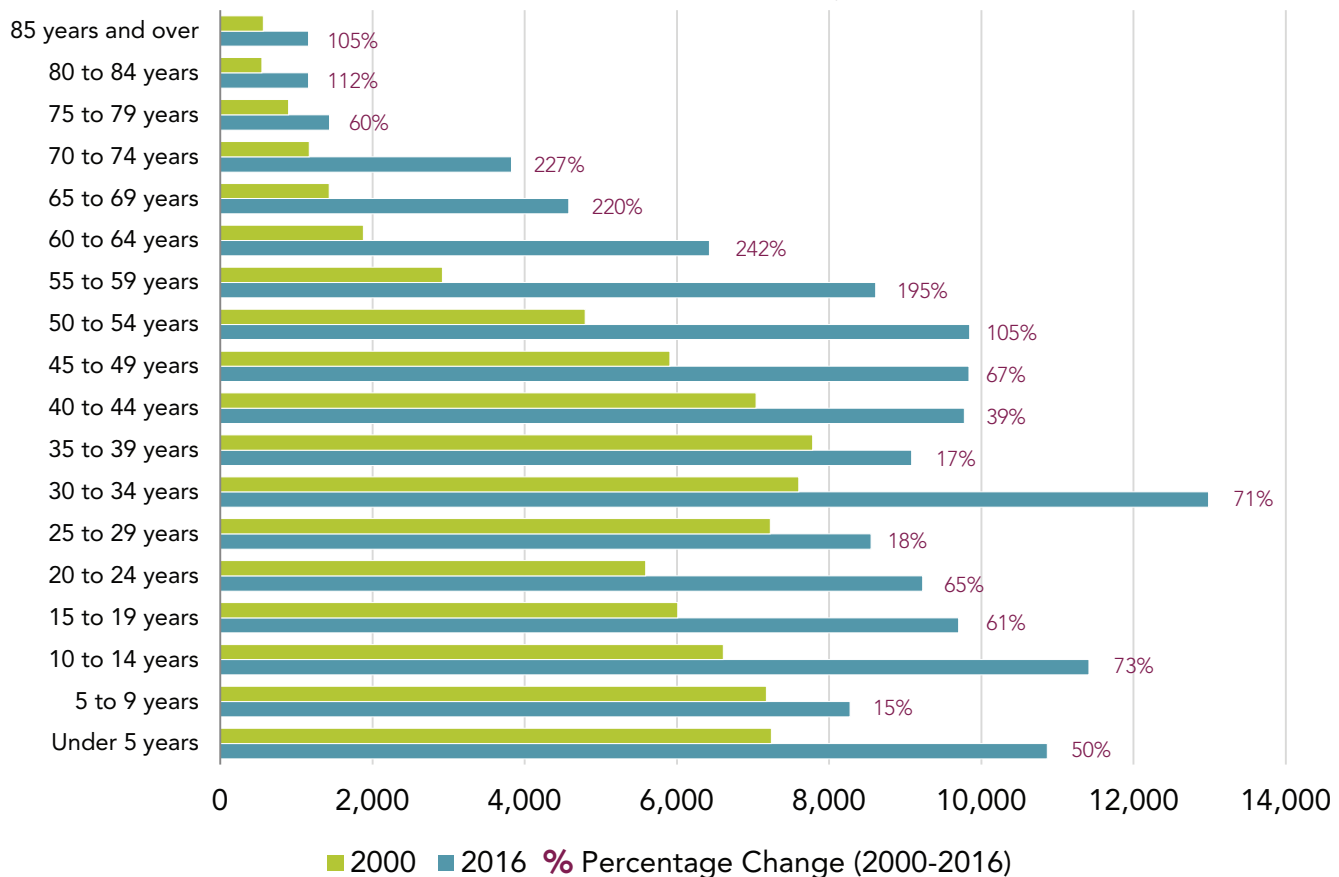


Homeownership among Thornton residents has decreased, but remains high.

73% of Thornton households own their home as compared to 63% of households in the DRCOG region as a whole.

Population Age Distribution and Growth Rates

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

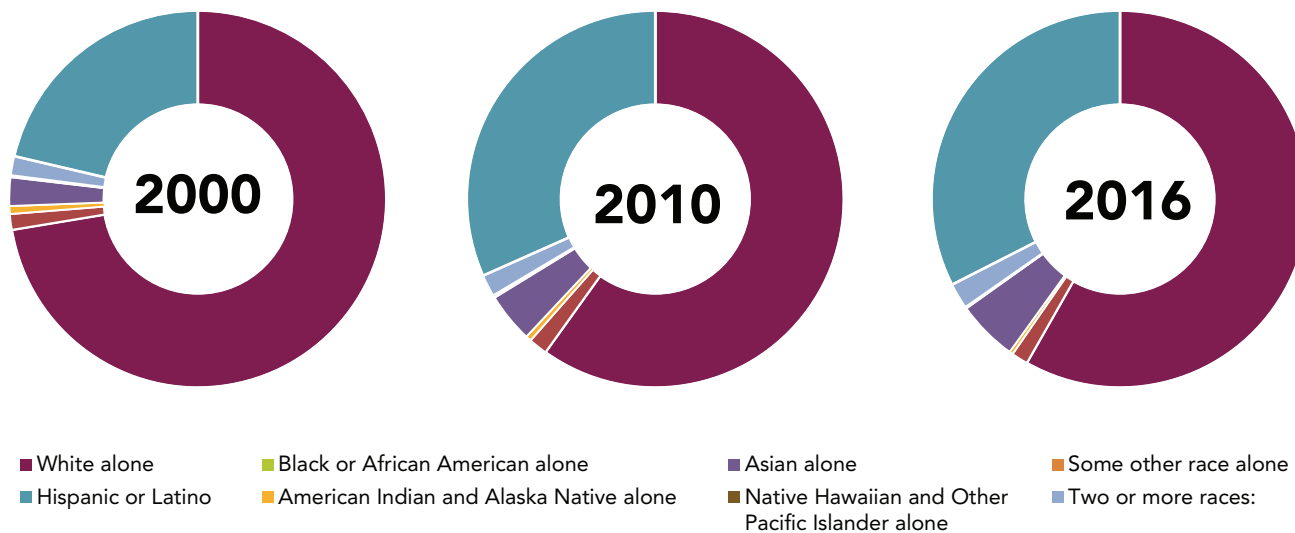


Thornton's population is increasingly older. Families still represent a significant portion of the overall population, however, the median age has increased, and the fastest rates of growth were seen primarily among older cohorts. Between 2000 and 2016, the 60 to 64 and 60 to 69 age cohorts doubled and grew at more than double the rate (8%) of the population as a whole. During the same time period, the median age increased from 30.8 to 33.9.



Racial/Ethnic Composition

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-year estimates



Thornton is getting more diverse. Thornton's minority population, most notably the Hispanic/Latino population, has increased significantly since 2000. Between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of the population that identified as Hispanic or Latino increased from 21.3% to 32.5%. During the same period, the Hispanic/Latino population also had one of the largest annual growth rates (5.7%) alongside the Asian population (7.9%). The White population had the lowest annual growth rate at 1.5%, but was still the largest ethnic group in 2016. The Hispanic/Latino population of Thornton (32.5%) is about 11% greater than the DRCOG region (21.5%).



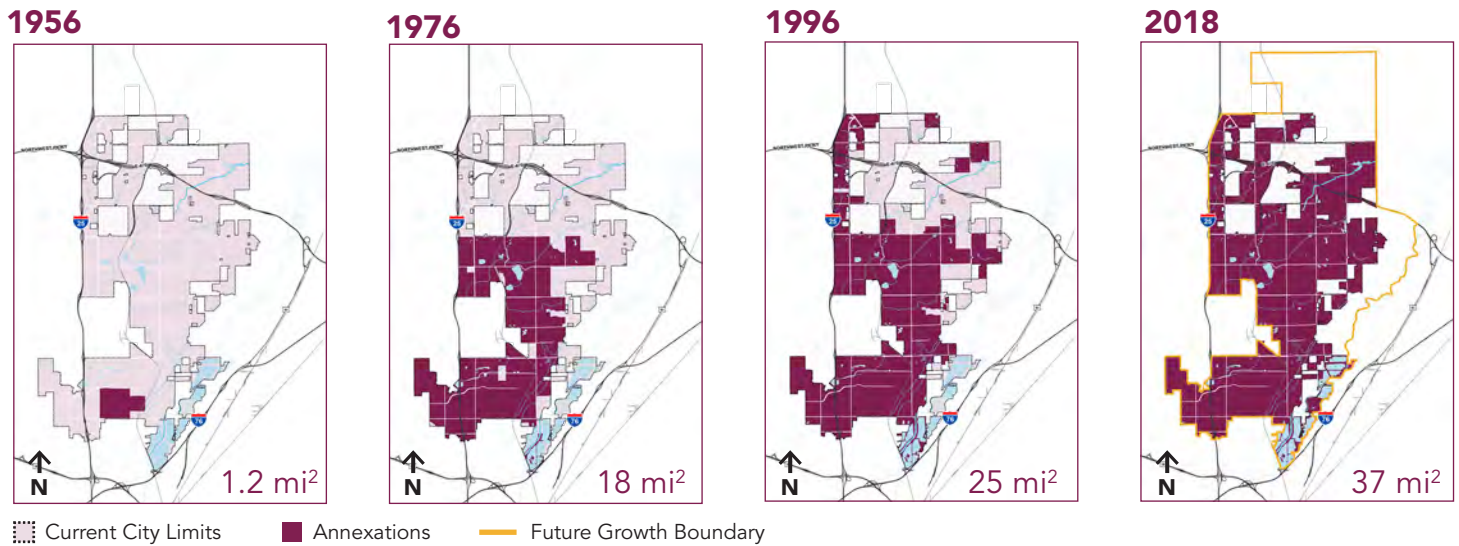
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



EXISTING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Annexations by Decade

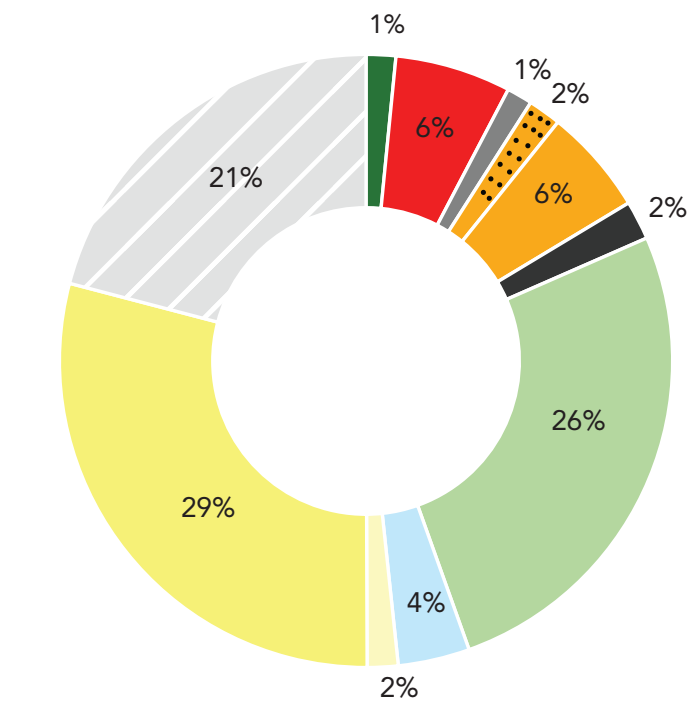
Source: city of Thornton, 2018



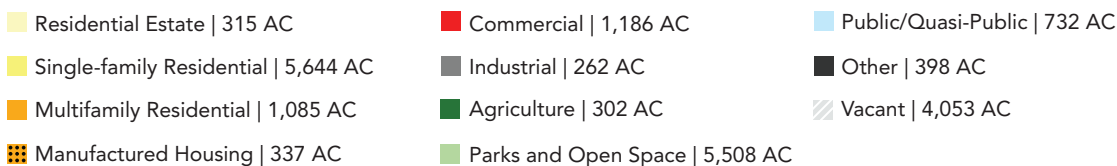
Thornton's geographic extent has expanded steadily since 1956. Within the first two decades of being incorporated, Thornton had annexed an additional 17 mi² of land area. This period of rapid expansion continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Since 1996, the city has incorporated an additional 12 mi² of land area.

Existing Land Use

Source: city of Thornton, August 2018; Clarion Associates

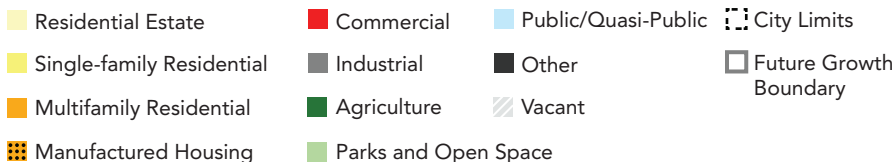
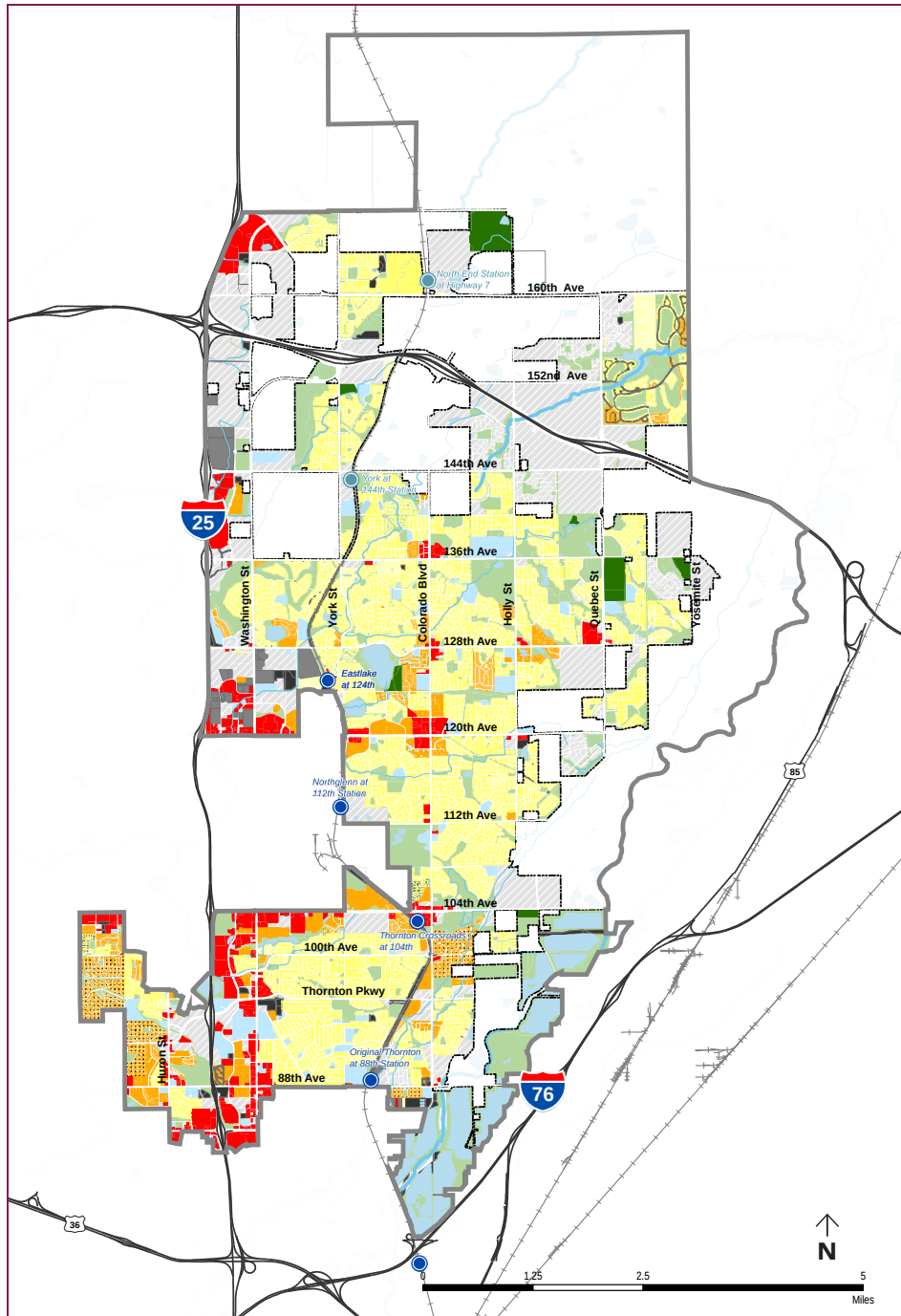


Thornton has a significant amount of vacant land within city limits. While single-family residential makes up majority of the city's existing land use (29%), vacant land also represents a significant portion of the land (21%). A substantial amount of land in Thornton is also dedicated to parks and open space (26%).



Existing Land Use

Source: city of Thornton, August 2018; Clarion Associates

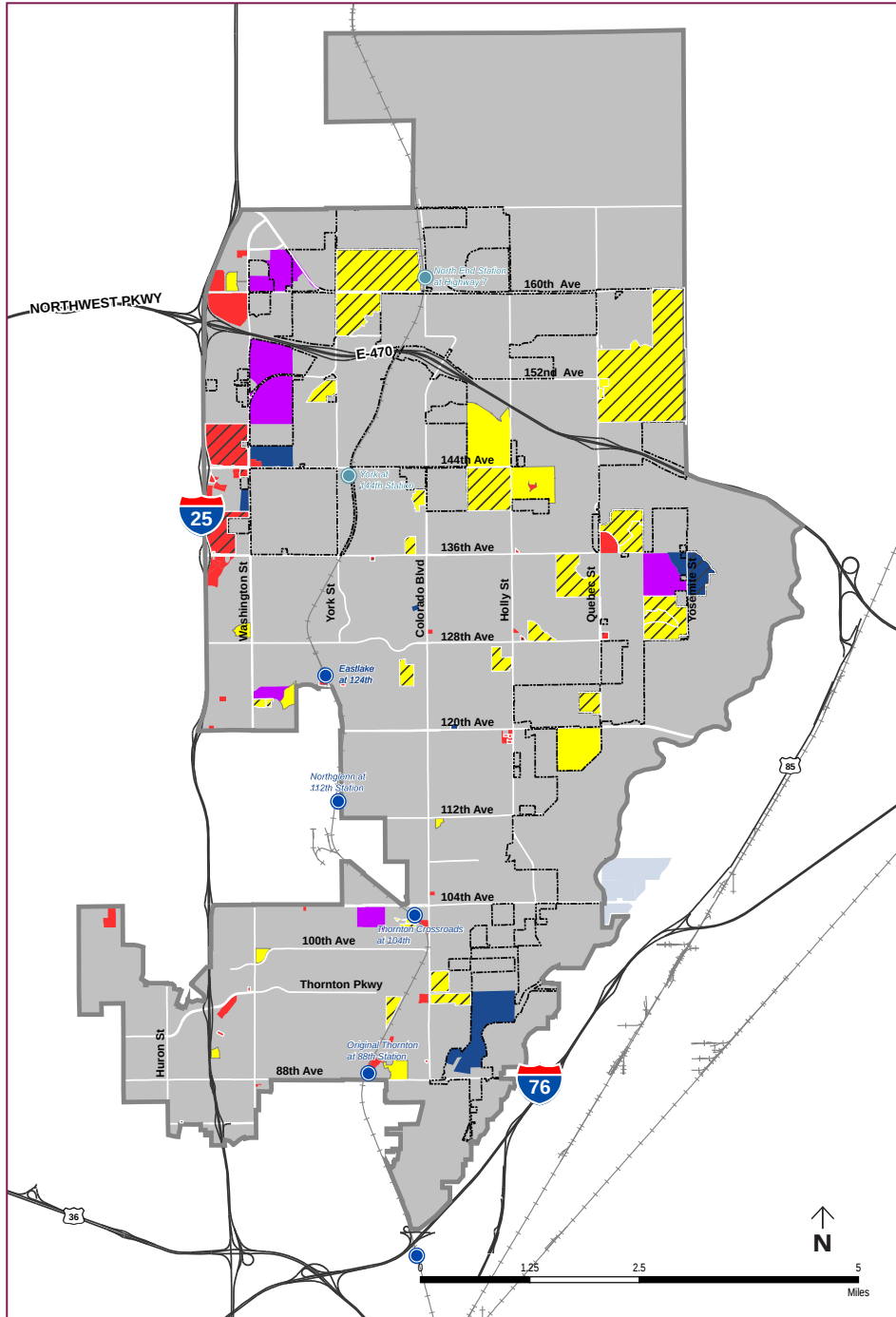


Commercial uses are largely concentrated along I-25 and at major intersections along Colorado Boulevard. Multifamily housing is located along major corridors and manufactured housing neighborhoods are concentrated in the south. The majority of vacant lands are located further north, along I-25 and E-470.



Active Projects in Thornton

Source: city of Thornton, May 2018



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Commercial | ■ Institutional | Under Construction | City Limits |
| ■ Residential | ■ Mixed-Use | Future Growth Boundary | |

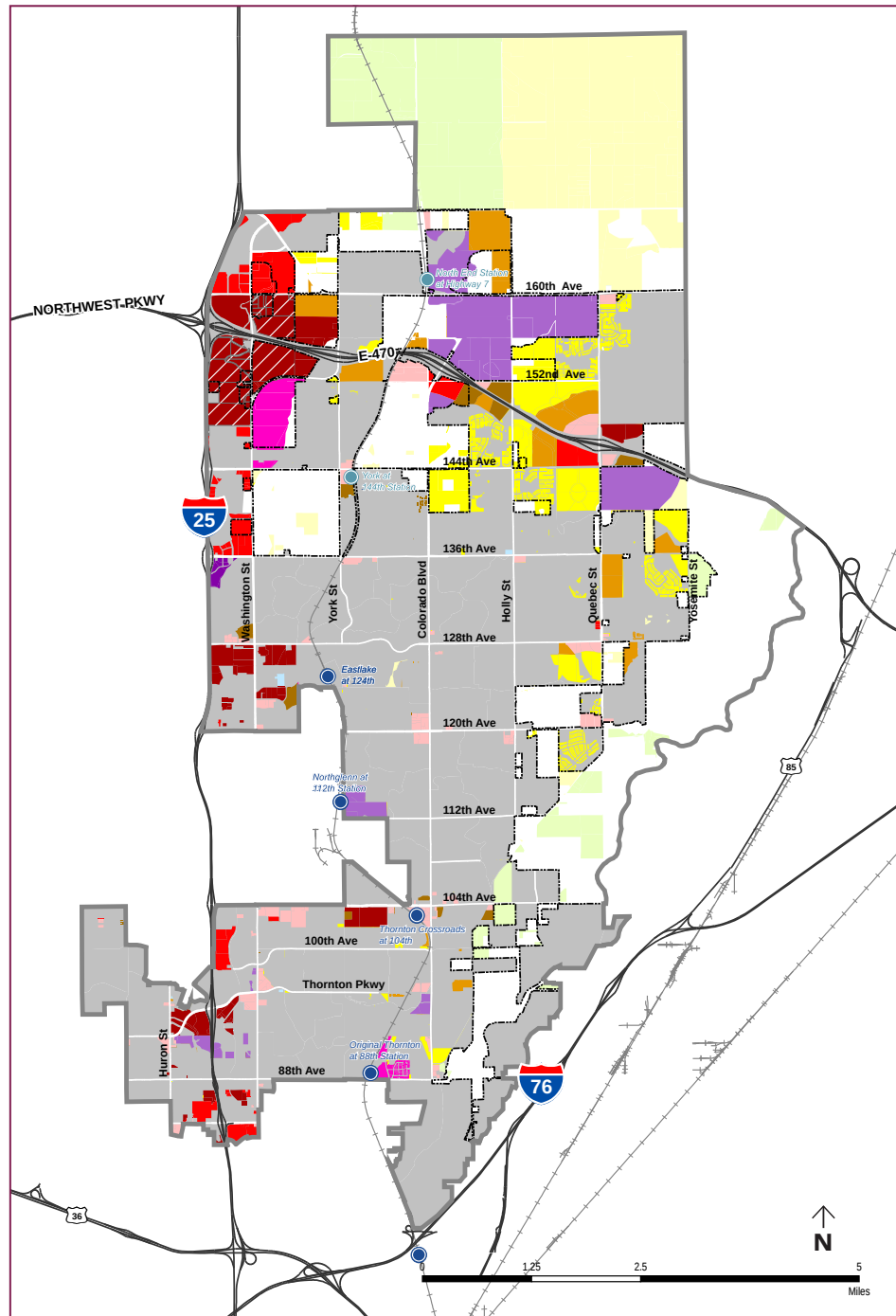
The majority of new construction and active projects within Thornton are concentrated north of 120th Ave. Many active mixed-use and commercial projects are concentrating along I-25 and E-470, with new construction around future commuter rail stations expected to begin in 2-3 years.



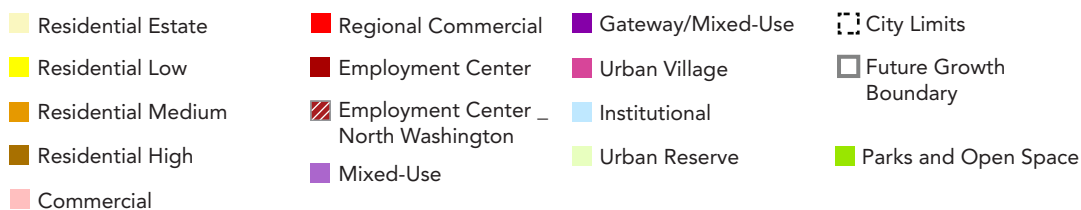
FUTURE GROWTH CAPACITY

Source: city of Thornton - Future Land Use Map, August 2018; Clarion Associates

Growth Opportunity Areas - Developable Land by Future Land Use*



Opportunity areas for new growth both within city limits and the future growth boundary are concentrated in north Thornton where majority of the developable land exists. The majority of the developable non-residential land is located along I-25 and E-470, while developable residential land is located northeast in Thornton along E-470.



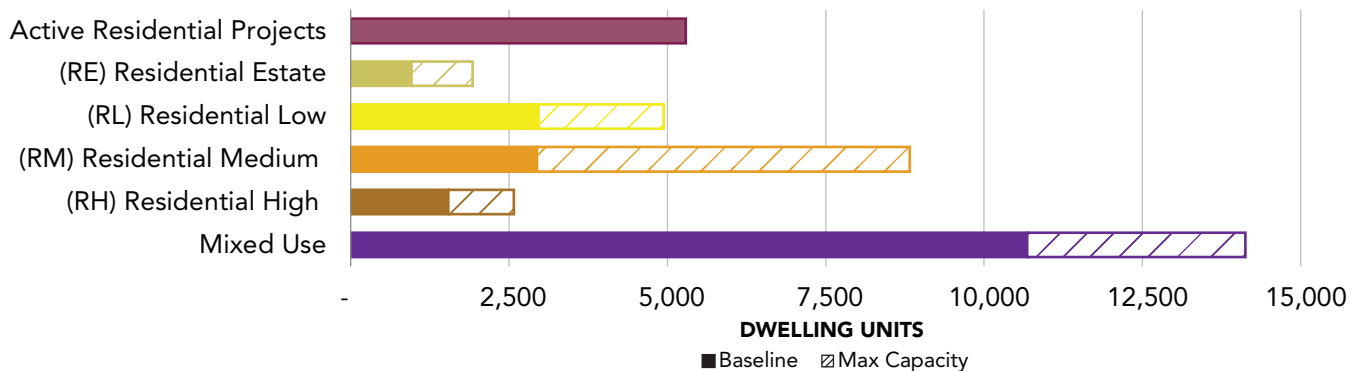
*Developable lands include existing vacant and agricultural lands within the city limits and future growth area that are not reserved for "Parks and Open Space" on the city's Future Land Use Map. It also includes targeted redevelopment areas and portions of Weld County within the city's future growth boundary.



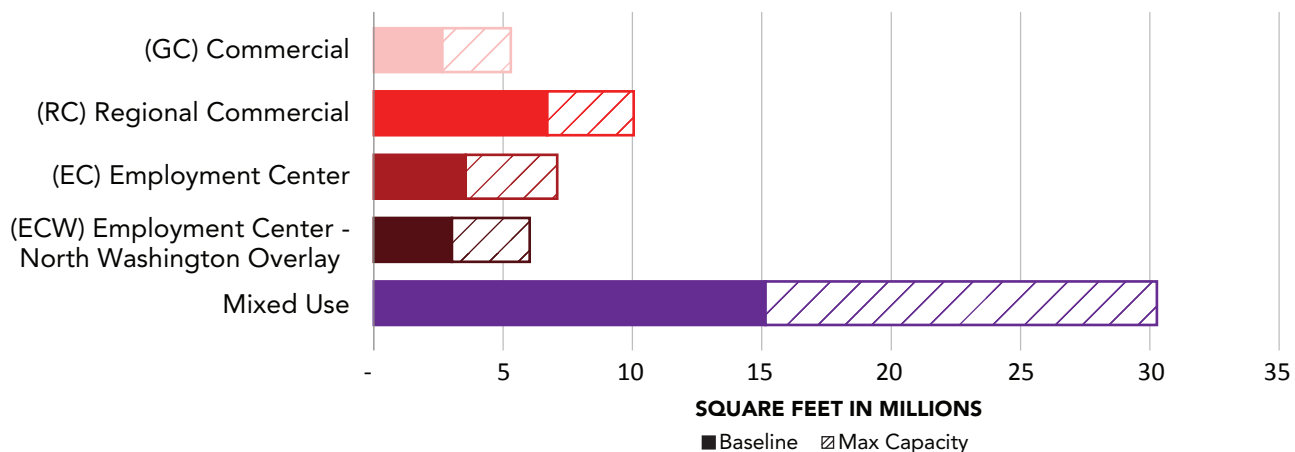
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY*

Source: city of Thornton - Future Land Use Map, August 2018; Clarion Associates

Distribution of Dwelling Unit Capacity by Future Land Use



Distribution of Non-Residential Capacity by Future Land Use



* The 2012 Comprehensive Plan provides limited guidance for portions of Weld County located within the city's future growth area and the "Urban Reserve" land use designation; as a result, these areas have been excluded from the development capacity analysis. An evaluation of potential land use scenarios for these areas and the fiscal implications of those scenarios will be conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process. The results of this analysis will be used to help inform potential updates to the Future Land Use Plan.

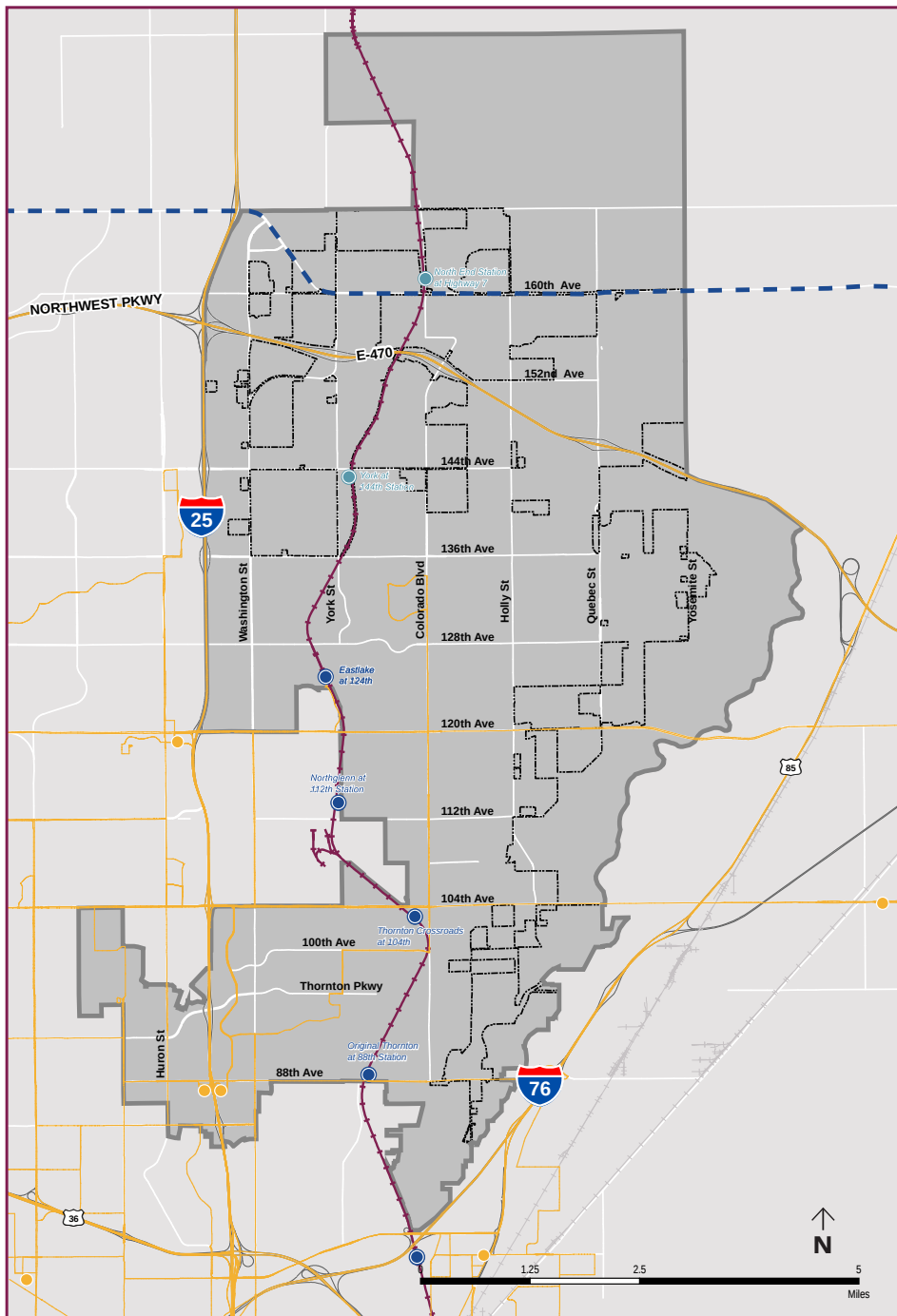
Based on current plans and policies, mixed-use areas of the city have the greatest capacity for both residential and non-residential development. While mixed-use areas represent only 14% of the city's supply of developable lands, they account for 44% of Thornton's residential development capacity and 52% of Thornton's non-residential development capacity. This analysis provides a baseline understanding of the city's current development capacity under the 2012 Comprehensive Plan. This information will be used to help inform alternative land use scenarios and potential updates to the Future Land Use Map as part of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process.



TRANSPORTATION

Existing and Proposed Transit Services/Facilities

Source: city of Thornton, 2018; RTD, 2018



- Commuter Rail — Proposed Bus Rapid Transit ● N Line Station ● Park-n-Ride
- Bus Route — N Line Future Station

Transit

Today, existing bus lines do not extend north of 136th, limiting access for residents that live in north Thornton. The future commuter rail (N Line) will improve the north-south connectivity for the city in addition to providing regional connections to the Denver Metro Region. The potential for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along State Highway 7 has also been studied and proposed, to connect Brighton and Boulder, and all other municipalities in between.

Roadways

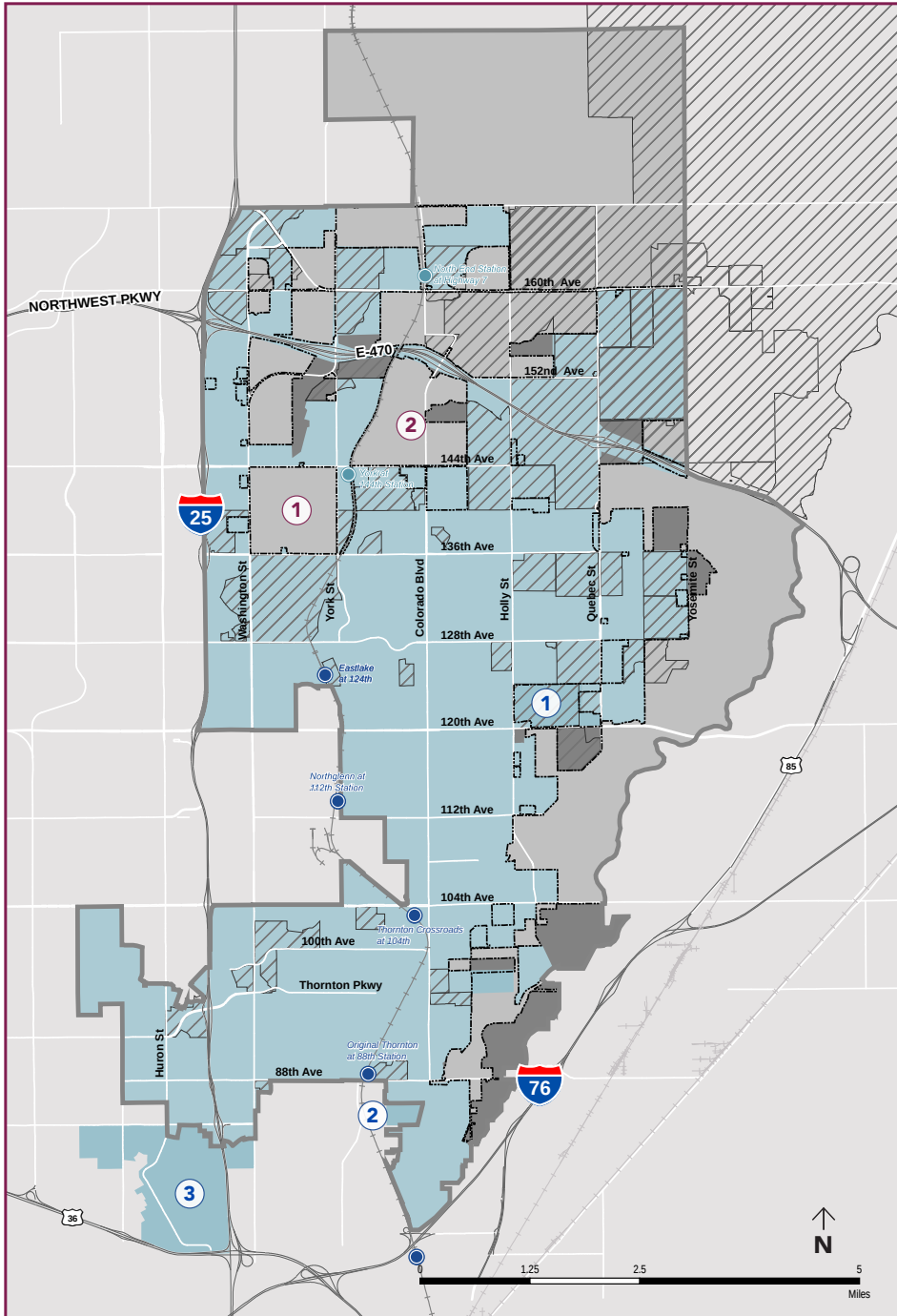
In addition to I-25, Colorado Boulevard and Washington Street are the only major thoroughfares that extend to points north and south of Thornton. East-west connectivity is also limited by the South Platte River.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Water Service Area and Metro Districts

Source: city of Thornton, 2018



- City Water Service Area
- City Limits
- Metro District
- Future Growth Boundary

Unincorporated Adams County Served by Thornton's Water Supply

- 1 Holly Crossing and Wright Farms
- 2 Welby
- 3 Western Hills and Sherrelwood

Adams County Residential Enclaves Not Served by Thornton's Water Supply

- 1 Wadley Farms
- 2 County Subdivisions at Colorado and 144th

Water and Wastewater

The city's water service area includes portions of unincorporated Adams County with some that are within and some that are outside the city's future growth boundary. There are also large county enclaves, north of 136th, that are within the future growth boundary but are not currently served by city water. Under normal circumstances, the city will serve these areas upon annexation.

Metro Districts

There are 63 metro districts in Thornton. Metro districts are special tax districts, typically established by developers, that help finance municipal services and infrastructure (e.g., water, roads, and parks) in areas where they do not exist. Thornton has typically used metro districts in the past to support the development of new subdivisions. While metro districts can help fund the development of these new neighborhoods, the costs associated with the municipal services are often shared with future homeowners of that neighborhood through a mill levy.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Clarifying the overall mix and intensity of uses desired in different locations. Future growth in Thornton will occur through a combination of new development on vacant land and infill/redevelopment in established areas of the community. Ensuring that adequate capacity is available to meet demand for housing and employment into the future will be important to consider as part of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite. What types of neighborhoods best fit the community's vision? What does mixed-use mean in different community contexts in Thornton? Where and how should additional retail and commercial services or employment uses be incorporated?

Understanding the fiscal impacts of future annexations. Significant growth opportunities exist in unincorporated portions of the city's future growth boundary in both Weld and Adams County. However, the potential impacts of future growth in these areas on existing services, infrastructure, and the city's overall fiscal health must be carefully considered. What types of services would be required to serve future uses in different locations? What mix of land uses would be most appropriate based on an evaluation of fiscal impacts? How should future requests to annex enclaves of existing county development be evaluated?

Promoting reinvestment in established areas of the community. New development and redevelopment activity remains low in older areas of Thornton relative to the newer areas of the city. How can the city of Thornton build on existing policies, strategies, and programs to ensure the long-term stability and vibrancy of established neighborhoods and commercial centers? What regulatory changes, incentives, and other strategies need to be considered in order to attract more private investment in established areas of the community?

Aligning land use and transportation plans. The city's land use patterns are intrinsically linked to the city's transportation system. As a follow up to the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite and any associated updates to the Future Land Use Map, the city will be initiating an update to the city's Transportation Master Plan. What types of transportation improvements will be needed to help support the community's preferred land use pattern? What types of land uses will be needed to help support existing/planned transportation investments?

Planning for long-term water needs. Updates to the city's Water Master Plan are in progress, based on the city's Future Land Use Map. As updates to the Future Land Use Map are considered, impacts on the city water supply will need to be evaluated. What types of policies or strategies are needed to help promote the sustainable use of the city's water supply in the face of growth and global climate change? How should the city approach future requests for service from outside of the city?



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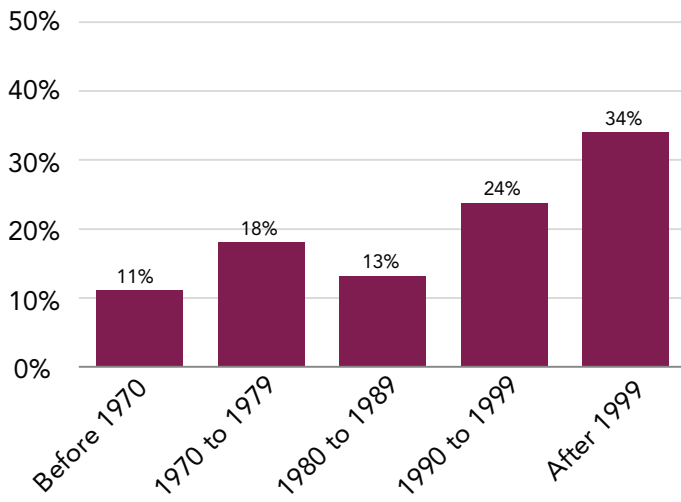
HOUSING ACCESS



EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS

Units by Decade Built

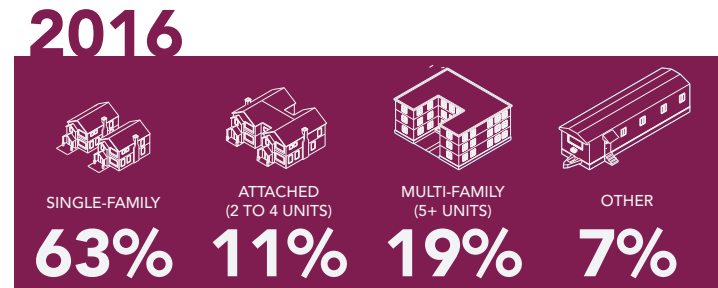
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS;
Economic & Planning Systems



Thornton has a relatively new housing stock, with over half (58%) of the city's housing built after 1990. As the community has grown, the age of the housing stock generally is younger the further north within the city and older the further south. However, there are pockets of infill housing developments that have occurred over the past decade or two.

Units by Structure (2016)

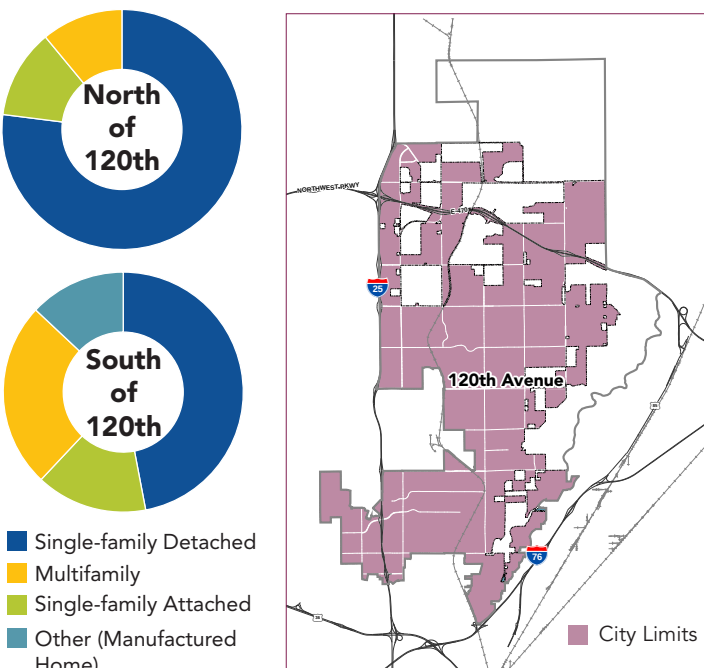
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS;
Economic & Planning Systems



The housing stock in Thornton is predominately single family. Single-family detached homes account for the majority of housing units in the city (63%). Multifamily units (buildings with 5 or more units) account for 19% of the housing stock.

Units Type by Geography

Source: city of Thornton Population Estimate and Housing Inventory Summary



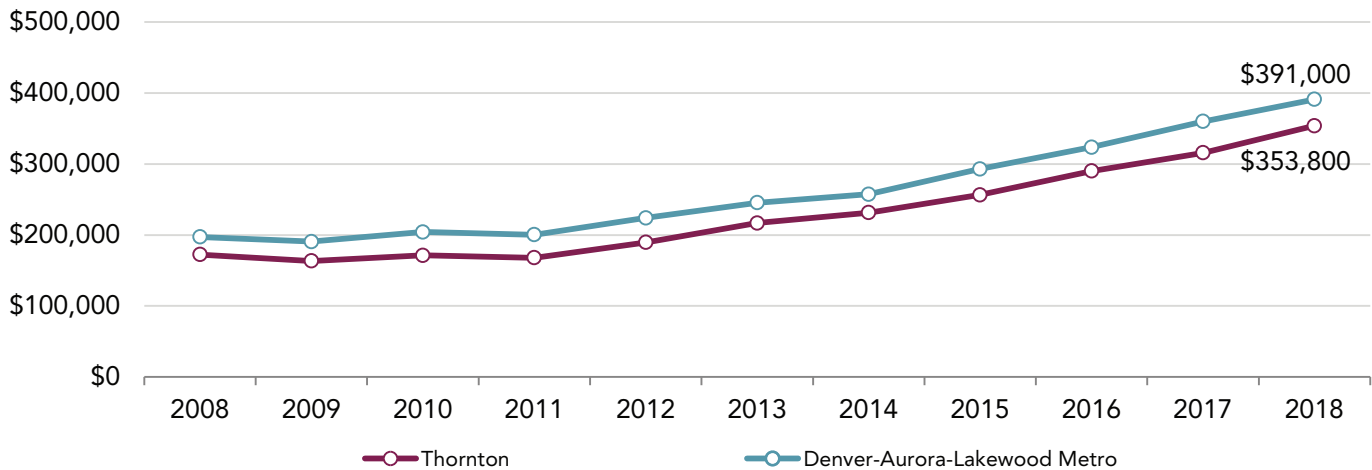
The mixture of housing within different portions of the city varies greatly. The northern portion of the city (north of 120th Avenue) is predominately single-family homes (77%), while single-family attached account for 12% and multifamily account for 11%. In the southern portion of the city (south of 120th Avenue), the mixture of housing is more diverse with 47% of units being single-family detached, 15% single-family attached, 25% multifamily and 13% manufactured homes.



HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS

Median Home Price

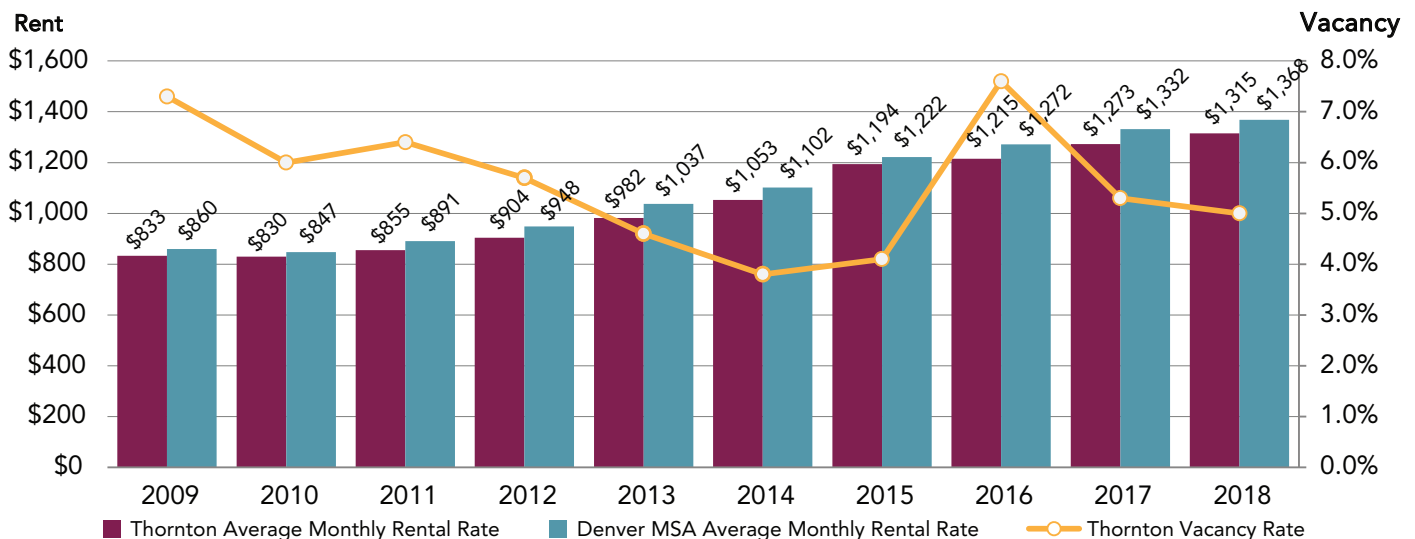
Source: Zillow; Economic & Planning Systems



The cost of housing has risen significantly in Thornton and the larger Denver Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) over the past decade. The median home sale price in Thornton in June of 2018 was \$353,800, which was slightly lower than the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA (Denver MSA) average of \$391,000. The median home price has increased in Thornton by \$180,000 since 2008, which equates to an annual rate of growth in prices of 7.5%, which is greater than the Denver MSA average of 7.1% annually.

Average Apartment Rental Rate and Vacancy (2009 - 2018)

Source: CoStar; Economic & Planning Systems



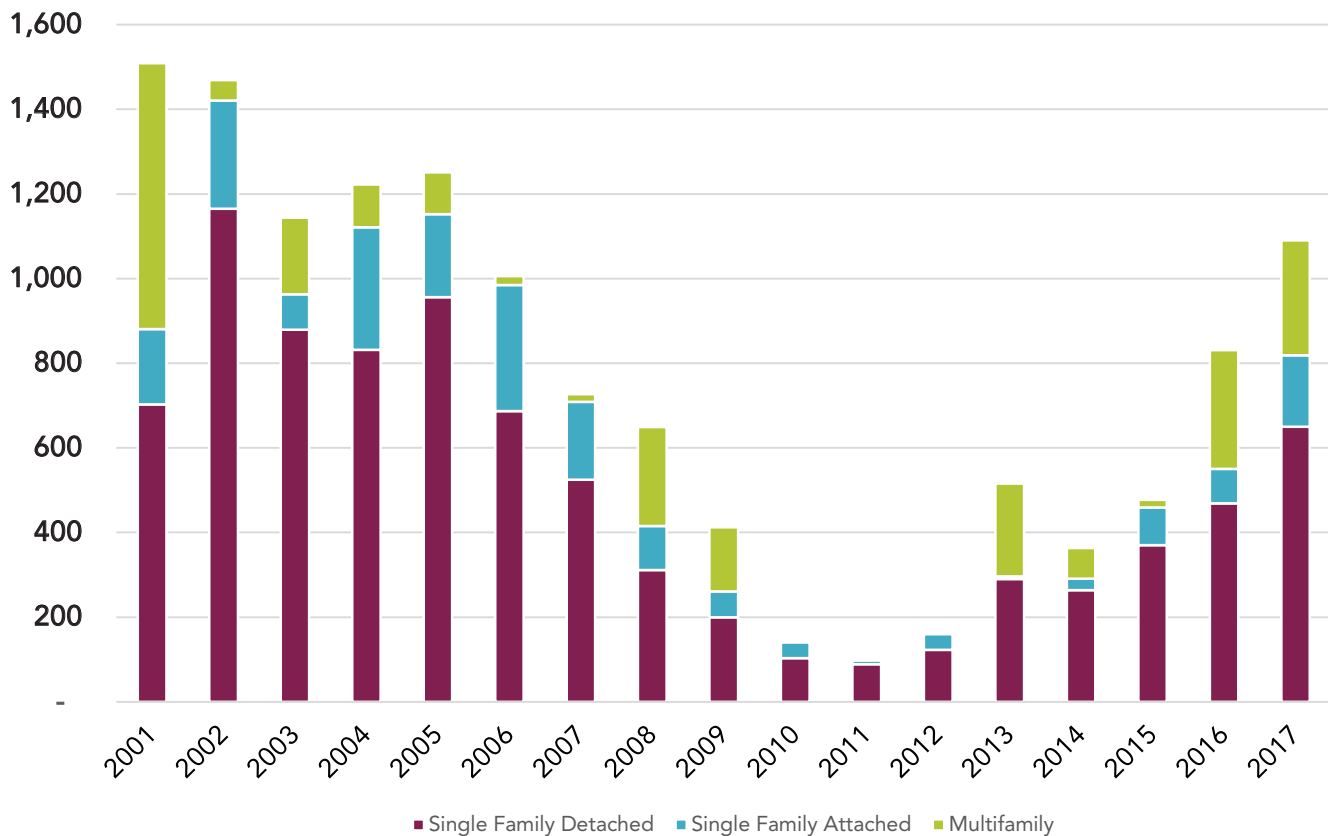
While rental rates have increased significantly in Thornton, the rate of growth is lower than the rate for for-sale homes. The average rental rate has increased by \$100 per month from 2016 to 2018. During the same period, the vacancy rate dropped from a ten-year high of 7.6% to 5%. The jump in vacancy from 2015 to 2016 was likely the result of a significant increase in new units in the market. As these units have leased, the vacancy rates have dropped to rates that are in line with the Denver MSA average. Thornton, like most cities in the Denver MSA, has a low vacancy rate for apartment units, indicating demand. Typically, apartment vacancy rates in a given market are at equilibrium at 5% to 7%. Rates below 5% indicate that vacant units are likely a result of renter turnover, which means there is essentially no vacancy in the market. Low vacancy coupled with growing rental rates, even as new units have come online, indicate a growing demand to developers and pressure to build multifamily within the city of Thornton will continue to grow in the near term.



HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Approved Residential Units (2010-2017)

Source: city of Thornton Population Estimate and Housing Inventory Summary



Housing production has increased significantly in Thornton over the past five years. Since 2010, the city has approved an average of 460 certificates of occupancy (COs) for new housing units per year. In 2016 and 2017, the city approved more than double that amount annually with 831 units approved in 2016 and 1,090 in 2017. The level of housing development in Thornton in 2017 is close to the average number of units receiving COs (1,190 units) in the city from 2001 to 2007, prior to the recession. The mixture of housing types approved matches almost exactly with the city-wide mixture of housing, as 64% of approved units were single-family detached from 2010 to 2017. Twenty four percent of units approved were multifamily units and 12% were single-family attached units.

Housing access and affordability is a growing concern for many communities like Thornton within Colorado and elsewhere in the US. The cost of construction for housing has increased significantly, which has increased housing prices. Employment growth in the Denver Metro Area has outpaced housing growth since 2010, which has resulted in increased demand for housing throughout the metro area, and in turn resulted in higher prices. The city of Thornton has proactively taken steps to recognize affordability issues.

In 2017, a Balanced Housing Task Force was created to advise City Council on issues and potential strategies the city could explore to address affordability concerns. One major conclusion from the effort was that the housing issues and needs differ in the community in different geographies. The need for more affordable and attainable housing was documented in the north portion of Thornton, while new market-rate housing is needed in the southern portion. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing is generally considered affordable (or attainable) when a home consumes no more than 30% of a household's gross, pre-tax income. In general, affordable housing developments are subsidized housing units that are available to people whose income is often below the median household income of the community and/or region; qualifications will differ by income, and household composition and size.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Aligning planned capacity with demand. Based on future population projections, there is the possibility that housing demand will exceed the city's planned capacity for future residential uses within the city. Should the city identify opportunities to increase the capacity for housing development in the city to match demand?

Encouraging a broader mix of housing types. Since 2000, the city of Thornton has continued to attract more single-family housing development than multifamily housing. To what extent should the city encourage more diverse housing types? What investments, regulatory changes, and amenities are needed to attract more dense housing products or different housing types?

Encouraging a more balanced distribution of housing options citywide. The southern portion of Thornton is more diverse and evenly mixed between product types but generally has housing with lower price points and rental rates. The northern portion of the community is predominately single-family detached housing. Should the city proactively try to attract greater diversity of housing in the north? Should the city make efforts to attract more new, market rate housing development in the southern portion?

Evaluating housing strategies. How proactive should the city be in trying to attract more attainable and affordable housing? How much affordable and attainable housing should Thornton provide? Are there areas of the city that should be priority? Are there additional policies and strategies needed for the city to take a more proactive approach?



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ECONOMIC VITALITY



EXISTING ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Comparable Jobs to Household Ratio

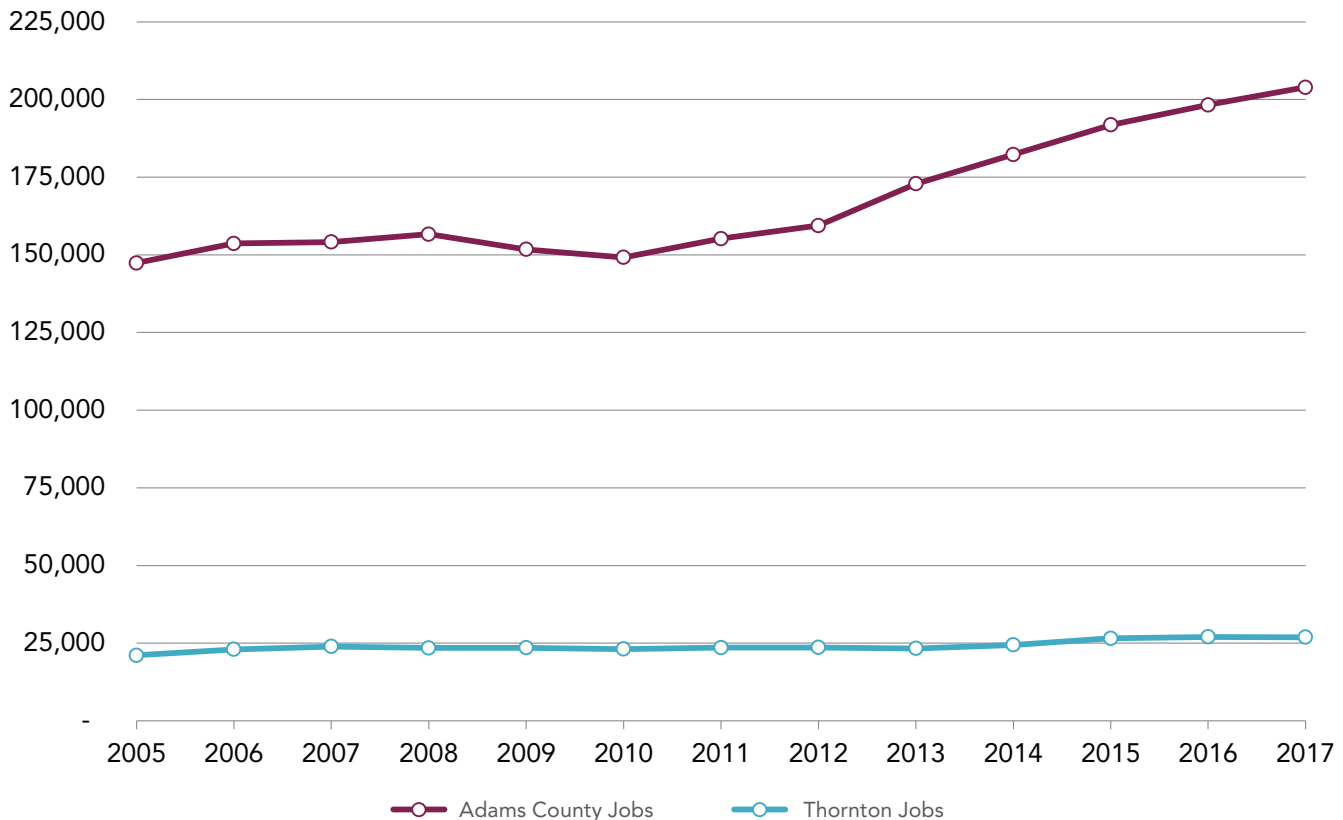
Source: US Census 2016 ACS 1-Year Estimate; US Census LEHD 2015; Economic & Planning Systems

COMMUNITY	JOBS	HOUSEHOLDS	JOBS TO HOUSING RATIO
Thornton	21,630	45,559	0.47
Arvada	27,949	45,850	0.61
Broomfield	32,873	26,269	1.25
Lakewood	98,469	66,185	1.49
Longmont	32,684	35,176	0.93
Westminster	47,362	43,754	1.08

The city of Thornton has traditionally served as a predominately residential community with supporting retail and service jobs. The city is home to over 21,000 jobs and has a jobs to households ratio of 0.47 currently. Like most communities in Colorado, the city of Thornton's fiscal health is dependent on a vibrant retail sector, which produces sales tax revenue that makes up the majority of the city's annual revenue. In recent years the city of Thornton has set out to not only proactively attract retail businesses, but to grow employment in primary industries and attract additional entertainment and culture assets to diversify the economy and create more opportunities for residents to live and work in the community.

Adams County Employment

Source: BLS QCEW 2nd Quarter 2000-2017; Economic & Planning Systems; DRCOG

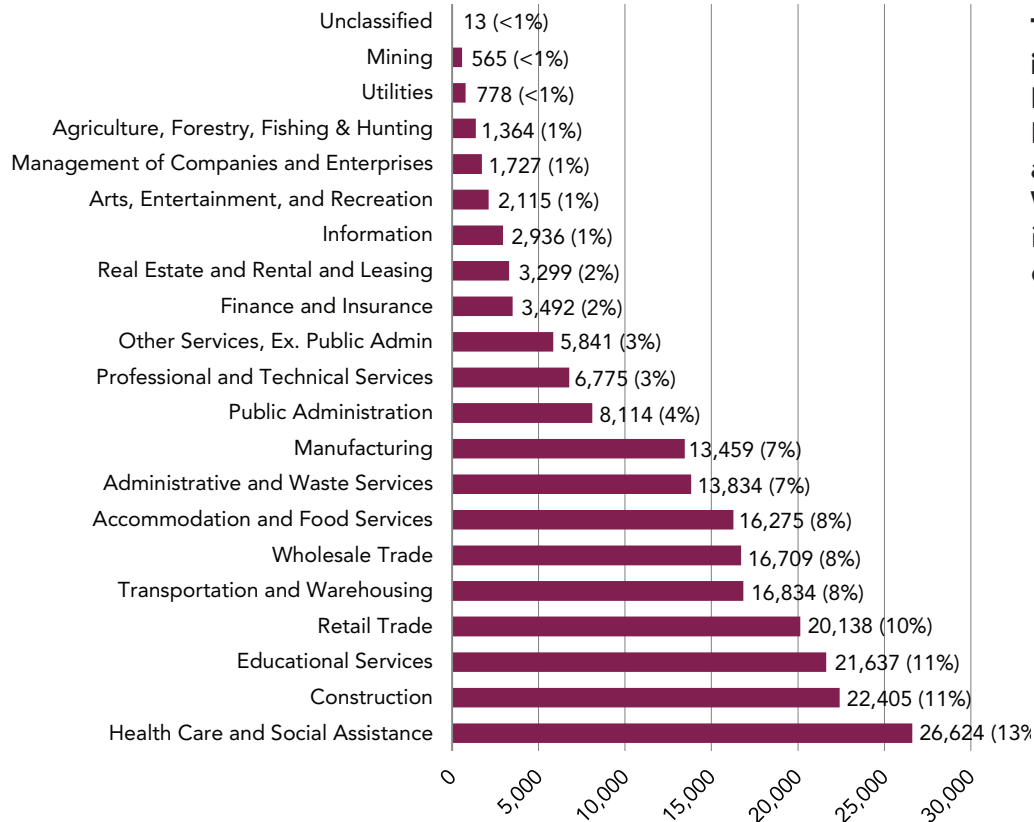


Adams County is home to over 200,000 jobs and employment in the County has grown by over 50,000 jobs since 2010 after a decade of slower employment growth from 2000 to 2010. Thornton added about 4,000 additional jobs during the same period.



Adams County Employment by Industry (2017)

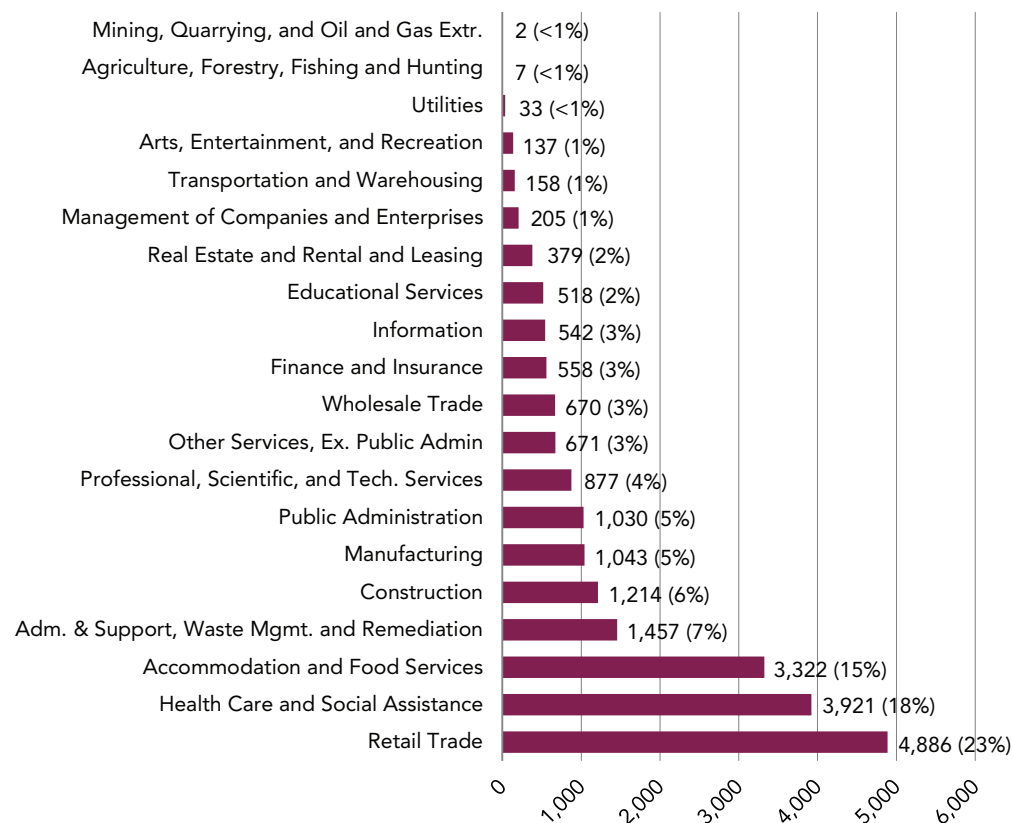
Source: BLS QCEW 2017; Economic & Planning Systems



The largest industries in Adams County are Health Care, Construction, Education, Retail Trade, and Transportation and Warehousing. These five industries account for over 50% of jobs within the County.

Thornton Employment by Industry (2015)

Source: US Census LEHD 2015; Economic & Planning Systems



The city of Thornton had a total of 21,630 jobs in 2015, which accounted for approximately 11% of the total employment within Adams County. The largest industries in Thornton are Retail Trade, Health Care, and Accommodation and Food Services. Combined employment in these industries accounted for 56% of all employees in Thornton.



Thornton Commuting Patterns (2015)

Source: US Census LEHD 2015; Economic & Planning Systems

Where Workers Live	#	%	Where Residents Work	#	%
Thornton	3,909	18%	Denver	15,255	26%
Denver	2,249	10%	Thornton	3,909	7%
Westminster	1,673	8%	Westminster	3,703	6%
Aurora	1,232	6%	Aurora	3,012	5%
Northglenn	1,024	5%	Northglenn	2,867	5%
Broomfield	872	4%	Broomfield	2,586	4%
Arvada	863	4%	Commerce city	2,550	4%
Commerce city	633	3%	Lakewood	2,132	4%
Lakewood	507	2%	Boulder	1,729	3%
Brighton	404	2%	Arvada	1,323	2%
Other Locations	8,264	38%	Other Locations	20,045	34%
Total	21,630	100%	Total	59,111	100%

The majority of Thornton's residents commute out of town for work. Only 7% of residents also worked in the city of Thornton in 2015. The highest percentage of residents (26%) commute to Denver for work. Despite the low percentage of residents that work in Thornton, nearly 20% of people employed in Thornton live in the city, which is the most of any community. Denver is the second-largest source of workers for Thornton businesses with 10% of workers living in Denver.

REAL ESTATE MARKET CONDITIONS

Commercial and Industrial Inventory (2009-2018)

Source: CoStar; Economic & Planning Systems

Note: Data for 2009 and 2018 are from 2nd quarter

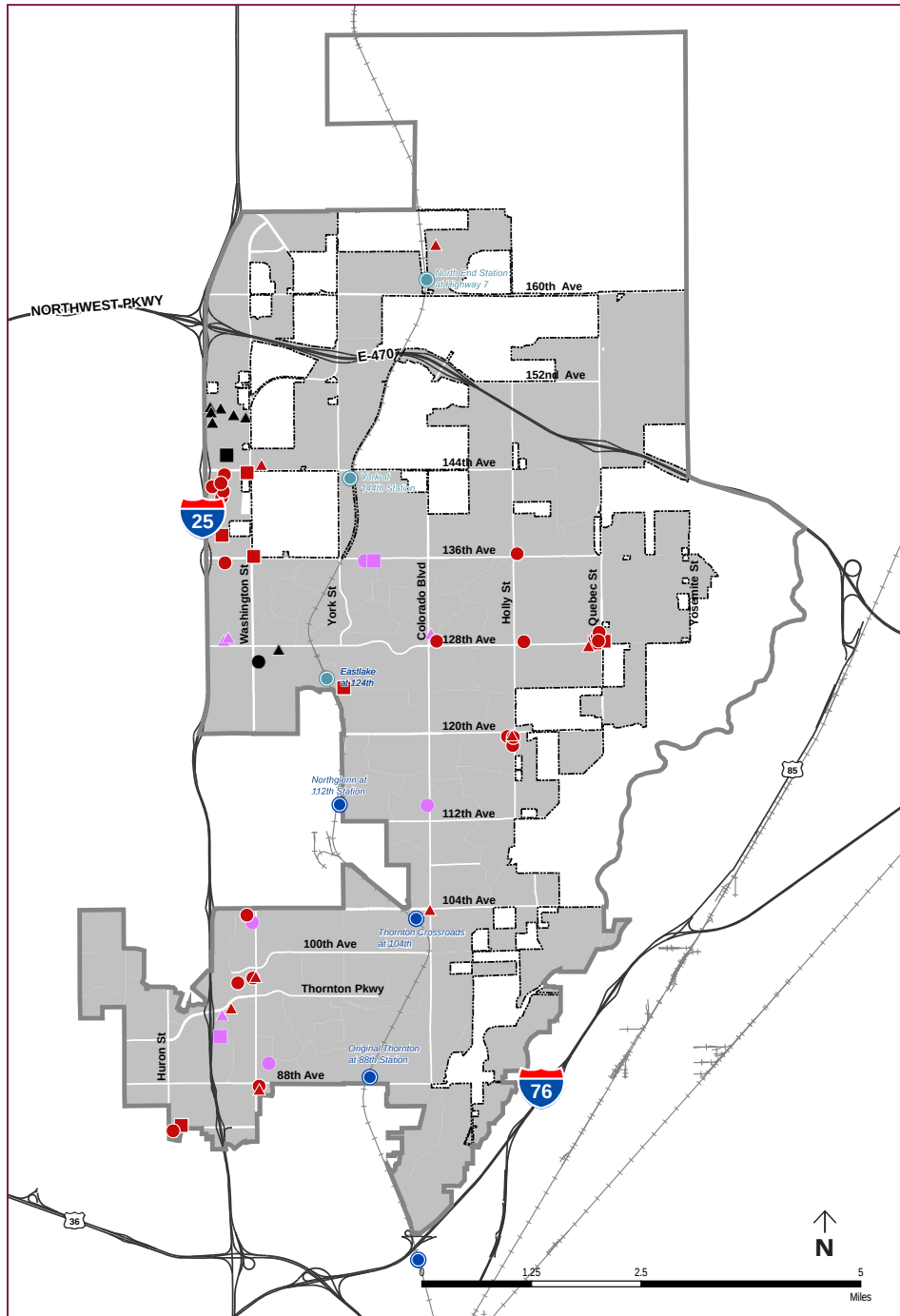
Description	2009	2018	2009-2018		
			Total	Annual #	Annual %
Retail (sq. ft.)					
Thornton	6,449,819	6,785,252	335,433	37,270	0.6%
Denver MSA	145,266,311	153,003,098	7,736,787	859,643	0.6%
Office (sq. ft.)					
Thornton	1,573,614	1,632,123	58,509	6,501	0.4%
Denver MSA	158,760,549	172,005,507	13,244,958	1,471,662	0.9%
Industrial/Flex (sq. ft.)					
Thornton	2,735,504	2,814,298	78,794	8,755	0.3%
Denver MSA	222,159,816	237,685,439	15,525,623	1,725,069	0.8%

Retail space is the predominate non-residential use within the city of Thornton. The city has an inventory of 6.8 million square feet of retail space. The retail inventory has increased modestly since 2009, but has matched the rate of growth found in the Denver MSA. The city of Thornton has a small concentration of office space within the city with 1.6 million square feet of space. The office space inventory has grown by only 58,509 square feet since 2009, growing at lower rate than the metro area. Thornton has an inventory of 2.8 million square feet of industrial and flex space, which has increased modestly since 2009 at similar rates as office growth.



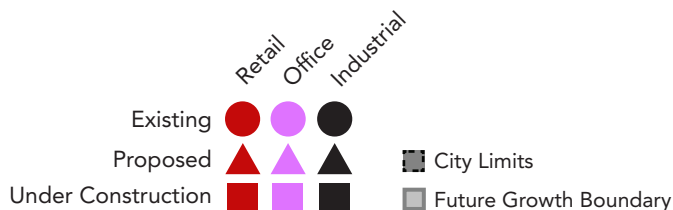
Commercial and Industrial Development Since 2010

Source: CoStar; Economic & Planning Systems



New development has largely gravitated towards I-25 or in the eastern portions of the city near new housing development.

Despite limited new growth in the commercial and industrial inventory in the city in the past decade, there is a significant number of projects which are proposed and under-construction that will have a significant impact. Amazon has opened a new fulfillment center along I-25 at 144th Avenue, which is not accounted for in the inventory totals. A new Denver Premier Outlets center also recently opened at I-25 and 138th Avenue, which is just south of the recently built Cabela's.



Commercial and Industrial Vacancy Rates (2009-2018)

Source: CoStar; Economic & Planning Systems

Note: Data for 2009 and 2018 are from 2nd quarter

Description	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Retail										
Thornton	16.2%	15.9%	14.7%	14.0%	11.8%	11.5%	10.1%	9.6%	9.2%	10.2%
Denver MSA	9.2%	8.9%	8.7%	7.4%	6.8%	6.1%	5.7%	5.0%	4.9%	4.8%
Office										
Thornton	20.7%	22.6%	19.9%	20.1%	21.0%	21.4%	13.3%	12.5%	12.7%	13.6%
Denver MSA	14.4%	14.1%	13.5%	12.7%	12.3%	11.5%	10.4%	10.0%	11.0%	11.3%
Industrial/Flex										
Thornton	9.5%	23.4%	22.5%	23.9%	26.9%	23.1%	13.6%	13.4%	17.3%	15.0%
Denver MSA	8.8%	8.2%	8.2%	7.6%	7.1%	4.5%	3.5%	4.0%	5.0%	5.0%

Commercial and industrial space in Thornton has higher vacancy rates than the average for the Denver Metro Area. The table above presents vacancy rates from 2009 to 2018 for office, retail, and industrial/flex space in Thornton and the Denver MSA. Vacancy rates for all three property types were higher in Thornton than the MSA but decreased during this timeframe, with the exception of industrial/flex space in Thornton.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Expanding job opportunities in Thornton. The city has a job to household ratio of 0.47, which is the lowest of the larger suburban communities in the region. In 2017, the city adopted a jobs/housing ratio goal of 0.75 for the preservation of employment land. This goal should be taken into account as the city considers potential updates to the Future Land Use Plan map and policies as part of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process.

Balancing short-term opportunities with long-term objectives. In recent years, the city has focused on continually growing the retail base but also attracting and allowing for more businesses that fit into industrial and flex-industrial areas, as opposed to waiting for more office-oriented businesses. These efforts have been successful and the primary employment base is growing in Thornton. Going forward, what types of employment areas should the city plan for? Should the city prioritize more short-term, viable employment opportunities over longer-term potential visions?

Identifying priority employment lands. Thornton has been getting requests for rezoning of employment land for housing uses. Going forward, what employment lands are most important to the city's long-term economic and fiscal health? Are there areas where conversion of employment lands should be allowed to create opportunities for housing development and/or mixed-use development?

Anticipating and proactively planning for changes in retail. As the retail world changes nationally and locally, what impacts will these changes have on the city's fiscal health and how should this be accounted for in the city's Future Land Use Plan? How much employment and commercial land is needed to support the fiscal health of the community?



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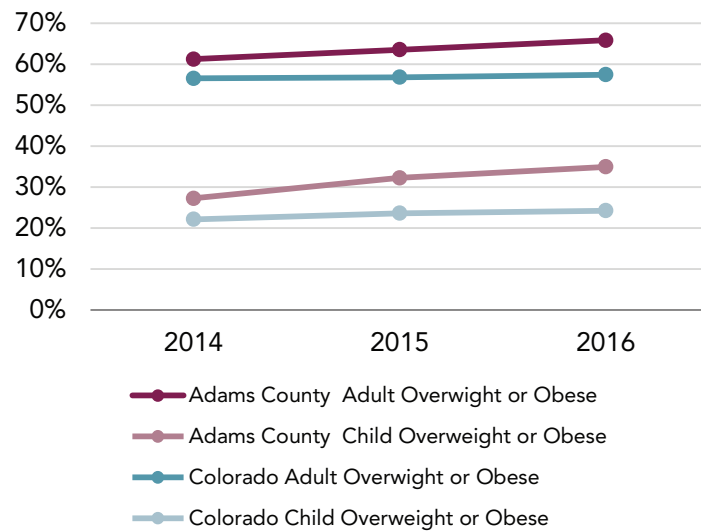
HEALTH, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



HEALTH INDICATORS

Adult and Childhood Obesity Rates

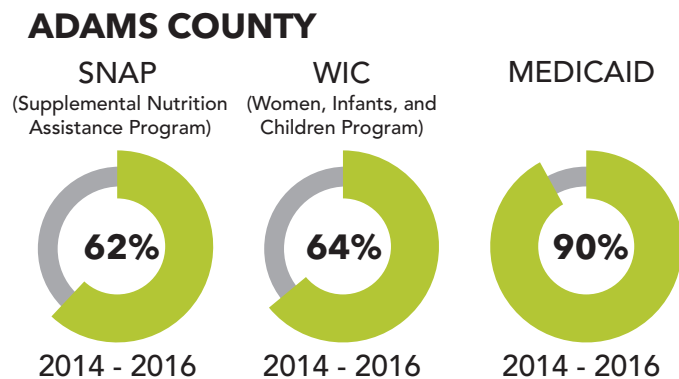
Source: Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment



The percentage of Adams County residents that are either overweight or obese has increased and is greater than the state as a whole. Since 2012, these percentages for both adults and children have incrementally increased over time for both Adams County and Colorado.

Percentage of Eligible Residents Enrolled in Assistance Programs

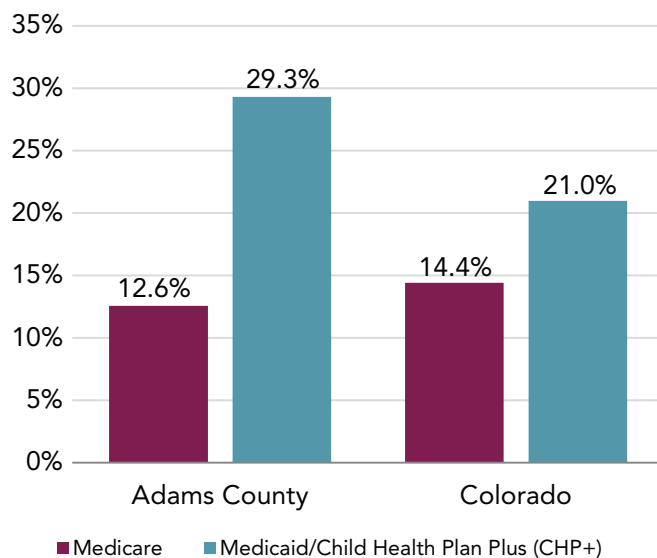
Source: Human Services Gap Map: Gapmap.org



The percentage of eligible Adams County residents enrolled in nutrition assistance and health care programs is higher than the state average. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) are nutrition programs funded by the federal government to provide assistance to low-income families to purchase healthy food. Medicaid is a joint federal and state health care program to assist low-income families and individuals.

Percentage of Residents Enrolled in Public Health Care Programs

Source: Health Care Institute, 2017

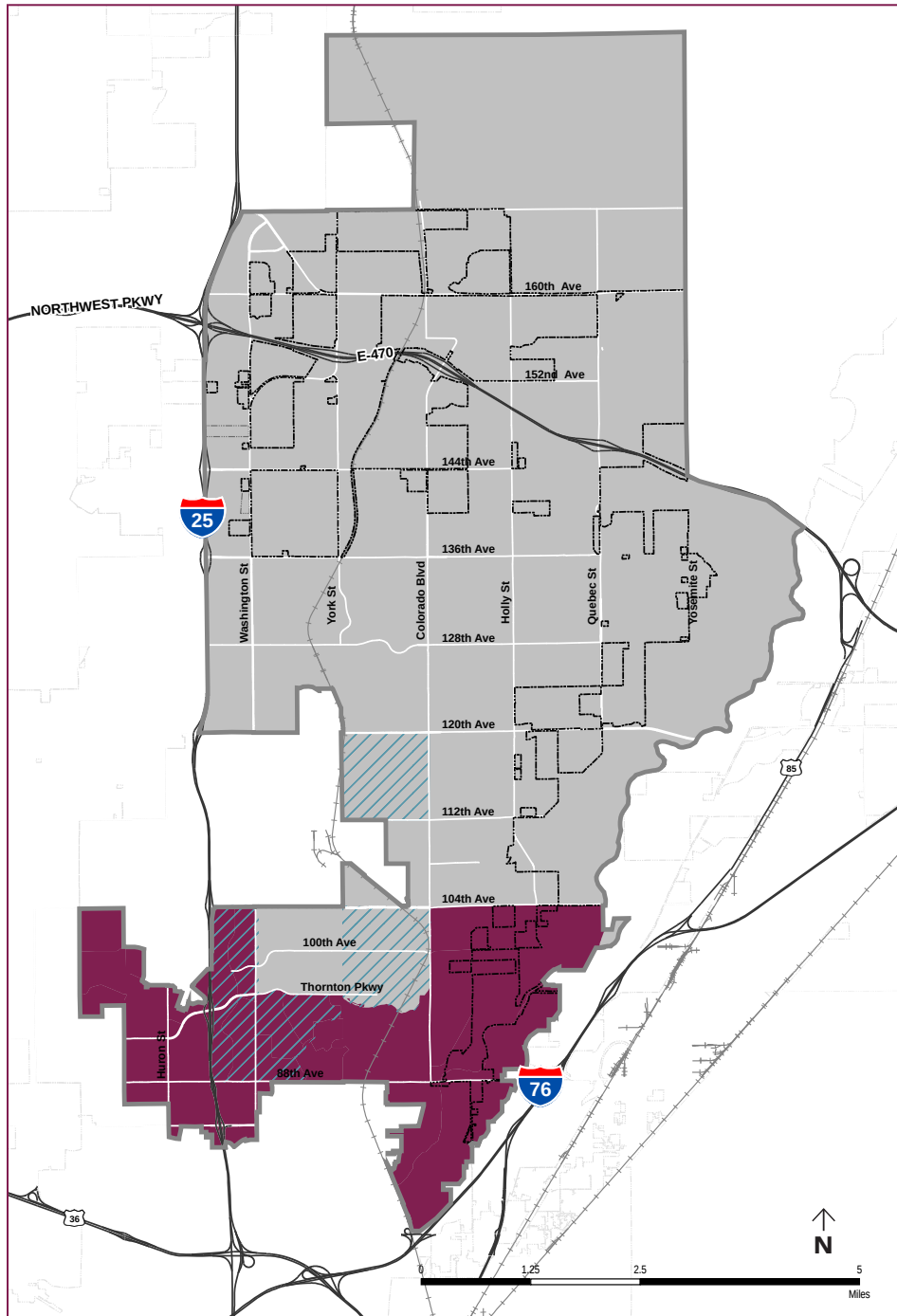


Children and adults under the age of 65 in Adams County are more reliant on public health care programs than at the state level. The percentage of Adams County residents enrolled in Medicare, a federal health insurance program for individuals who are 65 or older, and those with disabilities, is lower than the state.



Percentage of Residents Enrolled in Public Health Care Programs

Source: USDA Food Access Research Atlas; Federal Health Services and Resources Administration



- Medically Underserved Area*
- Low income and low access at 1/2 mile**
- City Limits
- Future Growth Boundary

* Areas or populations designated by the federal Health Services and Resources Administration (HSRA) as having too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty, or a high elderly population.

** Low-income census tracts where at least 500 people or at least 33% of the population is greater than 1/2 mile from the nearest supermarket, or large grocery store.

Thornton's most medically underserved areas and areas with low healthy food access are concentrated in the south.

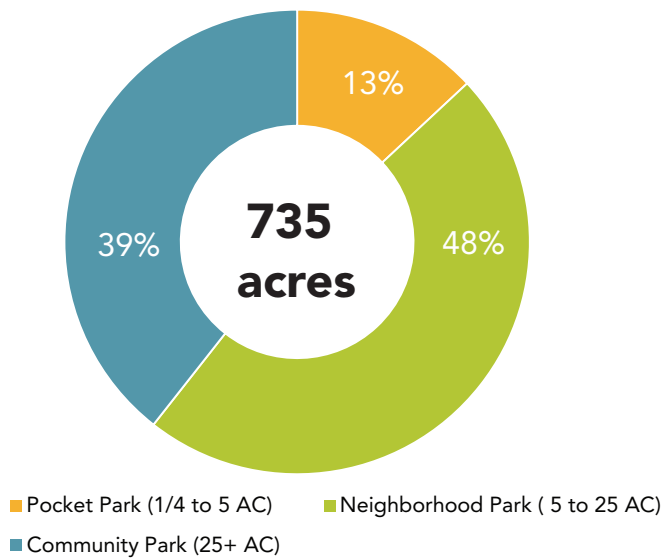
To a greater extent, these identified areas are made up of lower-income populations and older populations that have low access to grocery stores and health care facilities.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Source: city of Thornton Parks and Open Space Master Plan, 2015

City Parks and Service Areas



	WARD 1	WARD 2	WARD 3	WARD 4
Population	33,366	33,784	30,868	33,743
Park AC/ 1,000 residents	2.45	7.31	8.51	3.69
Designated Open Space (AC)	104.7	396.1	116.3	351.3

Ward 1 is underserved by Thornton's parks and open space system compared to the other wards.

Both the dedicated parkland per 1,000 residents and total acreage of designated open space for Ward 1 are the lowest compared to the other three wards. Dedication of new parks and open space in Ward 1 will be a challenge as much of the land is already built out. In looking at various service areas for the different parks, the most significant gaps for new facilities occur within Wards 3 and 4, which include developable land with significant build-out potential.

Regional Parkland Comparison

Source: city of Thornton Parks and Open Space Master Plan, 2015

	POPULATION	TOTAL PARK AC/1,000 RESIDENTS
city of Thornton (Dec. 2015)	131,761	5.6
National Recreation Parks Association 2015 National Database*	100,000- 200,000	2.7
Regional Municipalities 2012 Average: Broomfield, Westminster, Arvada, Ft. Collins, Lakewood	112,404	7.8

* PRORAGIS National Database Custom Report generated for cities with population ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Kansas.

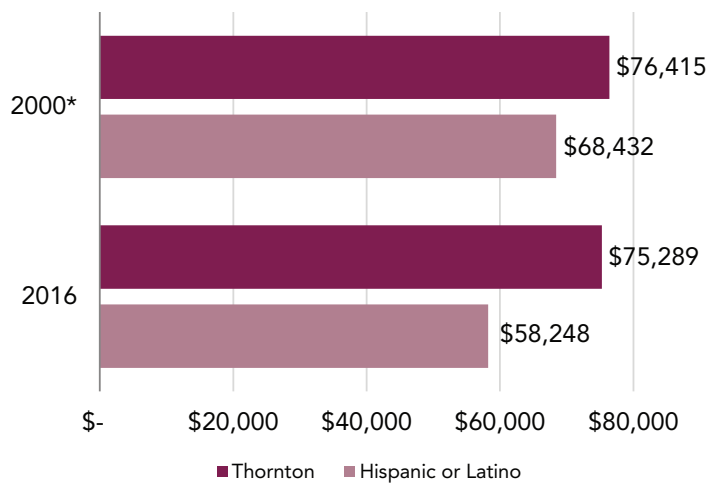
Thornton's dedicated parkland per 1,000 residents is higher than other comparable cities in the nation. Although Thornton's dedicated parkland per capita is greater than other comparable cities in nearby states, it is lower than other cities in Colorado. The city's current level of service goal is to have 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.



EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Median Household Income

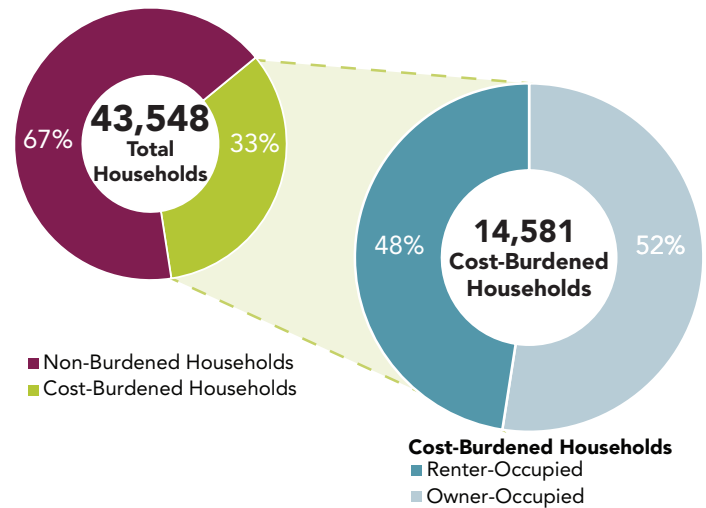
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census;
U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates



Household income has decreased. The median income for a Thornton household in 2016 was \$75,289. Once adjusted for inflation, this actually reflects a decrease from the median income of \$54,445 in 2000. This decrease in household income is even more apparent in a Hispanic household where the household income decreased by nearly 15% between 2000 and 2016.

Housing Cost Burden for Thornton Households

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-year estimates

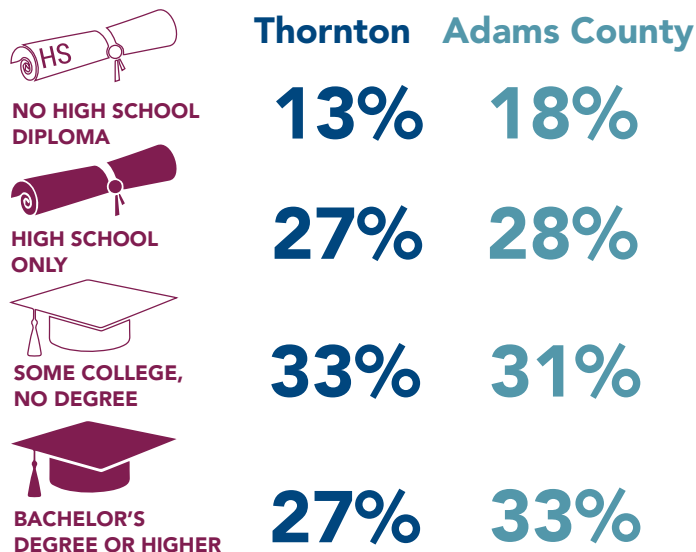


33% of Thornton households are cost-burdened.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs as cost-burdened. Among the 43,548 households in Thornton, 14,581 households were cost-burdened in 2016.

Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-year estimates



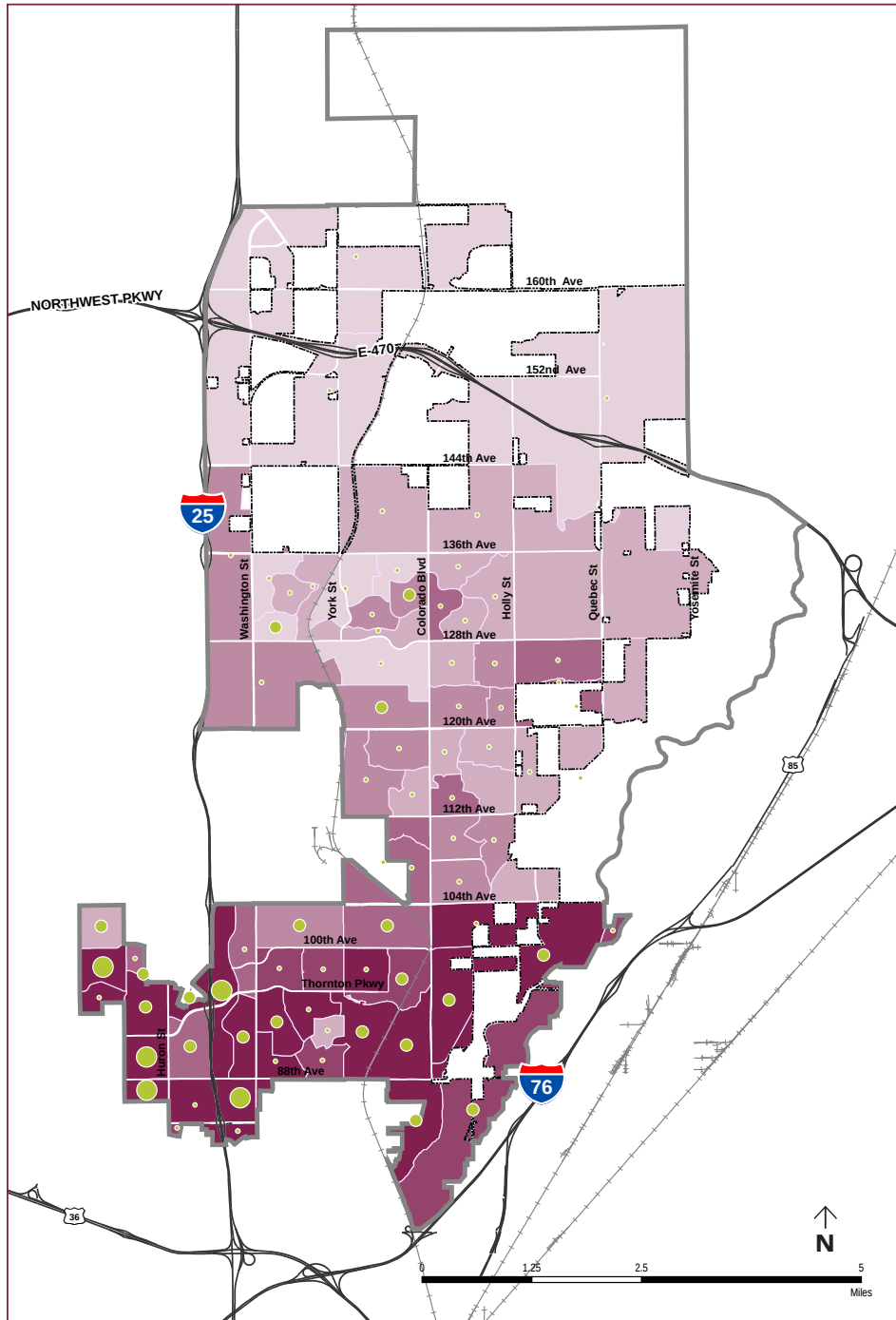
Educational attainment in Thornton is similar to that of Adams County and varies by race/ethnicity.

The percentage of Thornton residents with either some college education or a bachelor's degree or higher is slightly greater than the rest of Adams County. The Hispanic or Latino population in Thornton has a greater percentage (32%) of people without a high school diploma, and smaller percentage (9%) of people with a bachelor's degree or higher when compared to Thornton as a whole.

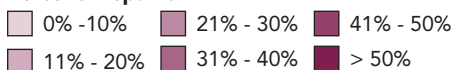


Poverty and Hispanic Concentrations

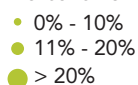
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-year estimates



Percent Hispanic



Percent Poverty

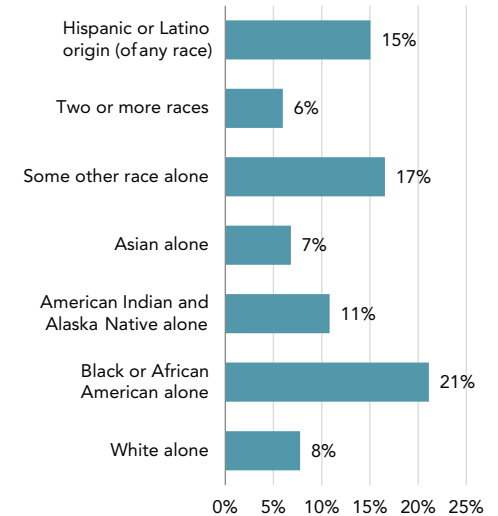


City Limits

Future Growth Boundary

Poverty Rates by Ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-year estimates



South Thornton has a high concentration of poverty and Hispanics/Latinos. Overall, residents in the southern part of Thornton are more vulnerable and underserved than those in other parts of Thornton. Minority groups in general, most notably the Hispanics/Latinos and African Americans, had the highest percentage of residents living in poverty in 2016. The U.S. Census Bureau uses an income threshold that varies by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. In 2016, a family of four composed of two adults and two children, would be considered to be in poverty if their annual income was below \$24,340.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Improving awareness of and access to services. Poverty and minority groups (particularly Hispanics/Latinos) are concentrated in south Thornton. In some locations, access to healthcare and healthy food are limited, in other areas, residents may simply not be aware what services exist or how to access them. Opportunities to increase resident awareness of and access to the services that do exist, and work with local and regional partners to address gaps in services should continue to be explored.

Fostering inclusivity and reducing barriers. As the city becomes older and increasingly diverse, it will be important to understand how Thornton can be more welcoming and supportive of the different needs of various demographic and ethnic groups. What barriers (poverty, age, health, employment, educational attainment, transportation, etc.) are limiting the ability of certain groups to thrive in Thornton?

Expanding housing options. Many Thornton households are cost-burdened today and housing affordability continues to be a growing issue in the city and the region as a whole. What policies and strategies should be explored as part of the rewrite process to expand housing workforce and affordable housing options in different parts of the city?

Providing opportunities for residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles. “A Healthy city with Great Amenities” is a core goal that was expanded upon in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update with healthy eating and active living being identified as an important area of focus. What new policies and strategies can be introduced to support and build upon the existing efforts of the city to establish a more healthy community for Thornton?





Appendix B: Community Vision

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THORNTON  Tomorrow, Together

communityvision



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Part 3: Vision Themes and Preliminary Goals	3.1 - 3.17

Introduction

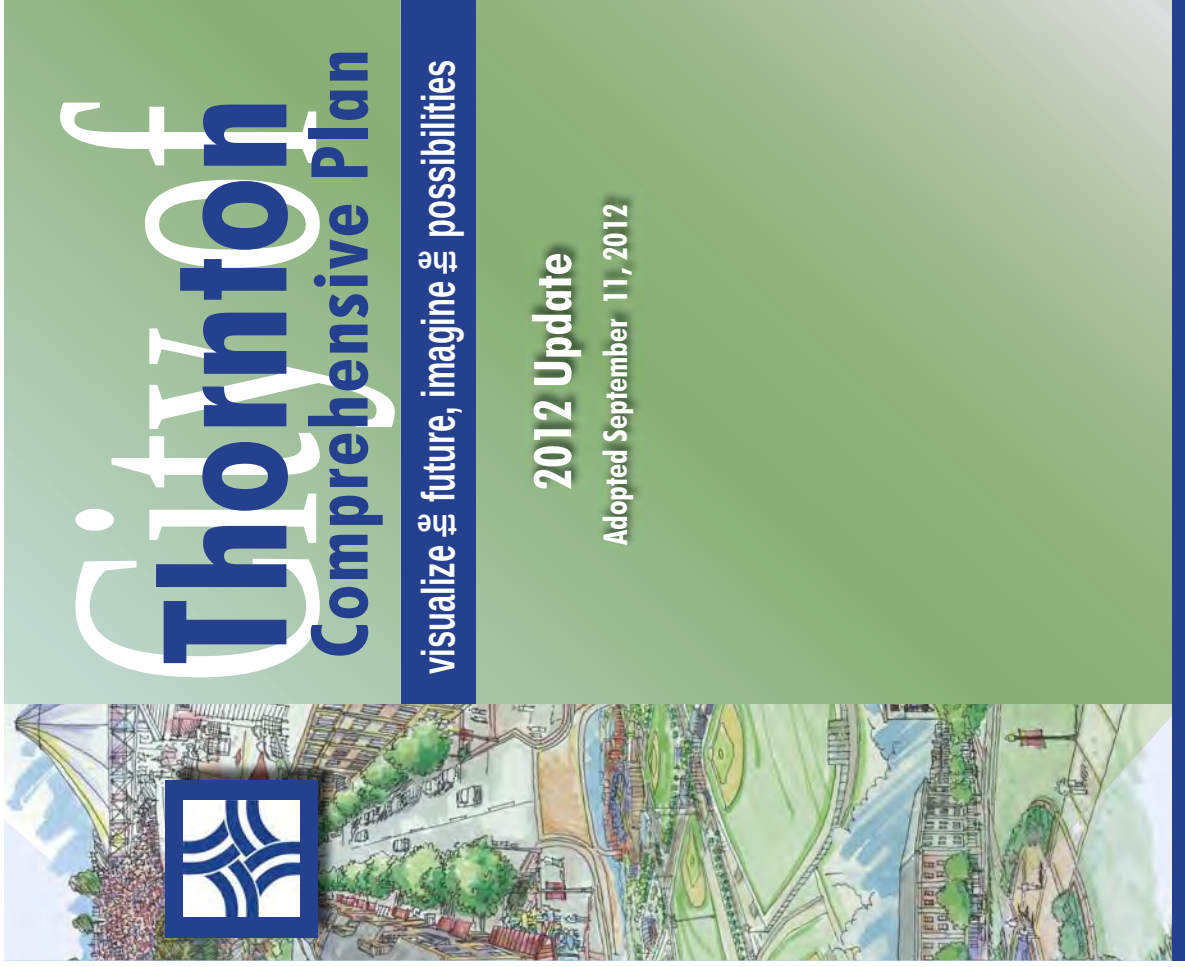
The city of Thornton, with support from a consultant team, conducted an extensive community and stakeholder visioning effort as a first step in the 2019 Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process. Over the course of five months, hundreds of people actively engaged in discussions about Thornton's future—exploring questions about hopes and challenges, everyday living, offerings for different age groups—and things to change or try to keep the same as the city grows over time.

This document is intended to:

- Provide a brief synopsis of the visioning process
- Highlight the “big ideas” or vision themes that emerged from input received
- Establish preliminary goals to help capture the community's specific aspirations in each area

As the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process moves forward, this document will be used to help guide the creation of policies and strategies to support the implementation of each theme.

Part 1



Why Now?

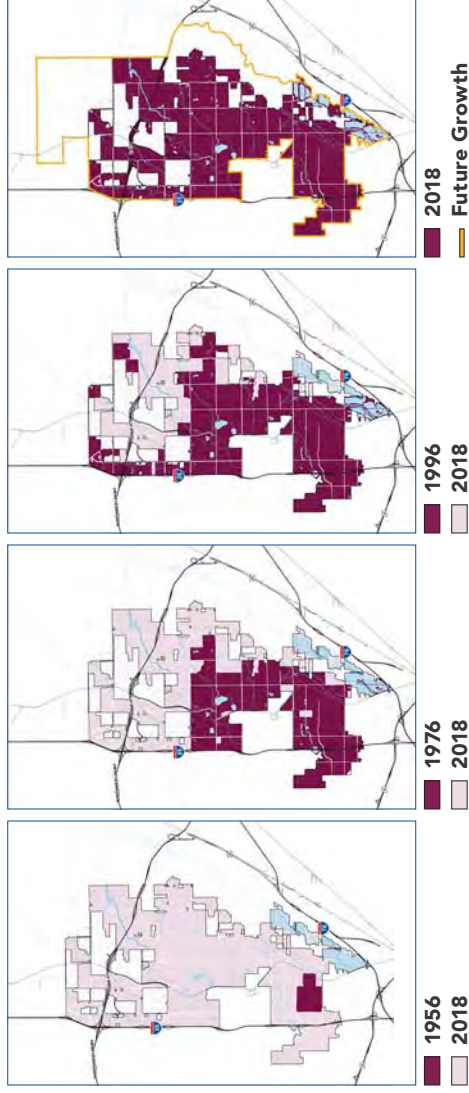
While targeted updates to the city of Thornton Comprehensive Plan were completed in 2012, the last major community visioning process and update to the plan were completed in 2007. In the more than ten years since, the city and region have seen extensive growth and change. A new commuter rail line will soon connect Thornton residents directly to Denver's Union Station and many points beyond, and provide visitors easy access to Thornton. There are increasing demands on infrastructure and city services, the local and regional transportation system, and social services. Furthermore, while Thornton has always been recognized as an affordable place to live, housing costs continue to rise.

The Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process occurs approximately every ten years and provides an opportunity for the city and community to engage in a discussion about what they value about Thornton and would like to protect for future generations—both as a place and as a community of interests. It also provides a chance to identify opportunities for improvement. The updated Comprehensive Plan will be used to guide growth and change in Thornton in a way that leverages the community's best assets and helps achieve the community's vision and goals for the future.



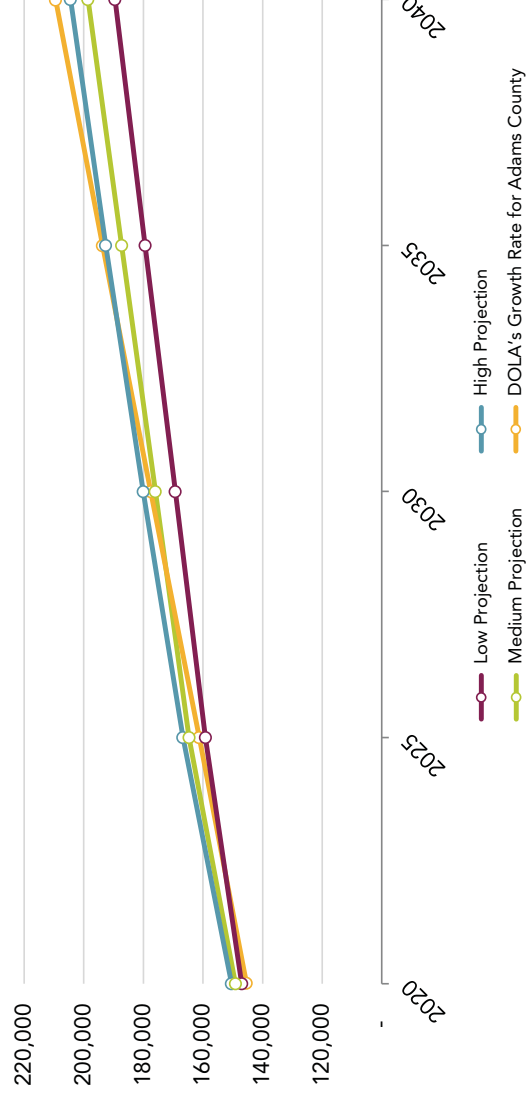
Demographics

GROWTH AND ANNEXATION
 Thornton's geographic extent has steadily expanded since 1956 and could expand further in the future. The city's Future Growth Boundary includes unincorporated portions of Adams and Weld counties.



POPULATION GROWTH FORECASTS

Thornton's population has grown steadily and is expected to continue to grow. Between 2000 and 2016, Thornton added nearly 12,000 new residents—reaching a population of 130,511. By 2040, Thornton is forecast to reach a population of between 189,500 and 204,500.



AVERAGE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates



Thornton has been and continues to be, a family-oriented community. In 2016, family households with children accounted for 72% of all households in Thornton.

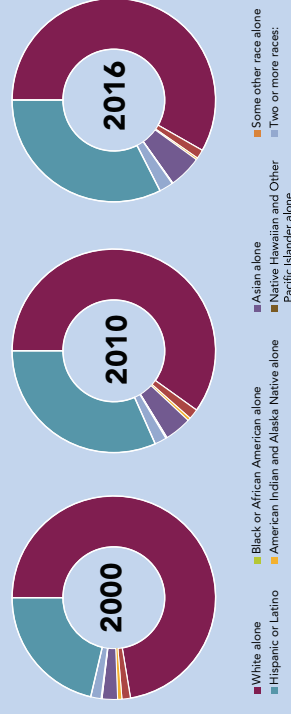
MEDIAN AGE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

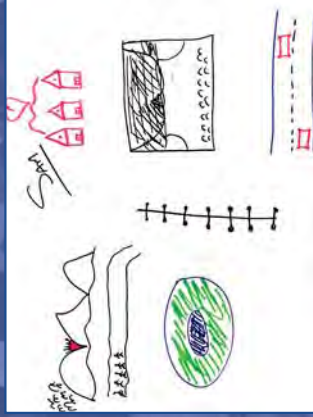
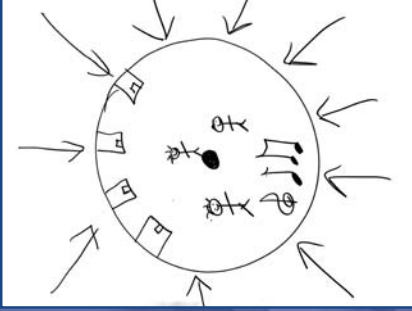
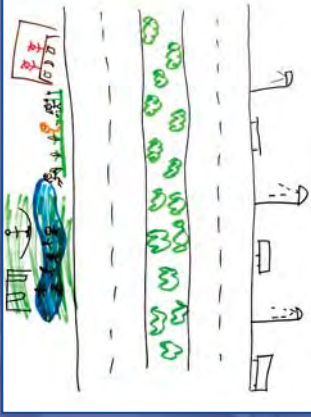


Thornton's population is increasingly older. While families still represent a significant portion of the overall population, Thornton's median age has increased and the fastest rates of growth were seen primarily among older cohorts.

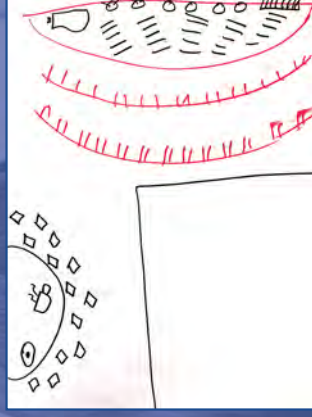
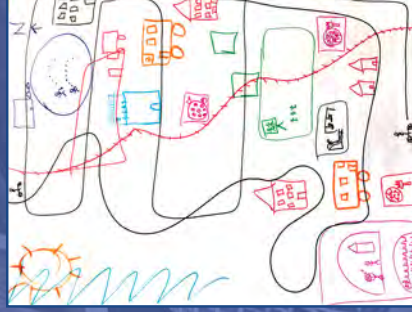
RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION



Thornton is getting more diverse. Thornton's minority population, most notably the Hispanic/Latino population, has increased significantly since 2000. Between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of the population that identified as Hispanic or Latino increased from 21.3% to 32.5%. The White population had the lowest annual growth rate at 1.5%, but was still the largest ethnic group in 2016.



City Council Visioning Workshop



Community Visioning Process

During the visioning process, city staff and the project team conducted extensive community outreach to identify the community's core values and vision for Thornton's future. Over the course of five months, the community was invited to participate at a variety of events and through various media to share their thoughts on a range of topics—from transportation to housing choices and from recreational amenities to social equity.

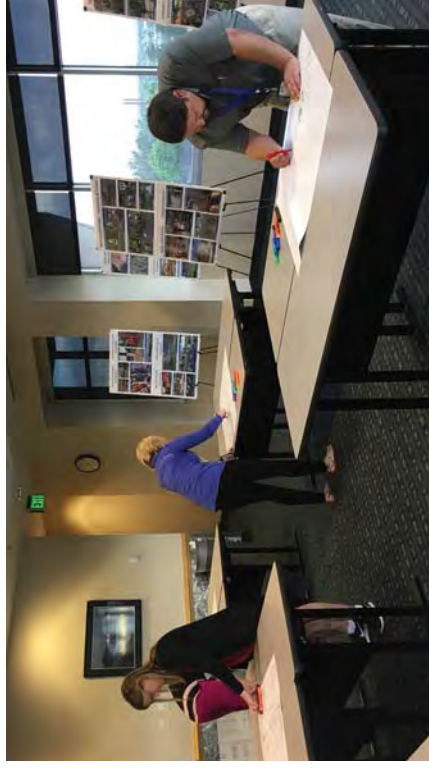
This section highlights the broad scope of outreach activities conducted, and conveys the city's commitment to ensuring that the visioning process was inclusive and was reflective of the community as a whole.

CITY COUNCIL VISIONING WORKSHOP

In May 2018, the project team conducted a workshop with the City Council to help confirm the overall approach for the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite process and solicit initial input and ideas. As part of the workshop, each Councilmember was asked to draw their vision for the Thornton of the future and share their ideas with the group as part of a facilitated discussion.

Key topics arising from Council's discussion included:

- Equity and inclusion
- Sense of place
- Connected community
- Destination spots
- Mix of housing
- Arts and culture
- Integrate North and South Thornton
- Smart City
- Recreation
- Green Thornton
- Good Governance
- Economy



COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Between June 2018 and October 2018, city staff and the project team engaged citizens of all ages, income levels, and ethnic backgrounds, from all parts of the city. While a particular focus was placed on engaging the city's Hispanic/Latino population, targeted outreach to other ethnic groups was also conducted. The team also reached out to local and regional partners, members of the business community, and service providers.

While some online engagement opportunities were offered, the vast majority of this outreach involved face-to-face interactions with over 1500 individuals. Events ranged from formal Focus Groups or Community/Neighborhood Meetings to more informal community events such as Ice Cream Socials, a booth at Harvest Fest, and visiting schools and senior centers. A sampling of data points from that outreach is shown below.

Public Meetings



Community Events



Interviews and Surveys



together reaching over 400 people



Spanish Outreach Surveys 287

Targeted Outreach



4 Senior Centers

reaching over 250 students and seniors

Creating the Community Vision - In Action



"The City and County need to coordinate better so the 'hand knows what the foot is doing' [in terms of social services offering]. Nobody could tell me what the programs around mental health support were for my son. Everything seemed so disconnected."



"If the city is going to keep growing, we need to ensure our city infrastructure and social service programs keep up with economic growth. Let's be proactive, not reactive, to population and economic growth."





"Good access to City Council. All Councilmembers are receptive to meeting, active and involved in their Ward and the City."



"I'd like to see more mixed-housing/business areas so that people don't have to travel so far to work and play. This is mostly to aid the folks who can't drive (like me)."



The map at right highlights locations of major outreach events. Every effort was made by the project team to ensure the input opportunities were well-distributed geographically and that a wide range of perspectives were represented.

ICE CREAM SOCIALS



COMMUNITY MEETINGS



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS/MEETINGS



FOCUS GROUPS



BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND ADVISORY GROUPS



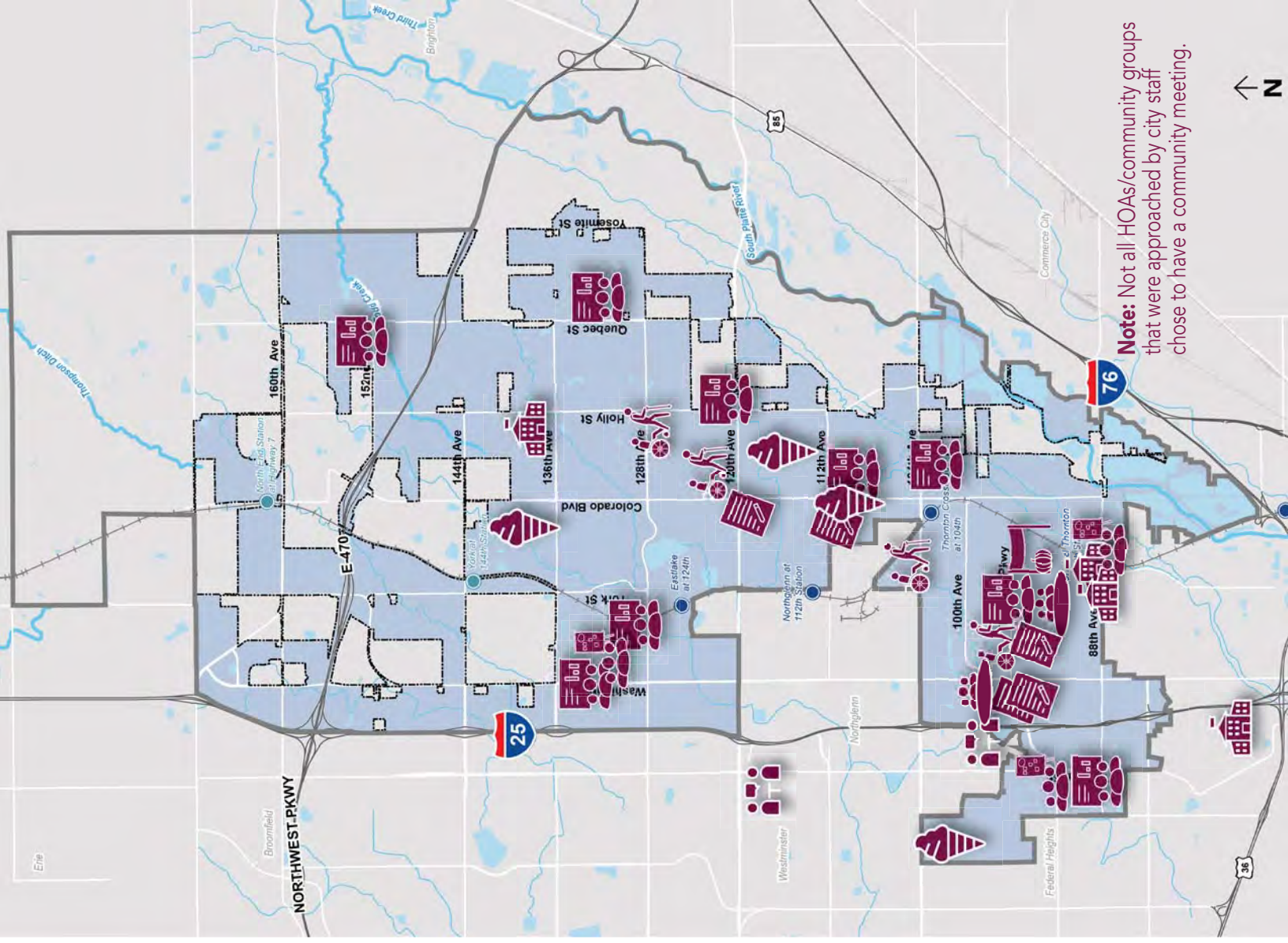
SCHOOL OUTREACH



SENIOR CENTERS



HARVEST FEST



Note: Not all HOAs/community groups that were approached by city staff chose to have a community meeting.

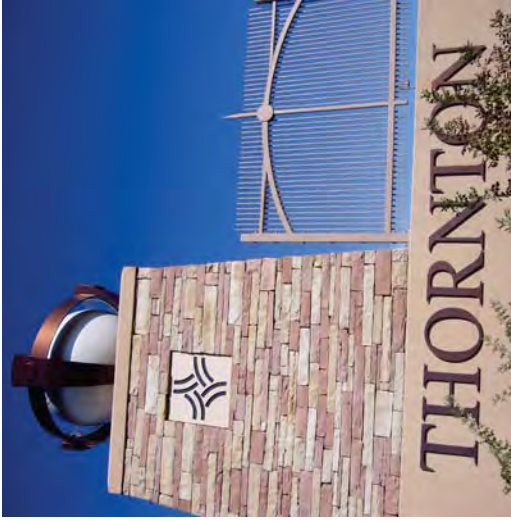
Vision Themes and Preliminary Goals

The eight themes represented on the graphic below emerged from input received as part of the visioning process. Community priorities with respect to each of these themes are explored in greater detail on the pages that follow. The importance of working toward a more equitable and inclusive Thornton was reflected in community input in all eight of these areas.





CULTIVATING IDENTITY AND IMAGE



Cultivating Identity and Image reflects the desire to create a sense of **community**, **beauty**, and **pride** throughout the city of Thornton. It seeks to celebrate the **character**, **culture**, **history**, and **environment** that makes Thornton a special place to live, work, and play.

Members of the community were particularly concerned with creating an **identity** that is uniquely Thornton, **improving aesthetics** throughout the city, and creating better physical and social **connections between North and South** Thornton.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Our city needs a heartbeat, a center, a core. We have no identity, no place to go to enjoy just being in Thornton."

"The key to making a stronger and better city is to make sure to get the community involved."

"I would like to see Thornton grow to a place where people come from all around to enjoy the amenities and they think it is a fun and safe place."



PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



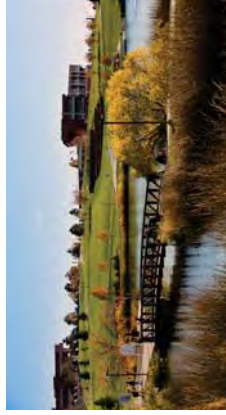
Cultivate and embrace an identity that is distinctly Thornton.



Foster an equitable and inclusive community.



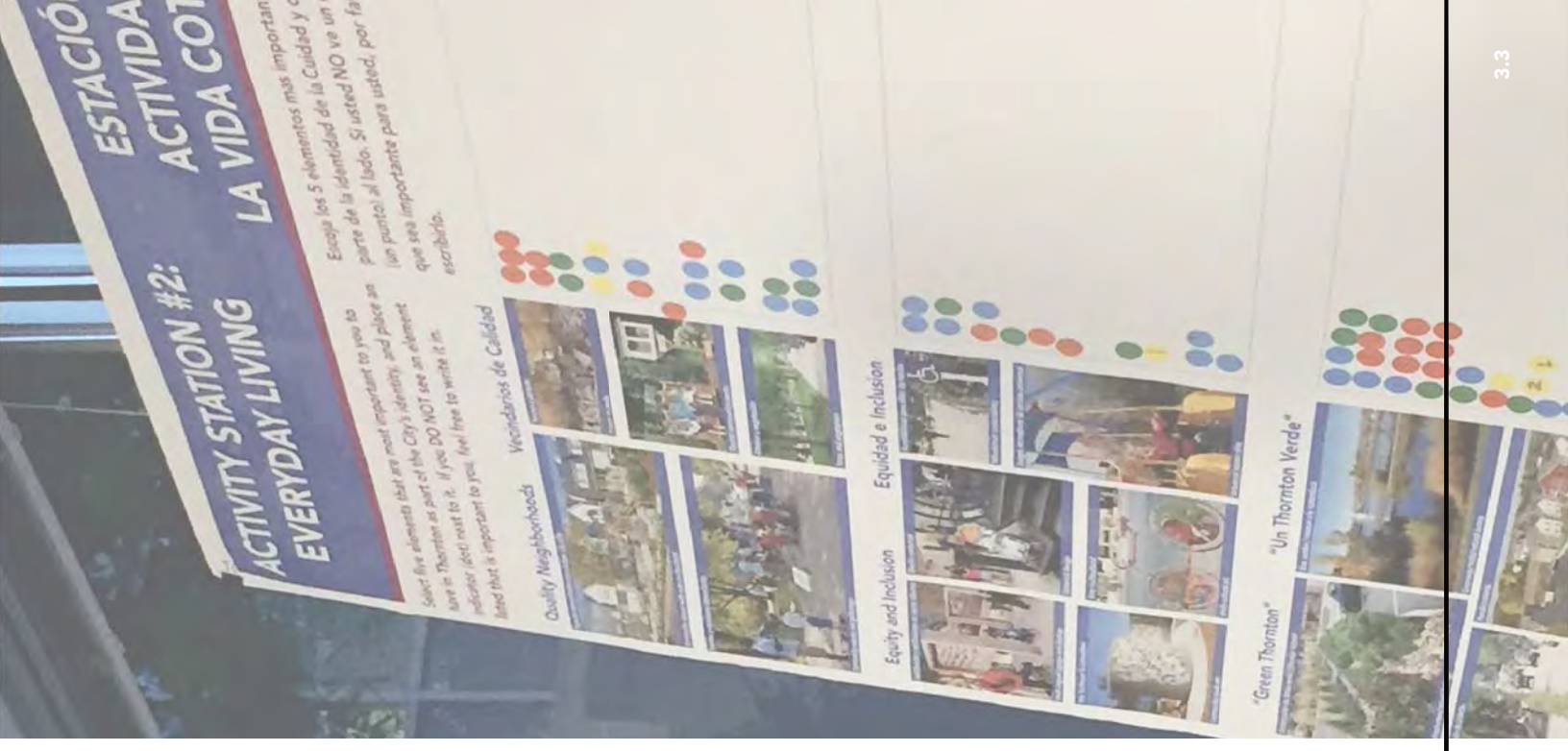
Celebrate our cultural diversity.



Help create regional destinations in Thornton.

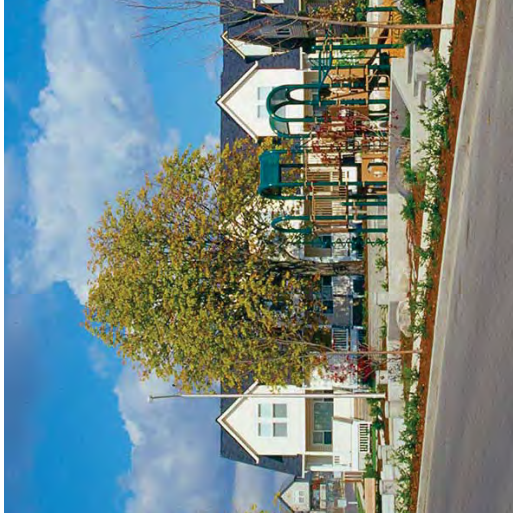


Recognize and appreciate our history and significant natural features.





CREATING QUALITY AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS



Creating Quality and Diverse

Neighborhoods is aimed at creating **affordable** and **balanced housing** options and **quality neighborhoods** for the diverse populations throughout the city of Thornton.

Community members were particularly interested in creating **walkable** neighborhoods that would be **inclusive** to residents of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and income levels, and in the **revitalization** of established neighborhoods.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

*"Inclusionary,
accessible, affordable
housing."*

*"Learn to appreciate
high-density housing
and balance it with
growth and green
spaces."*

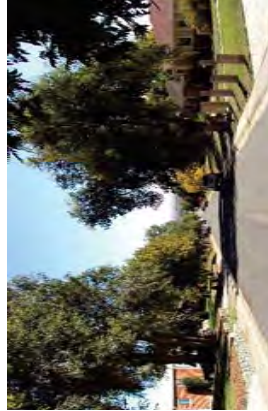
*"Integrated, diverse
population and
appreciation of that
diversity."*



PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



Encourage the provision of a mix of housing options to meet the needs of residents of varied ages, abilities and income levels throughout the city.



Pursue partnerships to promote revitalization and reinvestment in established neighborhoods.



Promote the development of new neighborhoods that offer a range of lifestyle options and amenities.



Advance the creation of walkable neighborhoods.





GROWING SMARTER AND GREENER



Growing Smarter and Greener emphasizes a need for development that is **environmentally** and **economically sustainable**. Community members desired good stewardship of the city's **natural resources** and **open spaces**, and wanted more education and opportunities for recycling, water conservation, and becoming a more **"green"** community.

There was also a desire to become a **"smart city"** that uses innovation and technology to provide greater services.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"I would like to see Thornton grow in awareness about renewable energy resources, and have people participate in conservation more."

"I would like to see more trees, plants, and reserves for animals and plants in the community of Thornton."

"I love it here. However we develop, I want to see it done in an environmentally sustainable way. I think the expansion is a positive thing, it just needs to be done intelligently and safely."





CONNECTING COMMUNITY PEOPLE AND PLACES



Connecting Community People and Places aims to increase the **effectiveness** and **equity** of Thornton's **community services, transportation networks**, and **connectivity**. It emphasizes the need to **collaborate** with local, regional and state partners to develop an effective **multi-modal transportation** system for residents, businesses, and visitors of the city of Thornton.

Community members also highlighted a need for greater **accessibility** to services, and a desire for greater **engagement** in civic affairs. Improving community connectivity through more **equitable access to internet** and **smart technologies** was a common concern.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Thornton needs transportation that is accessible and affordable."

"Youth want to be part of something, we need more information on how to be a part of this city."

"Technology and the internet need to be accessible, easy to use, and affordable for everyone."



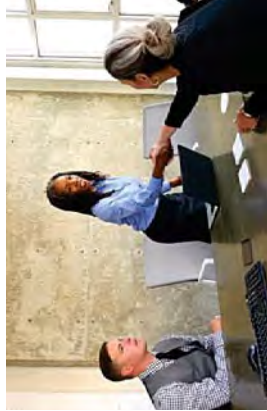
PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



Work with partners to develop an effective and equitable, multi-modal transportation system that serves all residents, businesses, and visitors.



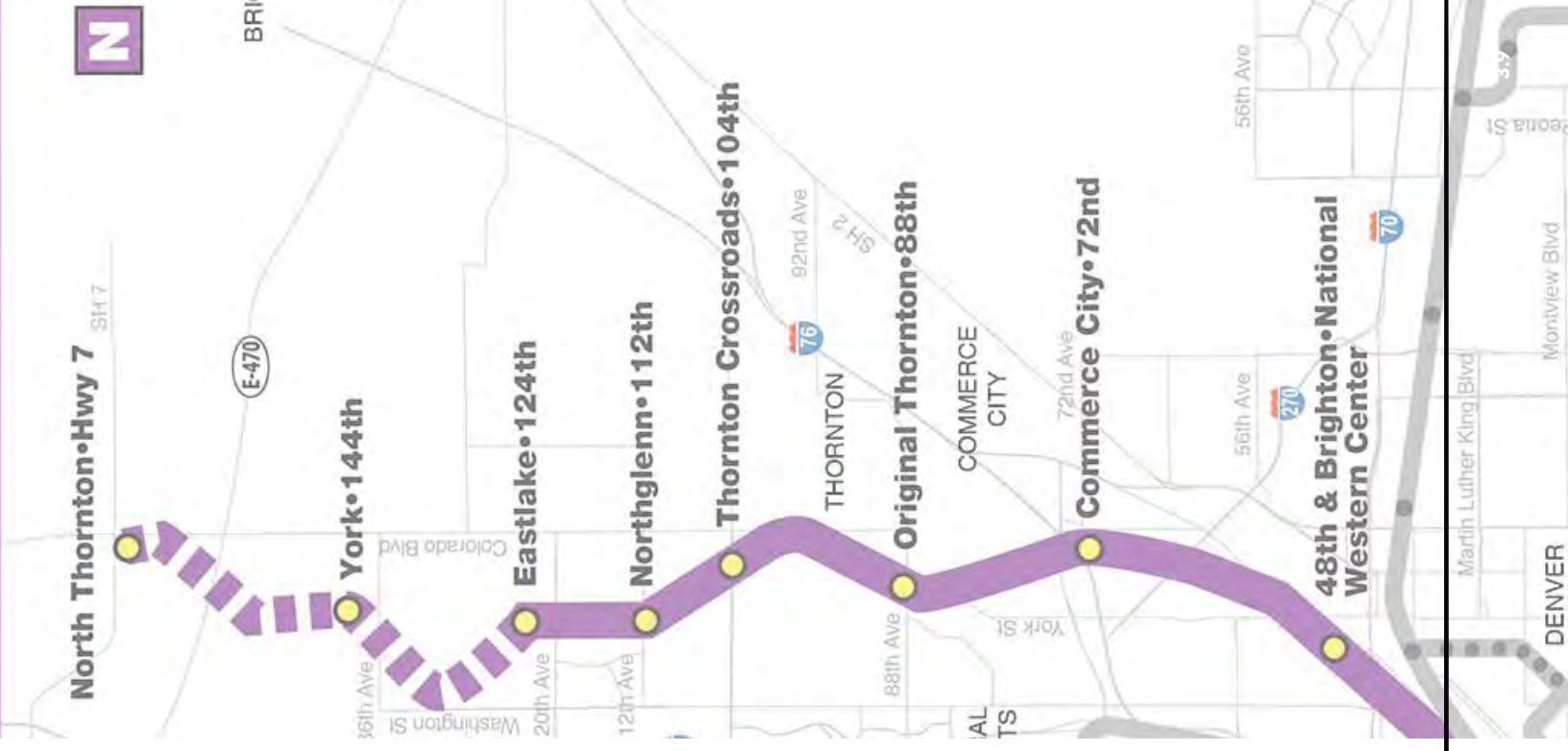
Seek opportunities for smart technology to improve community connectivity, equity and decision making.



Collaborate with local, regional, and state entities and service providers on issues of mutual significance.



Ensure that all residents have the ability to access and participate in civic affairs.





BUILDING A SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY



Building a Safe and Healthy Community reflects the high value community members placed on promoting a **safe and healthy lifestyle**. Community members expressed a desire for **safe, crime resistant neighborhoods** throughout the city of Thornton, both in form of **adequate public safety employees** and in **designing safe environments**.

There was also interest in promoting long-term **resiliency** to potential hazards. For health, community members identified a need for greater **access to healthy, affordable food**, and amenities that allow all residents the opportunity to lead an **active lifestyle**.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"We could have health food stores closer to residential communities so healthy living could be easier."

"Visible police presence, very friendly and helpful."

"Provide more opportunities for classes about health information, prevention, and nutrition."



PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



Foster a safe community.



Promote access to healthy, affordable food.



Provide opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

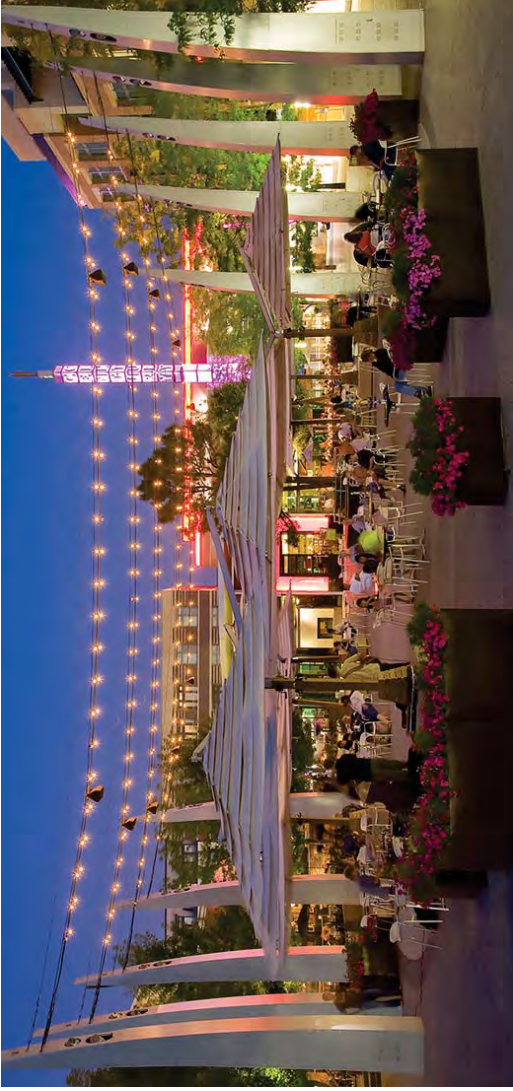


Identify and mitigate natural and other potential hazards.





PROVIDING GREAT AMENITIES AND SERVICES



Providing Great Amenities and Services reflects a desire for a city that is a **destination for arts, culture, entertainment, and recreation**. Members of the community expressed a want for more **diverse** and **unique amenities** within Thornton, accessible for residents and visitors of **all ages** and **abilities**.

They are proud of Thornton's trails, parks, and open spaces and want to see them expand with the growth of the city. Community members also sought a city government that is **continuously improving**, and seeking opportunities to better its operations and offerings.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

*"Only the imagination
is the limitation."*

*"Universal design to
accommodate senior
and people of differing
abilities."*

*"Art is an economic
driver."*



PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



Encourage the creation of community gathering places that are engaging and unique to Thornton.



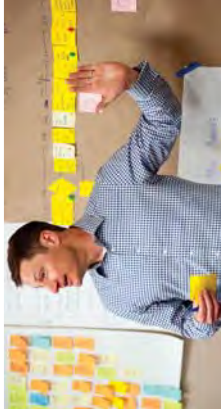
Encourage development that includes stimulating and creative amenities for all ages and abilities.



Ensure city amenities and recreation programs are inclusive of all ages and abilities.



Continue to expand and enhance the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system to meet the needs of a growing community.



Continually seek opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of city operations.





FOSTERING ECONOMIC VITALITY



Fostering Economic Vitality aims at cultivating **small business support**, **educational opportunities**, and options to **"live, work, and play"** in Thornton. Community members acknowledged the need for **increased retail** to support the city's tax base, and were interested in the city pursuing a greater **variety** of restaurant and retail options, particularly small businesses.

They also expressed a desire for the city to attract more **high quality jobs** that are **well-compensated** that allow people to live near where they work.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"I want more shopping and family-owned restaurants."

"Biggest challenges in Thornton: Number one concern is workforce development and attraction and retention; attainable housing and education."

"Thornton should be a city where residents can live, work, and play."



PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



Create, attract, and retain employers that provide high-quality and well-compensated jobs.



Support the development and growth of small businesses.



Preserve and enhance our retail sales base.



Preserve our land capacity for future businesses and accommodate for future employment growth.



Support a skilled and well educated workforce.





PROVIDING RESOURCES AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS



Providing Resources and Building Relationships emphasizes a need for **increased community support** for youths, the elderly, and others in need. Community members noted the importance of **improved communication** about healthcare, education, housing, and job support. They saw the city as a leader in **building partnerships** and **connecting people with resources**.

The community also highlighted a need for the city to provide opportunities for **meaningful dialogue** and **public input**. There was particular concern in the lack of variety of **messaging and language** services.

THORNTON THOUGHTS:

"Thornton youth need easy access to therapy to prevent suicide, addiction, and violence."

"The city should work together with more nonprofits."

"We want more information on the city's plans, developments, and decisions. We have no idea how or where to get the information we are looking for."



PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS



Connect people with social, health and human service facilities that meet the different needs of our community.



Increase awareness of and education about public services.



Provide an equitable distribution of city services and facilities throughout the community.



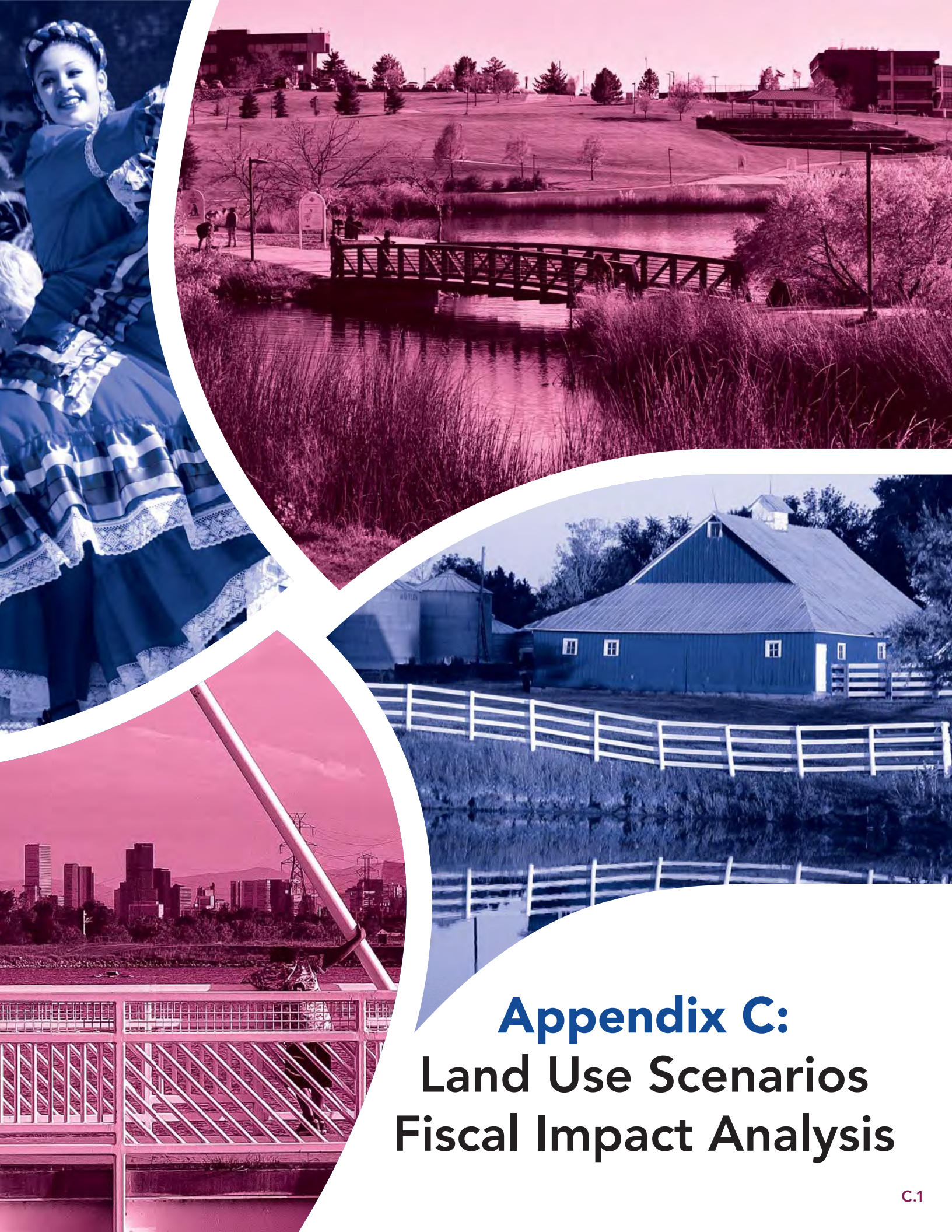
Develop and support leadership that reflects the diversity of the community.



Build and strengthen relationships with educational and other organizations that provide services to the community.







Appendix C: **Land Use Scenarios** **Fiscal Impact Analysis**

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MEMORANDUM

To: City of Thornton

From: Economic & Planning Systems

Subject: Land Use Scenarios Fiscal Impact Analysis;
EPS #183022

Date: August 22, 2019

Introduction

This memorandum provides a summary of Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) findings of the fiscal impact analysis (FIA) of the two land use plan scenarios developed and the ultimate preferred scenario for the 2019 Thornton Comprehensive Plan Rewrite. The purpose of this analysis is to identify what fiscal impacts the land use scenarios developed in the comprehensive plan have on the on-going fiscal health of the City and to identify policy recommendations and land use plan changes that are needed to ensure long-term fiscal health.

The FIA estimates the annual net fiscal impact of the land use plan based on the land use designations and the identified developable lands within the City of Thornton and its growth boundary. The analysis of the land use scenarios was completed using two contexts. The first context is considered a “Build-out” context where the impact of new development on all identified developable land in Adams County is measured. The second context is a “Plan Horizon” context where the estimated amount of growth for the 2018 to 2040 plan horizon is used based on the proportional allocation of land uses within each scenario.

This memorandum contains the following sections:

- Summary of Inputs and Methodology
- Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Summary of Findings
- Preferred Scenario Analysis

The Economics of Land Use



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Summary of Inputs and Methodology

The fiscal impact model was developed using three major components.

Fiscal Impact Model Budget Factors

First, the City of Thornton developed a fiscal model based on existing land use conditions in the city. The model estimates the revenues and expenditures per acre of different land use types. Seven land use types were used including:

- Single Family Detached (SFD)
- Single Family Attached (SFA)
- Multifamily/Mobile Home (Multifamily or MF/MH)
- Local Retail (LR)
- Regional Retail (RR)
- Government Exempt (GE or Institutional)
- Primary Employers (PE)

The model also breaks down four categories (SFD, SFA, MF/MH, LR) based on three areas of the city. The three areas are:

- South of 104th Avenue
- Between 104th Avenue and 128th Avenue
- North of 128th Avenue

EPS utilized the estimated revenues and expenditures per acre factors for each land use type and geography to estimate impacts.

Fiscal Impact Model Development Factors

The second component is the estimate of developable lands in the City of Thornton. Clarion Associates identified developable lands in the city to estimate land development capacity based on the current land use plan and any subsequent scenarios or preferred scenarios. Clarion developed factors for density based on the land use categories for residential (dwelling units per acre) and non-residential uses (floor area ratio) to apply to each developable parcel to estimate capacity for growth. Clarion developed low and high factors to provide a range of the estimated growth capacity. For the fiscal impact analysis, EPS utilized an average of the low and high, or mid-point. Clarion also developed efficiency factors for development of greenfield areas to account for land that will be used for rights-of-way, drainage, local parks and greenways, and other services. In mixed-use categories, Clarion provided estimates of the mixture of land allocated to residential and non-residential uses.

EPS relied on Clarion's factors and estimates to develop the land use scenario program to put into the fiscal impact model. EPS had to develop assumptions for the allocation of the use types (e.g. SFD, SFA, MF/MH) in the City of Thornton within each land use category (e.g. mixed neighborhoods).

Land Use Scenarios

The third component of the analysis is the land use plan. Land use plan scenarios were developed by the project consultant team and City staff based on direction from City Council and the community. The two scenarios (Scenario A and Scenario B) utilize the same amount of developable land in the city and its growth boundary. The total acreage of land analyzed equals 7,445 acres and does not include land designated for Parks and Open Space or considered Urban Reserve. As well, the undeveloped land in the City of Thornton's growth boundary that is in Weld County was not factored into the analysis and is assessed in a separate fiscal impact analysis completed by EPS.

Scenario A

Scenario A is more reflective of a continuation of the existing land use plan for the City with a greater amount of land allocated to single-use land use categories and less mixed use areas. The scenario results in 3,996 developed acres of which 70 percent are for residential uses and 30 percent for non-residential. The scenario has a capacity for 27,750 residential units.

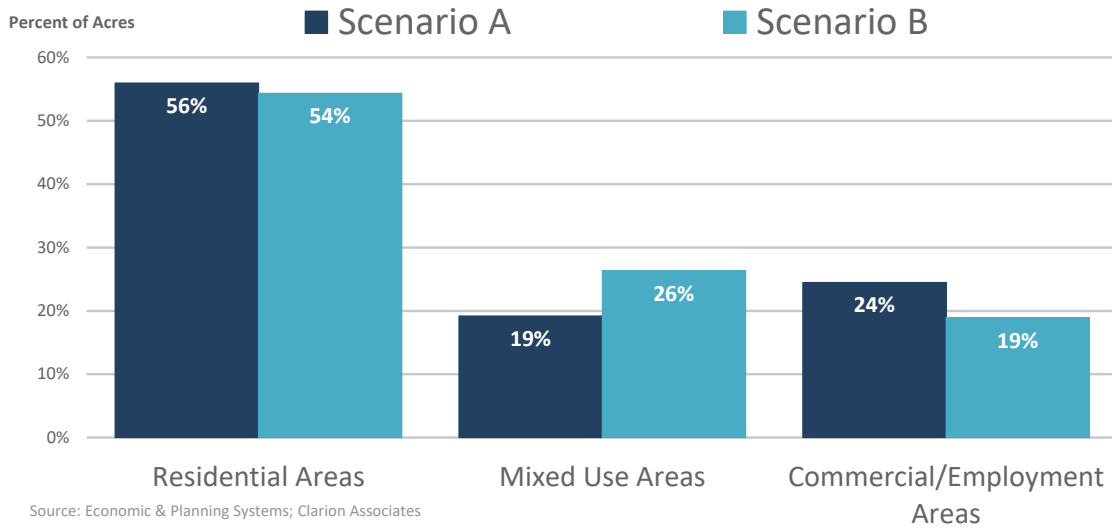
Scenario B

Scenario B reflects a land use plan that allows for a greater mixture and variety of land uses. There is more land allocated to mixed use areas and greater ranges of housing density allowed within residential land use categories. The scenario results in 3,939 developed acres, as the land use plan has a slightly higher average efficiency. The land use plan has an estimated capacity for 36,177 residential units.

Scenario Comparison

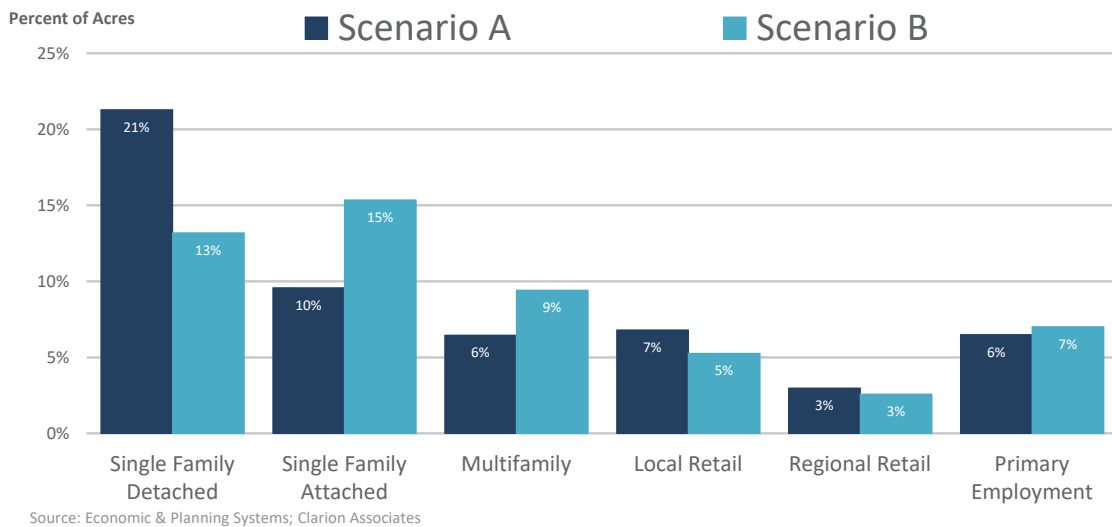
Scenario A has more land allocated to commercial/employment only uses (24 percent compared to 19 percent in Scenario B), as shown in **Figure 1**. Scenario A also has slightly more land allocated to residential-only land uses (56 percent compared to 54 percent in Scenario B). Scenario B has more land designated for a mixed-use (26 percent compared to 19 percent in Scenario A).

Figure 1 Percent of Acres by Land Use Designation Category



Scenario A results in a greater proportion of land allocated to single family detached housing (21 percent of acres) and more land allocated for retail/commercial only uses, as shown in **Figure 2**. Scenario B has a more evenly distributed allocation of land acres between the residential uses (SFD, SFA, and MF). Scenario B also has slightly more land for “Primary Employers,” which consists of office and industrial uses.

Figure 2. Percent of Acres by Use Type



Fiscal Impact Analysis

This section summarizes the results of the fiscal impact analysis for each scenario in both the Build-out and Plan Horizon contexts.

Build-out Fiscal Impact

Scenario A generates \$64.2 million in annual revenue and \$51.9 million in annual expenditures, which results in a net positive fiscal impact of \$12.3 million (**Table 1**). Scenario B generates slightly more revenue annually (\$66.7 million), but more annual expenditures (\$59.2 million), which results in a net positive fiscal impact of \$7.6 million. The greater positive impact is a result of more land allocated for non-residential only (specifically retail areas) uses in Scenario A than mixed use in Scenario B. The fiscal impact of the residential areas is essentially the same, as shown in **Figure 3**. It should be noted that Scenario B accommodates significantly more housing units. Scenario B results in slightly more revenue from Primary Employer uses, despite the shift to more mixed use designations, as shown in **Figure 4**.

Table 1. Build-out Annual Fiscal Impact

Description	Scenario A			Scenario B		
	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact
South of 104th						
Residential Areas	\$854,681	\$837,845	\$16,837	\$1,294,084	\$2,027,077	-\$732,993
Mixed Use Areas	\$4,170,341	\$2,714,887	\$1,455,454	\$7,754,511	\$4,866,461	\$2,888,050
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$6,454,296	\$2,565,311	\$3,888,985	\$751,469	\$348,610	\$402,859
Institutional	<u>\$654</u>	<u>\$4,749</u>	<u>-\$4,095</u>	<u>\$654</u>	<u>\$4,749</u>	<u>-\$4,095</u>
Subtotal	\$11,479,972	\$6,122,792	\$5,357,180	\$9,800,719	\$7,246,898	\$2,553,821
Between 104th - 128th						
Residential Areas	\$1,682,578	\$2,461,869	-\$779,291	\$1,963,824	\$2,347,837	-\$384,013
Mixed Use Areas	\$2,877,634	\$1,678,516	\$1,199,118	\$5,151,599	\$2,893,690	\$2,257,909
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$2,817,619	\$1,074,897	\$1,742,722	\$632,571	\$286,923	\$345,648
(I) Institutional	<u>\$257</u>	<u>\$1,865</u>	<u>-\$1,609</u>	<u>\$257</u>	<u>\$1,865</u>	<u>-\$1,609</u>
Subtotal	\$7,378,089	\$5,217,148	\$2,160,941	\$7,748,251	\$5,530,315	\$2,217,935
North of 128th						
Residential Areas	\$19,444,195	\$25,222,636	-\$5,778,441	\$24,812,538	\$30,986,237	-\$6,173,700
Mixed Use Areas	\$16,838,245	\$11,800,854	\$5,037,391	\$19,154,800	\$13,125,623	\$6,029,177
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$9,040,875	\$3,474,893	\$5,565,982	\$5,225,558	\$2,288,241	\$2,937,316
(I) Institutional	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>-\$3</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>-\$3</u>
Subtotal	\$45,323,316	\$40,498,386	\$4,824,930	\$49,192,896	\$46,400,105	\$2,792,790
Total						
Residential Areas	\$21,981,455	\$28,522,350	-\$6,540,895	\$28,070,445	\$35,361,151	-\$7,290,706
Mixed Use Areas	\$23,886,221	\$16,194,257	\$7,691,964	\$32,060,911	\$20,885,775	\$11,175,136
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$18,312,790	\$7,115,101	\$11,197,689	\$6,609,597	\$2,923,774	\$3,685,823
(I) Institutional	<u>\$911</u>	<u>\$6,617</u>	<u>-\$5,706</u>	<u>\$911</u>	<u>\$6,617</u>	<u>-\$5,706</u>
Total Revenue	\$64,181,377	\$51,838,325	\$12,343,051	\$66,741,865	\$59,177,318	\$7,564,547

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

Figure 3. Build-out Annual Net Impact by Land Use Designation Category

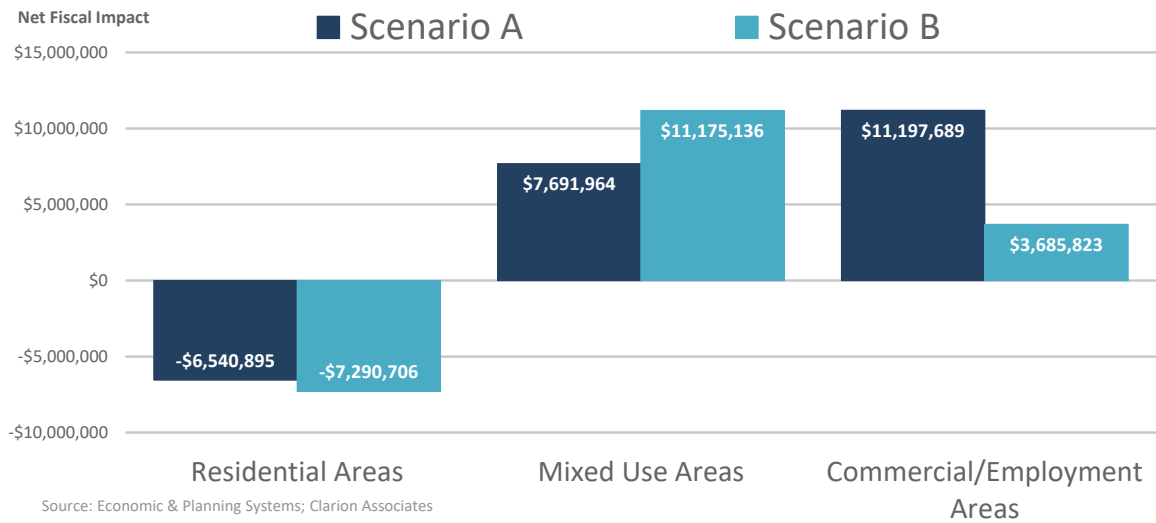
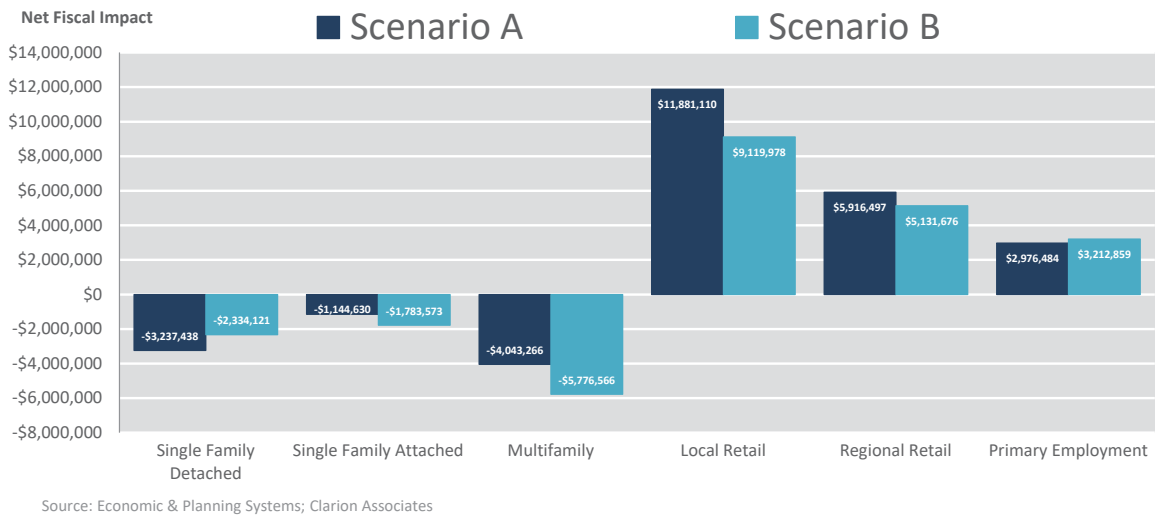


Figure 4. Build-out Annual Net Fiscal Impact by Use



Plan Horizon Fiscal Impact

The amount of forecasted new housing and jobs by 2040 will generate demand for development that does not exceed land capacity in aggregate. An estimate of demand for developable acres to accommodate growth in the Plan Horizon (2019 to 2040) was developed to provide an estimate of the fiscal impact of each scenario in 2040 to compare to the Build-out analysis.

The City of Thornton is estimated to grow by 20,000 to 25,000 new households by 2040 based on population forecasts. EPS allocated the 25,000 new households throughout the city based on the proportional share of buildable residential land in the city and the land use designations in each scenario. This was completed by determining the amount of acres 25,000 units would require in each scenario. At buildout, Scenario A new development has an average residential density of 10 units per acre. This average density results in a demand for 2,500 acres in the Plan Horizon analysis. Scenario B new development has an average residential density at buildout of 12.8 units per acre, which results in demand for 1,950 acres.

To estimate demand in the Plan Horizon for non-residential uses, EPS utilized land demand estimates for the City of Thornton generated in a study completed by Gruen Gruen + Associates (GG+A) in 2016. Based on estimates in that study, EPS approximated land demand for office uses to be 60 to 120 acres over the next 20 years. The estimated demand for industrial uses is estimated to be between 620 and 700 acres. EPS used an estimate demand of 750 acres for office and industrial uses over the 20 years.

EPS generated a planning level estimate of retail demand in the City of Thornton from new households over the Plan Horizon. The city is estimated to grow from approximately 45,600 households to 70,600 households by 2040. To estimate retail demand, EPS multiplies the 25,000 new households by the average household income in the City of Thornton (\$86,593, 2017 ACS 1-Year Estimate) to estimate "Total Personal Income" (TPI) for the city's new residents. The average Colorado household (based on estimates from the U.S. Census of Retail Trade) spends 35 percent of its TPI on retail goods and services. The new households in the city by 2040 are estimated to generate \$760 million in retail sales annually. Based on average sales per square foot factors for major retail store categories, EPS estimates the new households will generate demand for 2.1 million square feet of retail by 2040, which equates to an average sales per square foot of (\$365). Using an average floor area ration of 0.2 for retail, EPS estimates land demand to accommodate new retail space is 240 acres. EPS applied 1.5x planning factor to this estimate to develop a planning level estimate for retail acre demand by 2040 of 350 acres.

Each scenario estimates a total demand for 1,100 acres of non-residential land by 2040. The 1,100 acres are allocated proportionally based on the land capacity by land use designation in each scenario for the Plan Horizon.

Scenario A generates \$57.9 million in annual revenue and \$46.7 million in annual expenditures, which results in a net positive fiscal impact of \$11.2 million (**Table 2**). Scenario B, in the Plan Horizon, generates less revenue annually (\$55.2 million), but less annual expenditures (\$44.8.3 million), which results in a net positive fiscal impact of \$10.4 million. The denser development pattern facilitated by Scenario B results in a more equal fiscal impact of the two scenarios in the Plan Horizon because of less land used for residential uses. The fiscal impact of the residential areas is approximately \$0.9 million less in Scenario B, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Plan Horizon Fiscal Impact

Description	Scenario A			Scenario B		
	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact
South of 104th						
Residential Areas	\$769,285	\$754,130	\$15,154	\$892,989	\$1,398,794	-\$505,806
Mixed Use Areas	\$3,763,479	\$2,448,108	\$1,315,371	\$7,317,962	\$4,198,449	\$3,119,512
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$5,826,927	\$2,315,959	\$3,510,968	\$742,734	\$344,557	\$398,176
Institutional	<u>\$590</u>	<u>\$4,287</u>	<u>-\$3,697</u>	<u>\$590</u>	<u>\$4,287</u>	<u>-\$3,697</u>
Subtotal	\$10,360,282	\$5,522,484	\$4,837,797	\$8,954,274	\$5,946,088	\$3,008,186
Between 104th - 128th						
Residential Areas	\$1,514,461	\$2,215,888	-\$701,427	\$1,355,146	\$1,620,135	-\$264,990
Mixed Use Areas	\$2,596,743	\$1,513,499	\$1,083,243	\$4,845,354	\$2,495,469	\$2,349,884
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$2,543,742	\$970,415	\$1,573,326	\$625,217	\$283,588	\$341,629
(I) Institutional	<u>\$232</u>	<u>\$1,684</u>	<u>-\$1,452</u>	<u>\$232</u>	<u>\$1,684</u>	<u>-\$1,452</u>
Subtotal	\$6,655,177	\$4,701,486	\$1,953,691	\$6,825,948	\$4,400,876	\$2,425,072
North of 128th						
Residential Areas	\$17,501,401	\$22,702,481	-\$5,201,080	\$17,122,006	\$21,382,196	-\$4,260,190
Mixed Use Areas	\$15,187,469	\$10,636,677	\$4,550,792	\$17,100,026	\$10,747,502	\$6,352,524
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$8,162,086	\$3,137,127	\$5,024,959	\$5,164,811	\$2,261,641	\$2,903,170
(I) Institutional	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>-\$2</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>-\$2</u>
Subtotal	\$40,850,956	\$36,476,287	\$4,374,669	\$39,386,843	\$34,391,341	\$4,995,502
Total						
Residential Areas	\$19,785,147	\$25,672,499	-\$5,887,352	\$19,370,140	\$24,401,125	-\$5,030,985
Mixed Use Areas	\$21,547,691	\$14,598,284	\$6,949,407	\$29,263,341	\$17,441,421	\$11,821,920
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$16,532,754	\$6,423,501	\$10,109,254	\$6,532,762	\$2,889,786	\$3,642,976
(I) Institutional	<u>\$823</u>	<u>\$5,974</u>	<u>-\$5,151</u>	<u>\$823</u>	<u>\$5,974</u>	<u>-\$5,151</u>
Total Revenue	\$57,866,415	\$46,700,258	\$11,166,157	\$55,167,066	\$44,738,306	\$10,428,760

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

Figure 5. Plan Horizon Annual Net Impact by Land Use Designation Category

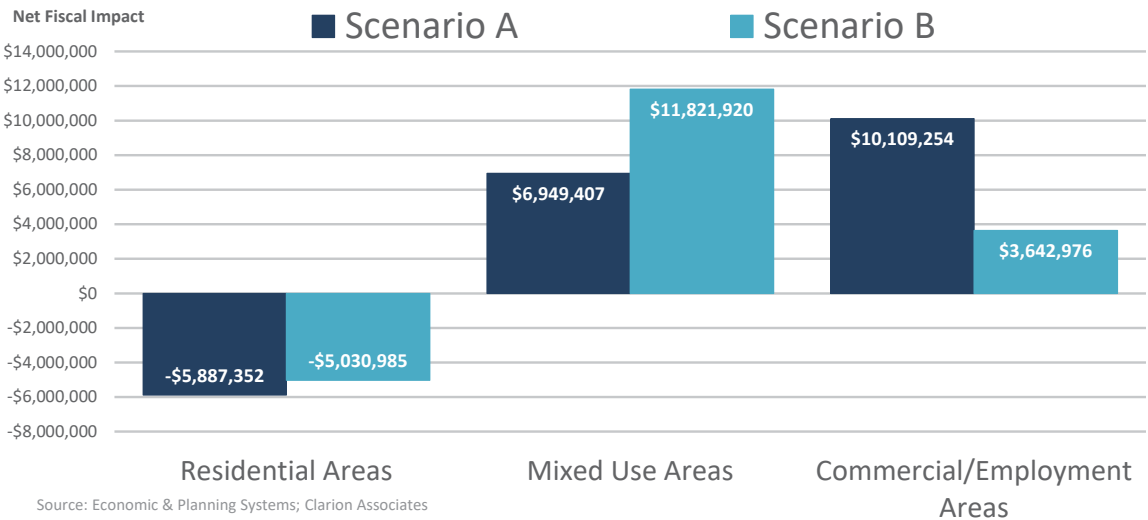
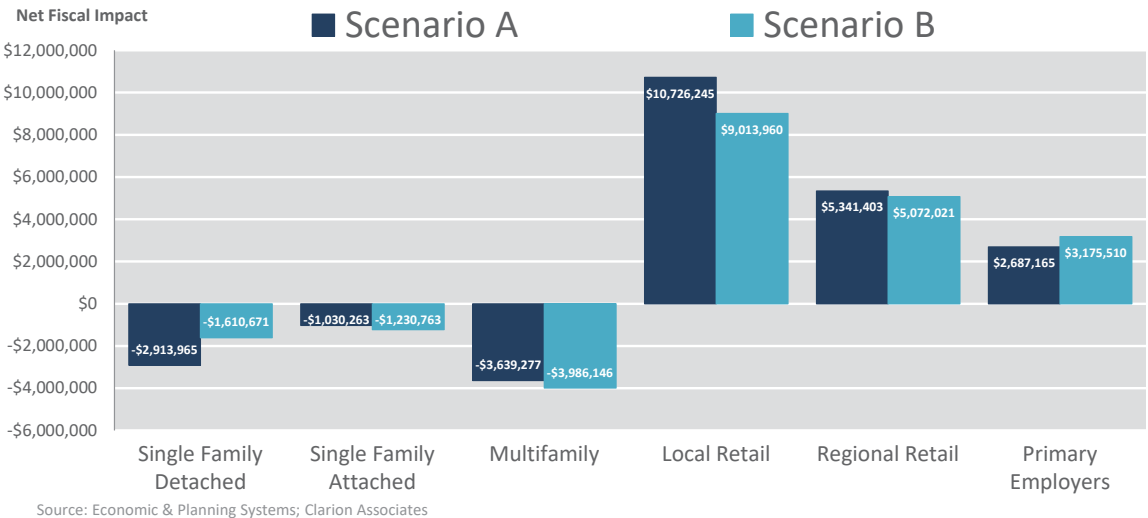


Figure 6. Plan Horizon Annual Net Fiscal Impact by Use



Summary of Findings

Major Findings

The following major findings regarding the land use scenarios and growth policies were identified from the fiscal impact analysis.

1. *The two scenarios generate a net positive fiscal impact on the City.*

Scenario A and Scenario B both generate a net positive fiscal impact annually on the City at Build-out. Scenario A generates a higher benefit annually than Scenario B. The evaluation of the land use scenarios over the Plan Horizon of 2019 to 2040 also results in a net fiscal positive impact for both scenarios. However, the net fiscal impact of both scenarios are more equal due to less residential land needed to support forecasted growth in Scenario B.

2. *Allowing for a greater amount of land designated as mixed-use in Scenario B results in a sufficient amount of land for commercial and primary employment development to produce a positive net fiscal impact.*

The shift of more land to mixed-use designations and reduced non-residential only areas in Scenario B generates a smaller net fiscal impact at Build-out but still generates a positive fiscal impact. Scenario B in the Plan Horizon results in a slightly lower net positive fiscal impact than Scenario A, due in part to less residential acreage, but also to more balanced residential and non-residential uses.

3. *The land use scenarios have sufficient land allocated to meet estimated demand over the Plan Horizon; however, there is a not an excess of land beyond the Plan Horizon.*

The land use scenarios allocate 1,100 to 1,200 acres of land for non-residential uses (after factoring in efficiencies and standard floor area ratio/intensity factors). EPS estimates demand for non-residential uses to be approximately 1,100 acres by 2040 based on the GG+A Study in 2016 and planning level estimates of retail demand completed by EPS. The comparison of land allocated for commercial uses (local and regional retail) versus primary employment indicates that there needs to be more emphasis on protecting and prioritizing employment lands compared to retail lands. It is likely there is more than adequate land designated for retail/commercial uses in both scenarios.

Both scenarios can accommodate the forecast housing demand in the city by 2040. Scenario A has less capacity (27,750 units based on EPS estimates) for residential units based on the land use designations, which is slightly higher than the estimate demand of 25,000 units. Under Scenario A, the city will reach its residential capacity shortly after the 2040 plan horizon. The allowance for a greater range of densities and more land designated for denser land use categories in Scenario B results in significantly more capacity for housing.

Policy Recommendations

EPS has developed the following policy recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan based on the fiscal impact analysis.

1. *A balanced approach to non-residential growth is needed to maintain fiscal health.*

Maintaining a more even balance of residential and non-residential growth in the city is necessary to maintain fiscal health. The fiscal modeling results reinforce the City's current policy direction that focuses on generating more employment growth to balance residential growth.

2. *A balanced mix of commercial (sales tax generating) uses and employment oriented uses is also needed.*

The protecting the amount of land for employment-oriented uses, as opposed to retail, may be more concerning for the City. This is partly due to the city's geography and access to major transportation routes. Employment oriented uses are more likely to locate near I-25 and E-470 than sites more internal to the city, therefore placing a greater importance on these areas. Attracting jobs and creating employment places should continue to be a major priority for the City's best suited employment lands. The GG+A study estimated that the majority of land demand for employment uses in the city will be for industrial uses. Industrial uses, especially warehouse and distribution, are more land intensive and most often do not generate a significant amount of employment. The creation of more people intensive employment uses either through light manufacturing or office uses should be the priority, which is consistent with the City's current policy direction.

3. *Plan for a greater diversity and flexibility of uses in areas not deemed as priority employment areas.*

The City's fiscal model estimates Local Retail land generates a greater fiscal benefit per acre than Regional Retail and Primary Employers. However, the future demand for local retail is somewhat limited. EPS estimates of demand (used in the Plan Horizon analysis) for retail land may be aggressive. Within EPS's estimate, the demand for retail land is more than adequately accommodated by the areas designated for commercial uses in both scenarios. Flexibility in uses within commercial areas that are not the highest priority or most attractive to the market can be supported and may help increase viability of existing retail areas

4. *Allow for a greater diversity of housing types and a denser land use pattern with a greater utilization of land.*

Allowing for more flexibility in the mixture and types of uses, as illustrated in Scenario B, and allowing for a greater diversity of housing types will ensure long term capacity and will still maintain fiscal health over the Plan Horizon. The evaluation of the scenarios in the Plan Horizon illustrates the benefit of a denser land use pattern. While the land use plan in Scenario B does not generate more revenue than in

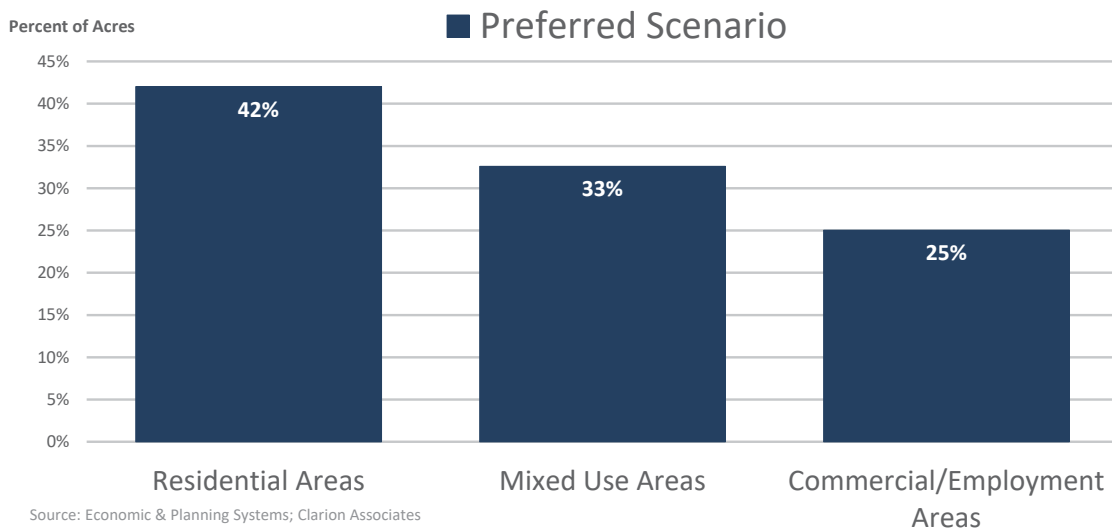
Scenario A, the expenditures are less resulting in a fiscal impact that approximately equal. As well, Scenario B allows for significantly more capacity for residential growth. The city will be nearing capacity for residential growth by the end of the Plan Horizon (2040). Greater utilization of the remaining land in the city will help maintain adequate capacity to accommodate growth and capture opportunities.

Preferred Scenario Analysis

A preferred scenario was developed through the outreach completed in the plan process and revisions made by the staff and consultant team. The preferred future land use map (preferred scenario) was used for the development of the adoption review draft of the Comprehensive Plan. This preferred scenario map was used to estimate the fiscal impacts of the proposed land use plan. The major findings from the fiscal impact analysis are summarized below.

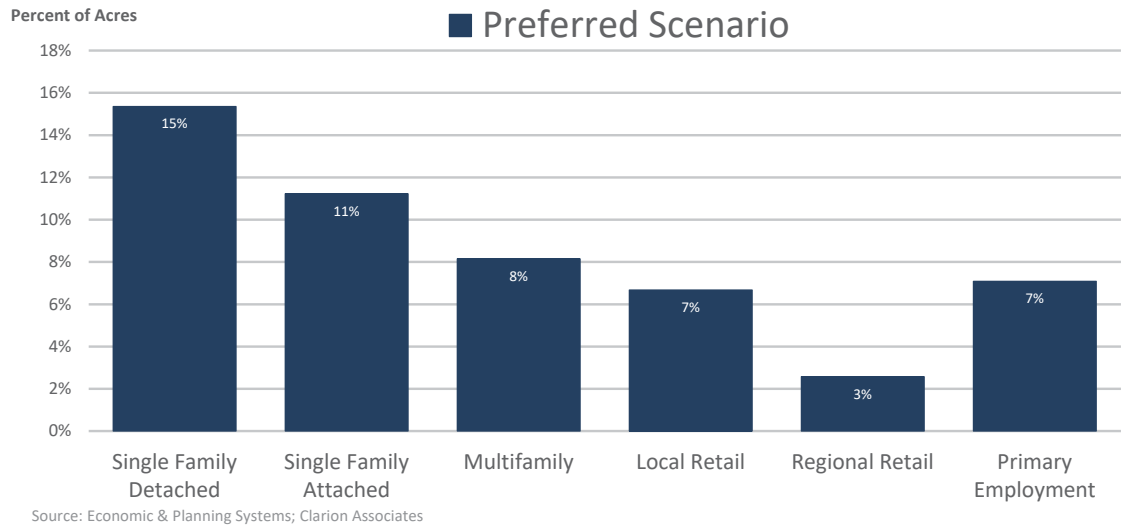
- **More Mixed-use Areas** – The preferred scenario results in the designation of more developable land for mixed use than the two scenarios review previously, with 1/3 of developable acreage designated in mixed use categories as shown in X. The amount of commercial/employment land is slightly higher than Scenario A but carries forward the approach in that scenario of preserving priority employment areas in the City. A large portion of undeveloped areas designated as Residential Areas was shifted into a mixed-use residential category to allow for more flexibility for larger undeveloped areas in the north portion of the City.

Figure 7 Preferred Scenario % of Acres by Land Use Designation Category



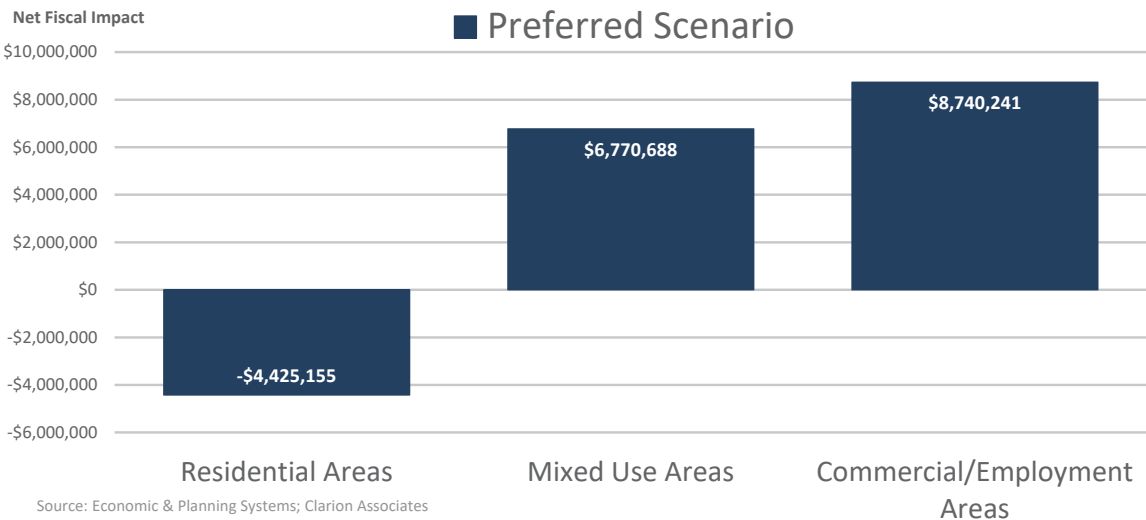
- **Diverse Mixture of Uses** – The preferred scenario results in a more even mixture of land use types than the scenarios and best reflects realistic market conditions.

Figure 8 Preferred Scenario % of Acres by Land Use



- **Strong Fiscal Performance with Mixture of Uses** – The preferred scenario results in a net positive fiscal impact of \$11.1 million at Build-out as shown in **Figure 9** and **Table 3**. The preferred scenario results in a slightly lower net fiscal impact as Scenario A (\$11.1 million versus \$12.3 million), but generally matches the approximate fiscal impact of Scenario A but while allowing for a greater diversity and mixture of uses as envisioned in Scenario B.

Figure 9 Preferred Scenario Net Fiscal Impact by Land Use Type at Build-out



When considering the estimated demand within the Plan Horizon, the fiscal impact analysis of the preferred scenario resulted in a similar impact as Scenario A and Scenario B. The net fiscal impact over the plan horizon of the preferred scenario is estimated to be \$10.5 million, as shown in **Figure 10** and **Table 4**.

Figure 10 Preferred Scenario Net Fiscal Impact by Land Use Type over Plan Horizon

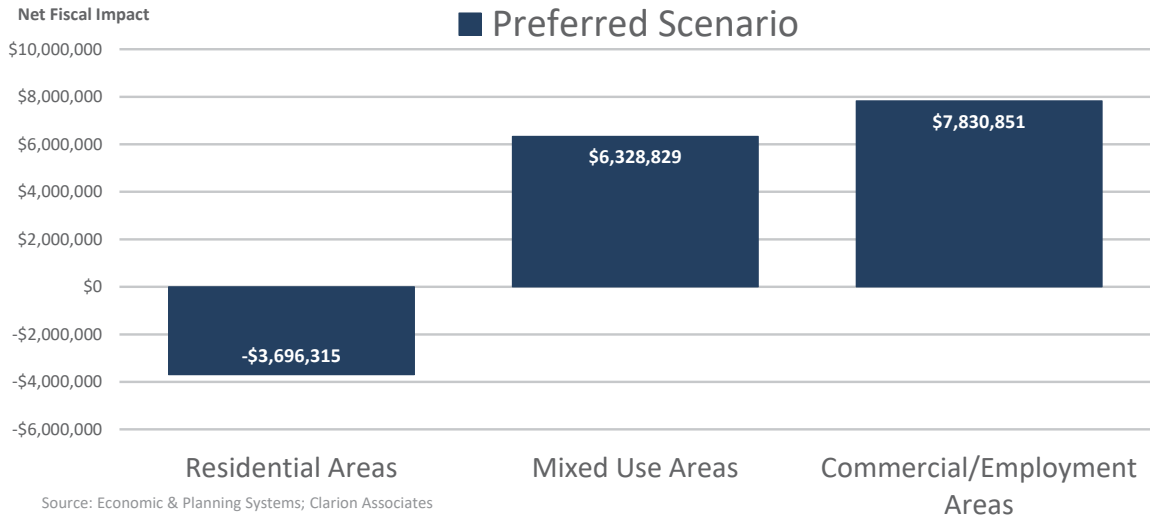


Table 3 Preferred Scenario Build-out Fiscal Impact Summary

Description	Preferred Scenario		
	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact
South of 104th			
Residential Areas	\$617,114	\$502,260	\$114,854
Mixed Use Areas	\$6,468,202	\$4,088,782	\$2,379,420
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$2,098,307	\$882,906	\$1,215,401
Institutional	<u>\$646</u>	<u>\$4,693</u>	<u>-\$4,047</u>
Subtotal	\$9,184,269	\$5,478,641	\$3,705,628
Between 104th - 128th			
Residential Areas	\$1,537,376	\$2,213,636	-\$676,259
Mixed Use Areas	\$2,821,509	\$1,643,193	\$1,178,315
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$3,032,411	\$1,152,387	\$1,880,024
(I) Institutional	<u>\$257</u>	<u>\$1,865</u>	<u>-\$1,609</u>
Subtotal	\$7,391,553	\$5,011,081	\$2,380,471
North of 128th			
Residential Areas	\$13,467,573	\$17,331,322	-\$3,863,749
Mixed Use Areas	\$27,004,890	\$23,791,938	\$3,212,952
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$9,116,218	\$3,471,401	\$5,644,817
(I) Institutional	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>-\$3</u>
Subtotal	\$49,588,681	\$44,594,664	\$4,994,017
Total			
Residential Areas	\$15,622,063	\$20,047,218	-\$4,425,155
Mixed Use Areas	\$36,294,601	\$29,523,913	\$6,770,688
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$14,246,935	\$5,506,694	\$8,740,241
(I) Institutional	<u>\$904</u>	<u>\$6,561</u>	<u>-\$5,658</u>
Total Revenue	\$66,164,503	\$55,084,387	\$11,080,116

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

Table 4 Preferred Scenario Plan Horizon Fiscal Impact Summary

Description	Preferred Scenario		
	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact
South of 104th			
Residential Areas	\$515,473	\$419,536	\$95,937
Mixed Use Areas	\$5,737,785	\$3,560,381	\$2,177,404
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$1,879,986	\$791,043	\$1,088,943
Institutional	<u>\$646</u>	<u>\$4,693</u>	<u>-\$4,047</u>
Subtotal	\$8,133,890	\$4,775,653	\$3,358,237
Between 104th - 128th			
Residential Areas	\$1,284,164	\$1,849,041	-\$564,877
Mixed Use Areas	\$2,502,007	\$1,431,440	\$1,070,568
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$2,716,899	\$1,032,485	\$1,684,414
(I) Institutional	<u>\$257</u>	<u>\$1,865</u>	<u>-\$1,609</u>
Subtotal	\$6,503,328	\$4,314,831	\$2,188,496
North of 128th			
Residential Areas	\$11,249,411	\$14,476,785	-\$3,227,375
Mixed Use Areas	\$23,279,805	\$20,198,948	\$3,080,857
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$8,167,708	\$3,110,214	\$5,057,494
(I) Institutional	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>-\$3</u>
Subtotal	\$42,696,924	\$37,785,950	\$4,910,974
Total			
Residential Areas	\$13,049,048	\$16,745,362	-\$3,696,315
Mixed Use Areas	\$31,519,597	\$25,190,768	\$6,328,829
Commercial/Employment Areas	\$12,764,593	\$4,933,742	\$7,830,851
(I) Institutional	<u>\$904</u>	<u>\$6,561</u>	<u>-\$5,658</u>
Total Revenue	\$57,334,142	\$46,876,434	\$10,457,708

Source: Economic & Planning Systems



Appendix D: **Weld County Fiscal** **Impact Analysis**

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Final Report

Weld County Annexation Fiscal Impact Analysis

The Economics of Land Use



Prepared for:
City of Thornton

Prepared by:
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July 16, 2019

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1. Introduction and Summary of Findings

Introduction

The City of Thornton (the City) has a large portion of land (approximately 4,500 acres) on the northern edge of its growth planning area that is within Weld County but not annexed into the City of Thornton, which is referred to as the Study Area for the purposes of this report. As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City requested EPS to analyze the potential fiscal benefits or costs of allowing annexation and urban level development (defined as development that would require City of Thornton services such as water, sanitary sewer, roads, police and fire services). This fiscal impact analysis will therefore provide guidance on whether it is in the City's best interest to plan for future urban level development in the area.

The Study Area is subject to a number of restrictions that affect the current and future use of the land. If annexed, the Study Area would represent a large expansion of the City into Weld County. A portion of the Study Area is under an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and court settlement agreement (Settlement Agreement) with the City of Northglenn. Additionally, a portion of the Study Area is adjacent to Northglenn's sanitary sewer treatment facility and may not be attractive for urban development. As well, some areas are not permitted to have urban level development under the IGA and Settlement Agreement.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of the fiscal impact analysis of potential development in the Study Area. The goals of the analysis are to:

- Determine if it is financially advantageous to allow urban growth in Weld County.
- Determine what threshold (amount/mix) of growth is needed to support fiscal sustainability.
- Identify major barriers to growth and impacts to service provision in the Study Area.

This report provides a summary of impacts for both on-going (annual) impacts on the City's General Fund and one-time fiscal and operational impacts. The following tasks were completed to assess the impacts to the City of Thornton:

On-going Fiscal Impacts

- Identify a market supportable buildout program for the portions of the City's growth area in Weld County.
- Utilize the City's fiscal model as a basis to estimate the annual costs and revenues to the General Fund from the defined development program.

- Identify the amount and mix of development needed to support fiscal health in the area.

One-time and Service Impacts

- Identify the major capital improvements that will likely be needed to support urban development.
- Identify the services considerations that will impact provision of services in the area.

Summary of Findings

A summary of the major findings of the fiscal impact analysis are provided below. The findings are split between Key Considerations, in terms of policy direction, and Recommended Policy Direction for consideration by City Council, City staff, and the community at large.

Key Considerations

- 1. The Study Area has several constraints that make a coordinated plan for urban development difficult and impact the ability of the area to achieve a level of development that allows for municipal services to be provided in a financially viable way.***

The 1992 Settlement Agreement with the City of Northglenn limits residential development to 1 unit per acre within the “Development Corridor” identified in the Settlement Agreement. As well, the Settlement Agreement limits the types of employment uses allowed, specifically heavy or outdoor oriented manufacturing uses. The market demand for development in the area is likely limited to primarily low-density residential uses with a limited amount of supporting commercial space. The Study Area’s proximity to I-25 and lower land values may make some industrial uses viable and attractive in the long term but improvements to 168th Avenue are needed to allow for greater traffic levels and enhanced access that employment uses will need. Lastly, the Study Area has major water and floodways that limit the amount of acreage available for development, and fragment the roadway network which will require bridges to extend major arterials.

- 2. The development program for the Study Area generates a negative annual fiscal impact on the City at build-out.***

The buildout development program generated for this study is based on a continuation of the development patterns in the northern portions of the City of Thornton. The program includes a mixture of lower-density housing products, supporting commercial space, and areas for industrial uses. The program generates a negative \$2.2 million impact on the General Fund at build-out. Additionally, the development program tested is an optimistic estimate for future potential employment uses, which may not be achievable

within the Comprehensive Plan time horizon of 2040. Decreases in the amount employment uses in the program will increase the negative annual fiscal impacts. An even balance of residential and non-residential growth (either in terms of acres or new jobs versus new housing units) is needed achieve fiscal balance, which is not likely in the area due to its location.

3. *Allowing development in the Study Area will generate the need to provide municipal services, which will create significant logistical and financial impacts due to the Study Areas location relative to existing services and infrastructure in Weld County.*

Significant annexation and development in Weld County will trigger the need for additional infrastructure and services to be provided outside existing and even planned future service areas. The Fire Department estimates that an eight fire station will be needed to serve portions of the City's planning area in Adams County. Annexing into Weld County will likely expedite the need for this station and will impact its location. Serving areas in Weld County will have a major impact on police services due to the need to rely and comply with Weld County courts and social services, which are primarily located in Greeley. Lastly, providing raw water, building water infrastructure and wastewater infrastructure, and addressing the treatment of wastewater will need to occur and will trigger City capital investments, which could also impact the timing of services/infrastructure needed in existing portions the City or its planning area in Adams County.

Recommended Policy Direction

The following policy recommendations were developed for consideration based on the analysis.

- 1. Annexation into Weld County is not recommended from a financial and fiscal perspective, at least for the foreseeable future (5 to 10 years). The re-evaluation of annexation could be explored during the next major comprehensive plan update in approximately 10 years.***
- 2. If Annexation into Weld County is determined to be desirable for other reasons, annexations should not occur for residential uses within the “Development Corridor” unless the amendments to the Settlement Agreement and IGA are made to increase the allowable density of residential uses.***
- 3. If an annexation into Weld County is pursued, the City should proactively seek partnerships in the provision of municipal services and construction of infrastructure as a way to reduce financial costs on the City of annexing.***

2. Land Use Assumptions

This chapter defines the boundaries and characteristics of the Study Area along with the use restrictions related to the Study Area. Consideration of the use restrictions and market demand for future growth in the area were then combined to develop a build-out development program for the Study Area.

Study Area

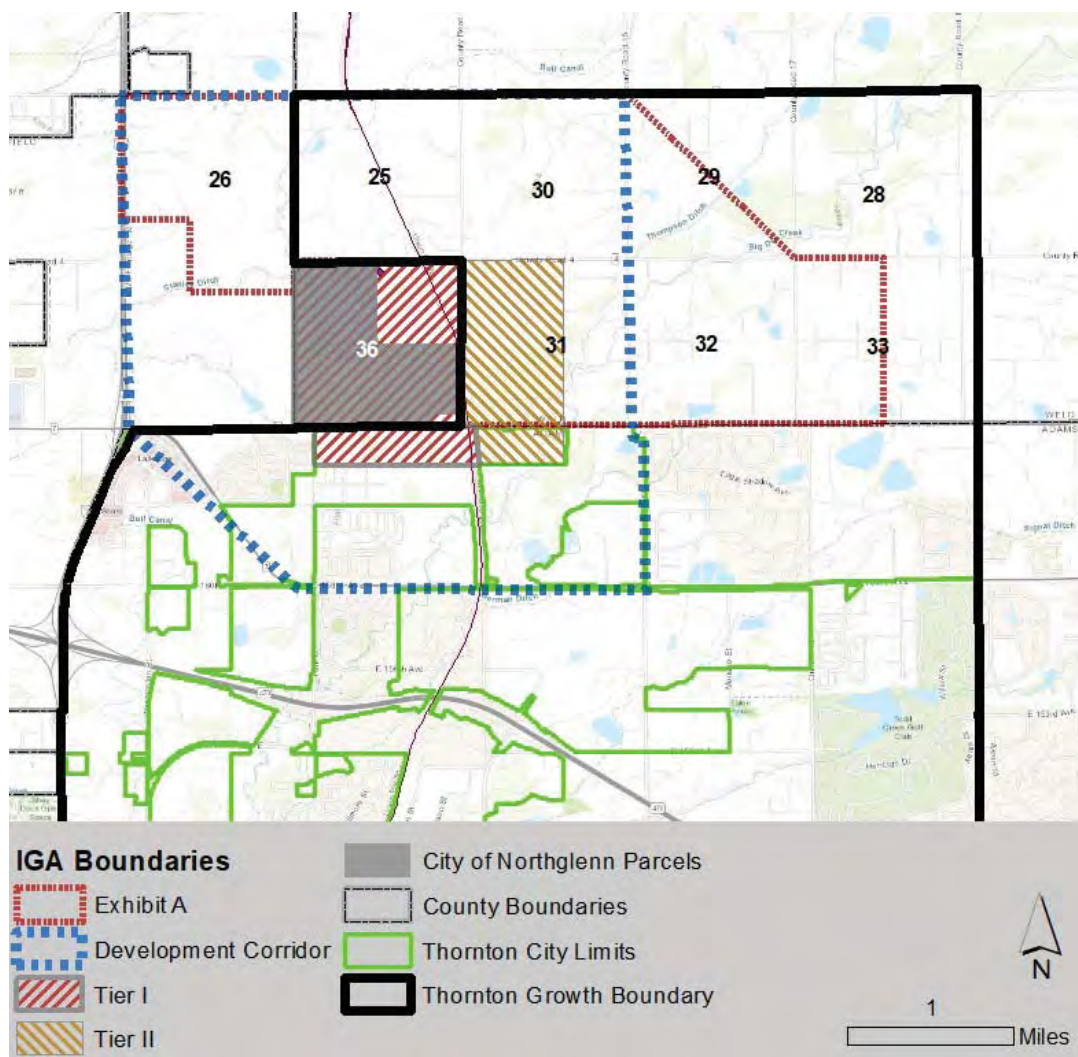
The Study Area for the Weld County Fiscal Impact Analysis consists of seven sections between 168th Avenue (southern boundary), Weld County 19 (eastern boundary), Weld County Road 6 (northern boundary), and Weld County Roads 11 and 13 (western boundary). A number of planning, legal, and utility service boundaries affect the Study Area is defined, which are shown in **Figure 1**.

- City of Thornton Planning Area – The City of Thornton’s urban growth boundary or “Planning Area”, which specifies the area where the City can initiate annexation is shown in black in **Figure 1**.
- “Exhibit A” Area – “Exhibit A” (outlined in red in **Figure 1**) depicts an area subject to the 1992 Settlement Agreement between the City of Thornton and City of Northglenn and is also defined within an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the two cities that was part of the settlement agreement. The City of Thornton agreed to the City of Northglenn providing sanitary sewer service to the areas within the “Exhibit A” boundary that are annexed to the City of Thornton.
- Development Corridor – The Development Corridor (outlined in blue in **Figure 1**) was defined as a part of the 1992 Settlement Agreement between Thornton and Northglenn. The area within the Development Corridor is subject to specific use and density restrictions within the Settlement Agreement including:
 - Exhibit 7 Non-Permitted Uses: Exhibit 7 defines a number of uses not permitted based on Standard Industrial Classifications (SICs). The prohibited uses are primarily industrial oriented and include: livestock feedlots, livestock sales, mining and milling, meat packing or food manufacturing, paper mills, chemical manufacturing, oil refining, steel manufacturing or related industries, asbestos manufacturing, firearm manufacturing, railroad switch yards or terminals, sanitary sewer facilities, corrections facilities, and scrap/waste storage or processing.
 - Residential Density – The City of Thornton agreed to limit residential development in the Development Corridor to one dwelling unit per acre in the Weld County portions of the Development Corridor.

- Tier I – No residential uses are allowed within Tier 1, which is entirely in the City of Northglenn.
- Tier II – Thornton agreed to limit residential development to a maximum of one dwelling unit per acre.

The proximity to the City of Northglenn’s wastewater treatment plant and limitations on uses and development in the Development Corridor make the areas outside of it in the Study Area the most attractive. This area includes Sections 28, 29, 32, and 33 (Township 1N, Range 68W) of the Study Area.

Figure 1 Weld County Fiscal Impact Analysis Geographies



The amount of land in each section subject to the Tier II, Development Corridor, and Exhibit A restrictions are summarized in **Table 1**. There is a total of 4,480 acres in the Study Area with 1,920 acres in the Development Corridor, and 320 acres subject to the Tier II restrictions.

Table 1 Study Area Acres by Geography

Area	Acres	Tier II		Development Corridor		Exhibit A	
		% in	Acres	% in	Acres	% in	Acres
Section 25	640	0%	0	100%	640	100%	640
Section 30	640	0%	0	100%	640	100%	640
Section 31	640	50%	320	100%	640	100%	640
Section 29	640	0%	0	0%	0	50%	320
Section 32	640	0%	0	0%	0	100%	640
Section 33	640	0%	0	0%	0	50%	320
Section 28	640	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	4,480		320		1,920		3,200

Source: City of Thornton; Economic & Planning Systems

Market Considerations

The Study Areas has limitations in terms of its suitability for new development beyond the use restrictions in the Settlement Agreement. The area currently lacks major transportation routes that could serve new development. Access is currently provided on East 168th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard (Weld County Rd 13). Both of these roads are currently two lane roads; however they connect directly to major regional routes including I-25, E-470 and State Highway 7.

The Study Area is approximately one to two miles east of I-25 and approximately two miles north of E-470. The lack of visibility and direct access from these major highways limits the appeal of the area for regional retail uses, and major office and industrial uses, especially given the current capacity constraints of East 168th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Improvements (e.g. widening and access control) both roadways are needed to support greater traffic volumes that would be desirable to employment uses.

This location does have potential to be attractive to residential development and supporting neighborhood and community retail centers. However it is likely a longer term opportunity (10 to 15 years) and major development projects may not materialize for in the immediate future. The Study Area is at least 2 miles away from any major residential development activity in Thornton, with some exceptions. Infrastructure improvements that could increase access and service access and reduce the cost of extending infrastructure will eventually be

developed in areas south of the Study Area, which increase the viability and feasibility of urban level development.

As a result of the market opportunities and the Settlement Agreement, the bulk of proposed development would likely occur in areas outside of the Development Corridor, specifically Sections 28, 29, 32, and 33. Within the Development Corridor either rural residential or industrial uses are possible. The industrial uses are limited however by the Settlement Agreement. Specifically most intensive manufacturing uses or uses with outdoor uses or storage that may impact Northglenn's wastewater treatment facility. EPS identified uses that are viable in the Study Area as follows:

- Rural residential in the bulk of acreage in the Development Corridor due to IGA and Settlement Agreement.
- Single family detached residential neighborhood developments with supporting commercial areas are viable for areas outside of the Development Corridor.

Improvements to 168th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard would provide access to I-25 and E-470, which may make the 168th Avenue corridor attractive to more community oriented retail and industrial uses

The Study Area is also impacted by the Big Dry Creek's flood plain. The Big Dry Creek runs through portions of four sections of the Study Area and its flood plain limits where development can occur in three of the Sections (31, 32, and 28). The acreage for new development in these sections has therefore been reduced and is shown as Parks/Open Space/Drainage space on the development program in **Table 2.**

Development Program

A build-out development program for the Study Area was developed and is shown below in **Table 2**. The program is based on an assessment of market trends in the area, the location attributes of the Study Area, and the use/density restrictions in place due to the Settlement Agreement. The development program is meant to represent a hypothetical build-out of the area. Alternatives to the program can be tested as part of the fiscal impact analysis to identify thresholds (amount of development) needed to support a positive fiscal impact.

The program includes 8,598 residential units, which are primarily single family units. The program also includes an estimated approximately 550,000 square feet of commercial space, which will likely be retail and service office space serving the surrounding residents. Lastly, an estimated 1.2 million square feet of industrial space is included. The market for industrial uses in this area is likely limited due to its distance from major transportation routes. However, the relative close proximity to the metro area and I-25 coupled with potentially lower than average land prices may make it attractive to industrial oriented uses seeking large parcels and outdoor storage.

Table 2 Weld County Fiscal Impact Analysis Development Program

Land Use	Sections										Percent by Use			Acres by Use			Factors		Estimated Capacity		
	25	30	31	29	32	33	28	Acres	Efficiency (ROW)	Dev. Acres	Resi.	Non-Resi.	Resi.	Non-Resi.	Dev.	FAR	DU/Acre	sq. ft./job	DU	Bldg. Area	Comm./Indust. Jobs
Estate Neighborhoods	480	480	280	0	0	0	0	1,240	60%	744	100%	0%	1,240	0		0	1.00	0	744	0	0
Single Family Neighborhoods	0	0	0	300	180	180	300	960	60%	576	100%	0%	960	0		0	4.00	0	2,304	0	0
Mixed Neighborhoods	0	0	0	150	100	150	100	500	75%	375	100%	0%	500	0		0	13.00	0	4,875	0	0
Community/Neighborhood Mixed-Use	0	0	0	30	30	30	30	120	75%	90	30%	70%	36	84		0.2	25.00	700	675	548,856	784
Industrial	0	0	120	0	120	120	0	360	50%	180	0%	100%	0	360		0.15	0.00	1,000	0	1,176,120	1,176
Parks/Open Space/Drainage	160	160	240	160	210	160	210	1,300	0%	0	0%	0%	0	0		0	0.00	0	0	0	0
Total	640	640	640	640	640	640	640	4,480		1,965			2,736	444					8,598	1,724,976	1,960

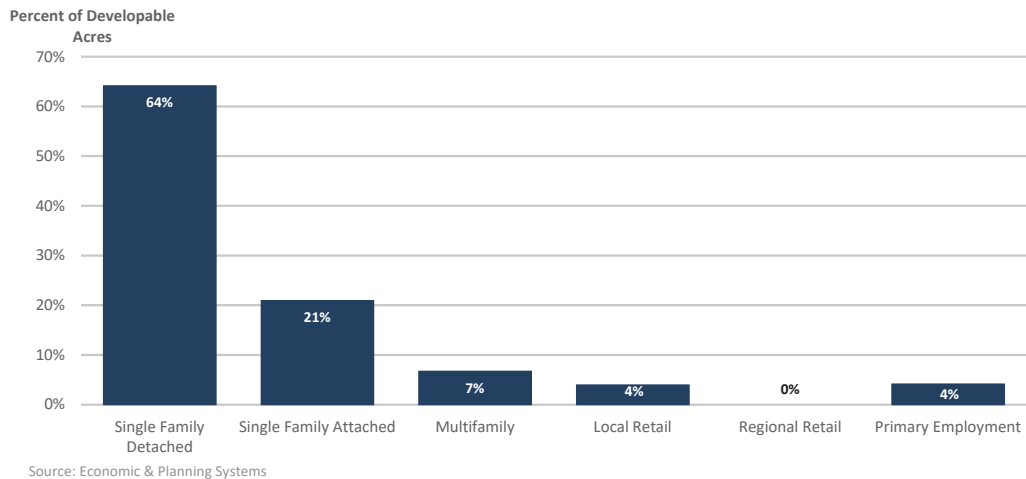
Source: Economic & Planning Systems

3. On-going Fiscal Impacts

Fiscal Impacts

EPS utilized the City of Thornton's fiscal impact model as a basis for testing the fiscal impacts of annexation into Weld County. EPS used the revenue and expenditure factors per acre for each land use type from the City's fiscal model. The City of Thornton's model utilizes different revenue and expenditure factors based on geographic location in the City. EPS used the factors for development north of 128th Avenue, as this area most closely represents the potential development in the Study Area. The percent of acres allocated to each land use type using the uses within the City's model is show in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 Buildout Acres by Land Use Type



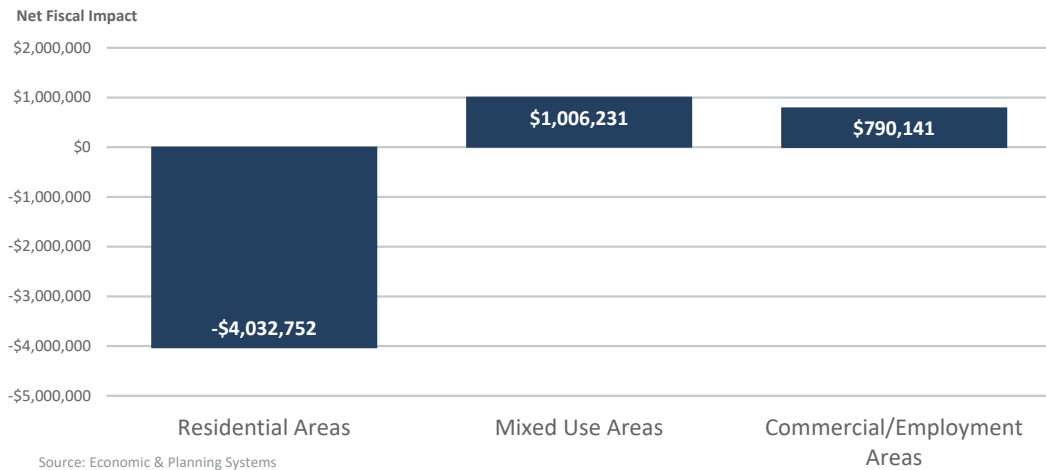
The buildout development program is estimated to generate \$15.6 million in annual revenues at buildout, as shown in **Table 3**. The program is estimated to generate \$17.8 million in annual expenditures from the City. The result is a net negative annual fiscal impact on the City of \$2.2 million. The residential areas are estimated to generate a negative \$4.0 million annual net fiscal impact, as shown in **Figure 3**. The mixed use areas (i.e. retail uses in this program) are estimated to generate a net positive impact of \$1.0 annually. The employment areas (i.e. industrial uses) are estimated to generate a net positive impact of \$790,000 annually.

Table 3 Net Fiscal Impact of Buildout Program

Description	Weld County Program		
	Revenue	Expenditures	Net Fiscal Impact
Residential Areas	\$12,017,330	\$16,050,082	-\$4,032,752
Mixed Use Areas	\$2,244,128	\$1,237,896	\$1,006,231
Commercial/Employment Areas	<u>\$1,344,843</u>	<u>\$554,702</u>	<u>\$790,141</u>
Total	\$15,606,300	\$17,842,680	-\$2,236,380

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

Figure 3 Net Fiscal Impact by Use Type



On-going Fiscal Considerations

The commercial space designated in the development program is likely the maximum achievable for the Study Area and would require a high capture rate of sales from the homes in the Study Area (instead of these residents shopping elsewhere). The amount of industrial space programmed is a significant amount and may not be achievable and is limited by the use restrictions from the Settlement Agreement. The inability to attract the programmed retail and/or industrial uses in the Study Area will further increase the annual negative fiscal impact of the Study Area, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.

The following considerations were developed in evaluation of the development program and additional modifications to test the impact of changes of the program.

- **Balanced Land Use Pattern** - Additional employment uses are needed in order to realize a development pattern in the Study Area that does not create a net fiscal impact on the City. As mentioned above, the buildout program represents an optimistic capture of new retail and industrial development over time for the area. It is likely the residential uses will develop first and the associated employment uses will follow. There is little opportunity to increase the amount of employment uses contemplated in the development program without a major economic catalyst use or investment in the area.
- **Residential Development Pattern** - Reductions in residential uses in the Study Area will decrease the negative impact of these uses in relation to the employment uses. However, decreasing residential uses will likely reduce retail demand in the area, which will offset gains from the reduction of residential. The rural residential uses in the development program are have the largest negative impact as they produce more roads per acre the City will have to maintain and do not produce increased revenue. If annexation and subsequent development does occur in the Study Area, then the City should consider not annexing areas that are within the Development Corridor designated in the Settlement Agreement. Or the City could explore changes to the IGA with Thornton to allow for increased residential density in this area.

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4. Capital and Service Impacts

This chapter provides an assessment of the capital infrastructure and operational impacts annexation and development in the Study Area could have on the City of Thornton. Estimating capital costs for a hypothetical development program is difficult and may not produce realistic estimates. EPS aims to highlight improvements area likely needed as a result as a consideration in deciding on a future policy direction for the area. The decision to annex and allow development in the Study Area will also create increased operational costs for the City's service providers due to the distance of the Study Area from existing services and infrastructure. As well, the Study Area being Weld County creates additional service challenges and likely costs which are summarized below. The major service and infrastructure areas of focus are:

- Water and Wastewater
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Police Services
- Transportation Network

Water and Wastewater

The provision of water and treatment of wastewater are major issues in this area and for the City of Thornton as a whole. Development requiring connection to the City's water and wastewater system will generate impacts that may decrease the attractiveness of development in the area.

The City of Thornton is currently undergoing a major project (Thornton Water Project) to increase the supply of water for the City's future growth. The City is currently working on building a pipeline to bring water they purchased from sources in Larimer and Weld Counties. The project will provide additional water supply to serve the City's forecasted growth through and beyond the Comprehensive Plan's time horizon. A high-level estimate of water demand for the Study Area is 6,000 acre feet, as estimated by the City of Thornton. Thornton Water Project will bring additional 14,000 acre feet of water to the City for its use. As a result, the City of Thornton will have the water resources to serve development in the Study Area, but serving the Study Area may inhibit the City's ability to serve potential annexation areas in Adams County as well. The City's Water Plan did not consider annexation and development in the Study Area and changes to this plan will be needed if development is desired and expected in the Study Area.

The treatment of wastewater is another major consideration for annexation in to Weld County. The likely entity that would serve the area for treatment is not entirely clear or known. The IGA and Settlement Agreement with the City of Thornton says that wastewater generated by area annexed into the City of Thornton in the Development Corridor will be treated by the City of Northglenn at their treatment facility adjacent to the Study Area. It is unclear if the City of Northglenn is able and willing to accept water for treatment as conditions for the City of Northglenn may have changed since 1992. (Note: EPS did not seek input on this issue from the City of Northglenn.) For areas outside of the Development Corridor that are in the Study Area, the City of Thornton would have to collect and convey wastewater to a treatment plant, as they normally would for new annexations. The nearest treatment facility is several miles south and the City of Thornton would have to plan for and anticipate construction of trunk pipelines and potential lift stations to move wastewater generated in the Study Area to treatment facilities with capacity to accept additional wastewater. The City of Thornton is currently working constructing a new water treatment plan to replace the existing Thornton Treatment Plan to increase capacity and address issues with the 55-year old plant.

Providing water and wastewater services to the Study Area has logistical challenges that would need to be addressed. Given the location and distance of the Study Area from existing Thornton facilities, it may be more beneficial to form partnerships with regional entities to share/trade services in the area. A partnership to reduce the cost and burden of the City to extend infrastructure to the area for service and provide water and treat wastewater could reduce costs and impacts on the City. Any decisions to annex into Weld County should consider the viability of partnerships and may also require changes to the IGA with Northglenn.

Fire and Emergency Services

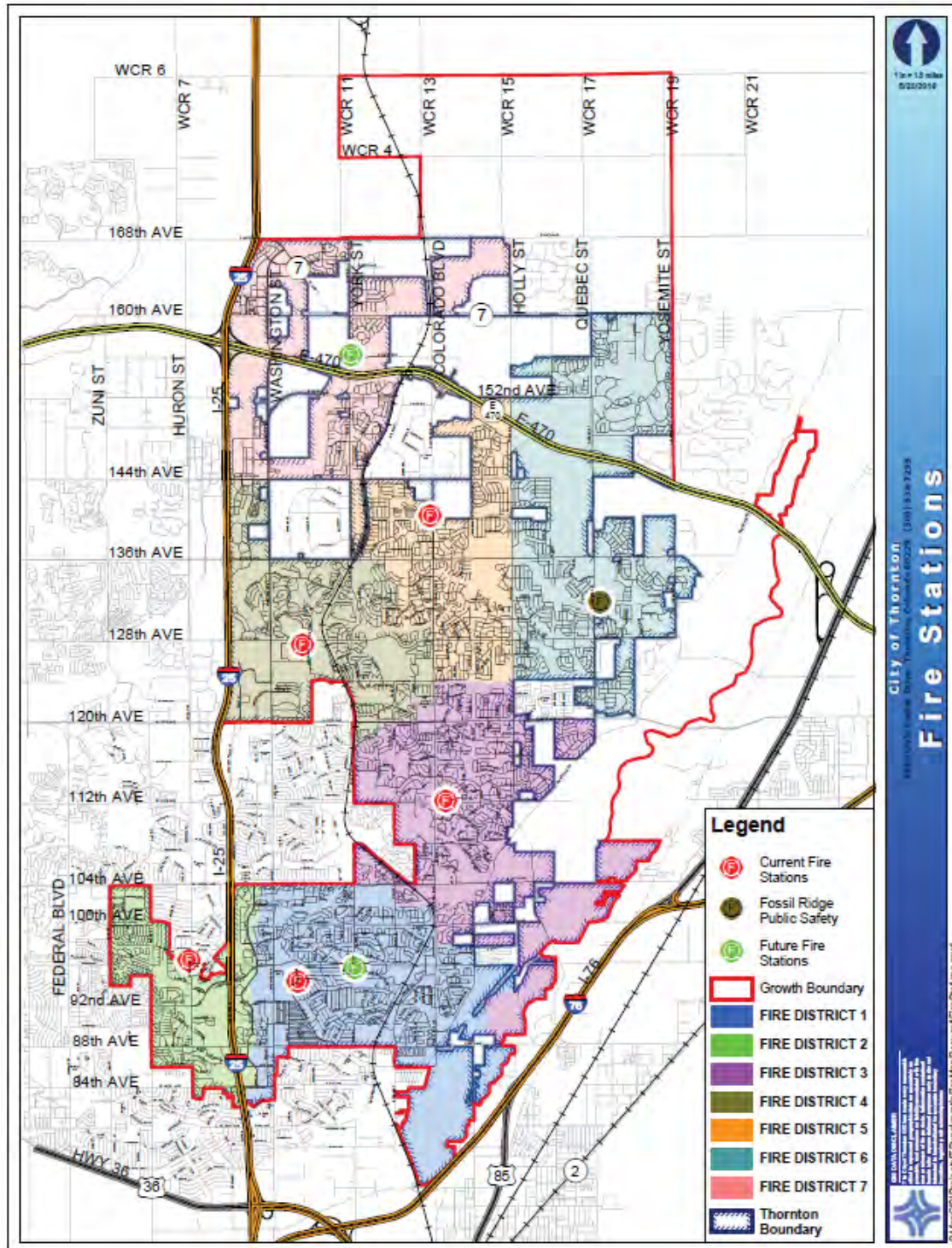
Annexation in Weld County will also generate impacts on fire and emergency services. The area is currently served by Greater Brighton Fire Protection District. The District currently charges 11.795 mills in property tax for properties in the area. Exclusion from the fire district would be needed and would occur over time. This exclusion may result in added costs and will require negotiation with the District.

The major impact on the City is related to the need and timing of a fire station to serve the area. The area cannot be served by any current fire stations based on the distance from the station and City's response times. Thornton is already planning for the creation of a new Fire Station 7 to serve the northern portion of the City. The two general potential locations for Station 7 are shown in **Figure 4**. Fire Station 7 will likely be needed within next five years and the decision of whether to annex into Weld County will impact the location decision.

Even with the addition of Station 7, an eighth fire station would also be needed to serve the Weld County Area. A new fire station is estimated to cost \$10 million in 2019 costs. The station would serve primarily the Weld County area and the area likely will not produce the density of use that other stations serve. The city's existing fire service districts serve an average of approximately 20,000 residents. Development in Weld County is likely to result in a service population below the average for most stations.

Other impacts on fire and emergency services are the potential lack of roadway connectivity in the area and potential lack of required water pressure/fire flow in the area.

Figure 4 Existing and Potential Fire Station Service Districts



Police Service

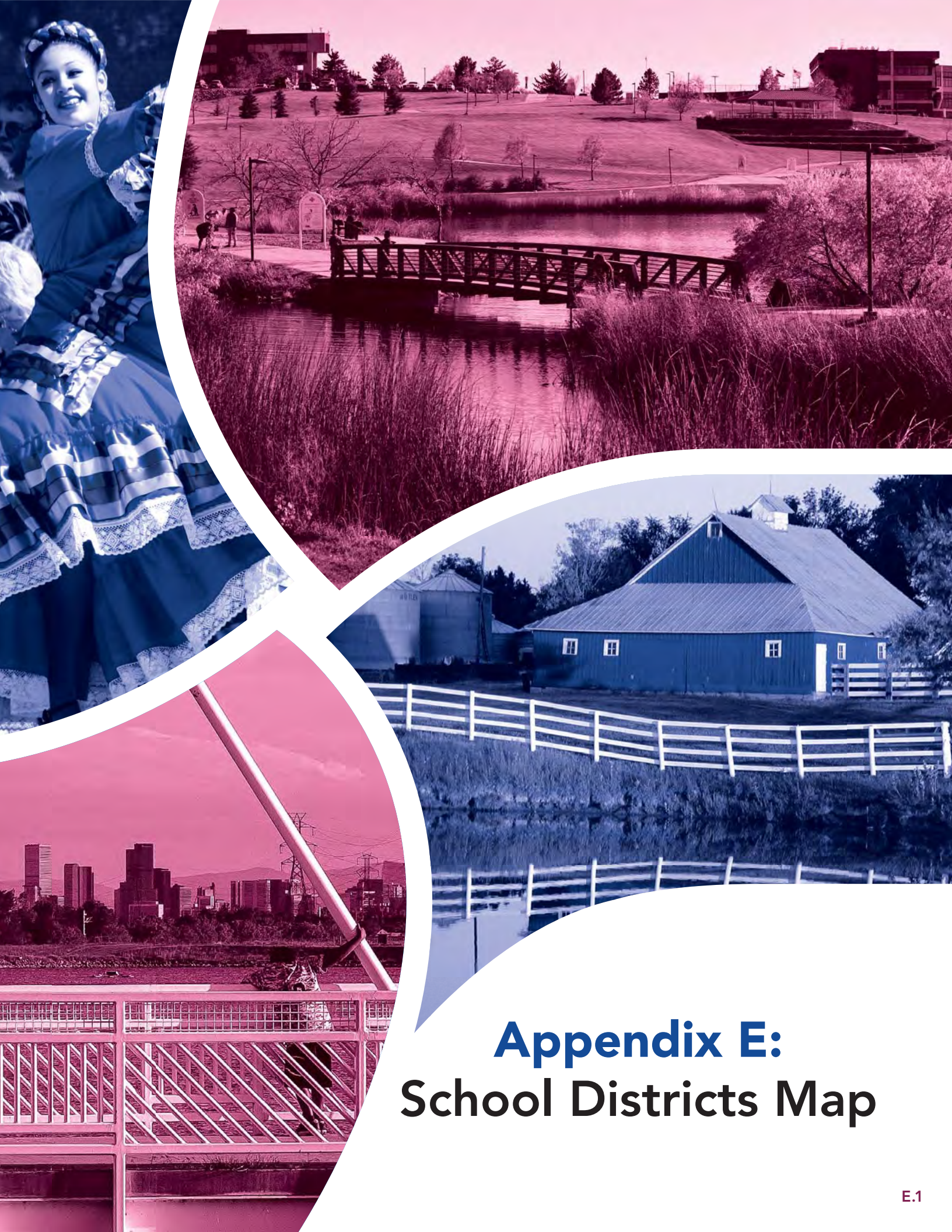
Annexation into Weld County will likely have the most significant impacts on police service. The expansion into Weld County will trigger the need to rely on Weld County jail, court, and social services, as opposed to Adams County. Expansion into Weld County will require any public safety efforts that have a county related component to utilize Weld County facilities. There are a wide variety of police cases/calls may trigger need for Weld County services beyond an arrest. Social and health services, including adult and juvenile support services, criminal investigations, well-fare checks, and domestic abuse cases will also trigger the need for interaction or use of Weld County services and facilities.

The use of Weld County facilities and services will decrease officer utilization. Currently, officers have a typical 10 to 20 mile drive to Adams County for booking, court appearances, and other arrest related activities. Arrests in Weld County would require a 50 to 60 mile drive to the Weld County facility in Greeley. There are mitigating approaches that can be taken to reduce costs and travel times. These mitigating approaches include booking substations, virtual court appearances, and other technology solutions, but they will only eliminate a portion of need to travel to Greeley.

Transportation

The last major fiscal considerations for annexation into Weld County are transportation network needs. Providing a roadway network that has adequate connectivity will be challenging due to the floodplain constraints and the likely piecemeal nature of development in the area due to existing developments in the County. Creating a connected network may require participation by the City of Thornton to address. As mentioned previously, the Study Area is impacted by large flood plain areas. The Big Dry Creek runs through portions of four sections of the Study Area. Providing bridge crossings for arterials roadways may be costly given the size and location of these floodplains. Addressing these road crossings may create cost burdens on the City and private developers that may limit where and when development occurs. Lastly, widening and expansion of 168th Avenue will be needed to provide adequate access and connectivity for industrial uses in the annexation area. Without this expansion, the attractiveness of industrial uses will decrease and further impact the ability to attract enough employment uses to mitigate costs generated by the residential uses.

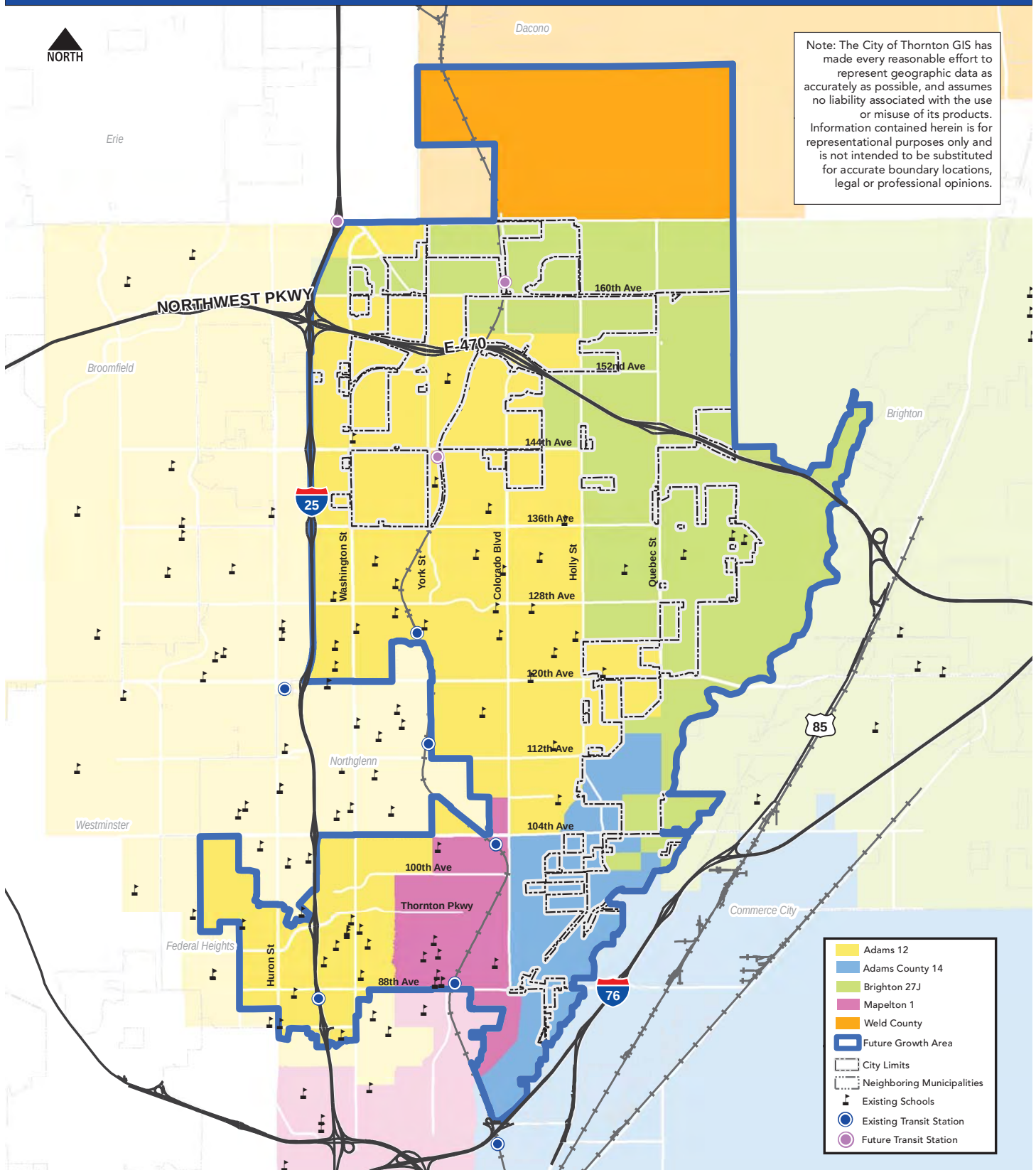
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Appendix E: School Districts Map

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School Districts



In February 2010, the city of Thornton entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA, C.D. No. 2010- 034) with Adams County School District 12 regarding the future location of school facilities within the city's boundaries. The inclusion of this map in the Comprehensive Plan satisfies the city's IGA obligations.

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Appendix F: **Glossary**

Acronyms

ADCO:	Adams County
BRT:	Bus Rapid Transit
CDBG:	Community Development Block Grant
CII:	Cultivating Identity and Image (Vision Theme)
CIP:	Capital Improvements Plan
CMU:	Community Mixed-Use Future Land Use Category
COM:	Commercial Future Land Use Category
CPP:	Connecting Community, People, and Places (Vision Theme)
CPTED:	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
DRCOG:	Denver Regional Council of Governments
DU:	Dwelling Unit/s
EC:	Employment Center Future Land Use Category
EC-W:	Employment Center Warehousing Overlay Future Land Use Category
EN:	Estate Neighborhood Future Land Use Category
EV:	Fostering Economic Vitality (Vision Theme)
FEIS:	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FLH:	Flood Hazard Area
FLUM	Future Land Use Map
HOA:	Home Owners Association
IGA:	Intergovernmental Agreement
INS:	Institutional Future Land Use Category
LEED:	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MRN:	Mixed Residential Neighborhood Future Land Use Category
MUN:	Mixed-Use Neighborhood Future Land Use Category
NATA:	North Area Transportation Alliance
PTO:	Parks, Trails, and Open Space Future Land Use Category
QDN:	Creating Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods (Vision Theme)
RMU:	Regional Mixed-Use Future Land Use Category
SHC:	Building a Safe and Healthy Community (Vision Theme)
SG:	Growing Smarter and Greener (Vision Theme)
SFN:	Single-Family Neighborhood Future Land Use Category
STAMP:	Station Area Master Plan
TASHCO:	Thornton Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Council
TOD:	Transit-Oriented Development Future Land Use Category

Words and Terms

A

Accessory Dwelling Unit

A dwelling unit that is a separate living quarter from the principle dwelling unit and has its own kitchen and bathroom.

Activity Centers

A place where people gather for a variety of live, work, and play opportunities. Activity centers are intended to be destinations that foster a sense of place and identity for the city. The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on cultivating three types of Activity Centers: Shopping, Dining and Entertainment Activity Centers; Employment Activity Centers; and Regional Activity Centers.

Affordable Housing

The relationship between the price of housing in a region (either sale price or rent) and household income. Affordable housing commonly refers to dwelling units in which the total cost of housing is affordable to those that are below the median income of the area. The city is focused on expanding the supply of affordable housing for those that are at 40% Area Median Income or below.

Area/Subarea Plans

These plans address a more detailed vision for a smaller geographical area than is covered in the Comprehensive Plan.

Attainable Housing

Attainable housing refers to the idea that all income groups should have accessible housing. Attainable housing as a policy measure seeks to create housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels.

B

Bike Lane

A bike lane is a portion of a roadway that has been designated by striping, signage, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

Boomer Bond Assessment

An initiative of the Denver Regional Council of Government's (DRCOG) to assist local governments

and partnering organizations evaluate how well the existing resources, plans, regulations, programs, and community design features serve older adult residents. Thornton conducted a Boomer Bond Assessment in 2019.

Broad Land Development Plan

A plan that demonstrates how proposed development within a mixed-use land use category will achieve well-integrated development across adjacent mixed-use parcels. It shows the location and interconnection of uses across these parcels and how, potentially, a mix of land uses is achieved.

Building Blocks

Eight foundational concepts that reflect the direction received from City Council and the community on growth and land use policy that informed key policy directions and changes to the Future Land Use Map.

Building Form

The shape and structure of a building as distinguished from its substance or material.

Building Mass

The three-dimensional bulk of a building height, width, and depth.

Building Scale

The size and proportion of a building relative to surrounding buildings and environs, adjacent streets, and pedestrians.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

BRT is a proven bus-based transit system that delivers fast, comfortable and reliable service along a designated corridor. The system has limited stops to improve speed, reduce travel time and maximize ridership.

C

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)

A proposed schedule adopted by City Council of all future public improvement projects and their construction priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project.

City Council

The City Council of the city of Thornton, Colorado.

City Development Director

The City Development Director for the city of Thornton, Colorado.

Community Destinations

These are publically-accessible recreational and cultural amenities which are vital to the quality of life of people living in the Thornton community.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The State CDBG program was established by the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (42 USC 5301, et seq.). The primary federal objective of the CDBG program is the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. "Persons of low and moderate income" or the "targeted income group" (TIG) are defined as families, households, and individuals whose incomes do not exceed 80 percent of the county median income, with adjustments for family or household size.

Complete Neighborhoods

Within the context of this Comprehensive Plan, Complete Neighborhoods include a range of housing options and convenient access to high quality services and amenities, such as schools, parks, jobs, and shopping areas. They are supported by an interconnected network of streets and sidewalks and multimodal transportation options that accomodate people of all ages and abilities.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transport users of all ages and abilities.

Comprehensive Plan (the Plan)

Thornton's Comprehensive Plan, which includes any component plans dealing with the growth and development of the city, its public facilities, or its public services, as adopted and amended by Thornton City Council. This Plan serves as a long-term vision and roadmap for Thornton's future. Throughout this document, the Comprehensive Plan may be referred to as 'the Plan'.

Condominium

A building or group of buildings in which units are owned individually, but the structure, common areas and facilities are owned by all owners on a proportional, undivided basis.

Convalescent Home

See 'Nursing Homes, Convalescent Homes and Hospices'.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

CPTED involves designing the built environment to reduce the opportunity for, and fear of, stranger-to-stranger predatory crime, while at the same time encouraging legitimate use of the environment.

D

Density

This refers to the number of housing units on a unit of land (e.g. ten units per acre).

Denver Metropolitan Area

Conurbation region in Colorado, of which Denver is the central city. It includes one continuous region consisting of the six central counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson.

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is a nonprofit, membership association of local governments dedicated to making the Denver region a great place to live, work and play. DRCOG fosters regional cooperation between county and municipal governments in the Denver metropolitan area. DRCOG is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Transportation Planning Region for the the region, as well as the Area Agency on Aging.

Design Guidelines

Criteria developed to guide land development to achieve a desired level of quality for the physical environment. Design Guidelines function to preserve and enhance the desired character of existing neighborhoods and improve the aesthetic and functional quality of new development projects.

Dwelling Unit

A structure or a portion of a structure which is used exclusively or primarily for human habitation. Examples include single-family homes, duplexes, town homes, manufactured homes, residential condominiums, apartments, and live/work units. Dwelling units may be owned or rented by their occupants.

E

Eastlake

The earliest known reference to Eastlake appears on an 1899 map showing an area called East-Lake Farm owned by the Denver Land Company, to the east of the present day Town of Eastlake. In 1905, John Frank Church and Andrew Morrison Patten purchased over 1,500 acres from Judge Charles Toll's Estate, in the area around present day Eastlake, with the intent to bring irrigation water down from the mountains to begin farming Adams County. The two men quickly formed the Eastlake Investment Company and began subdividing land and selling plots to farmers. The Union Pacific Railroad was built by 1907 and began daily service to Eastlake about a year later. Farmers now had a direct link to Denver cattle and grain markets and cheaper, standardized construction materials. With help from the Union Pacific Railroad, the Town of Eastlake was platted in 1911 as an agricultural town. The Town of Eastlake was incorporated into the city of Thornton in 1990 and today the area is referred to as Eastlake.

Emerging Growth Areas

Areas within the city's Future Growth Area that have opportunities for greenfield development.

Employment Activity Center

See 'Activity Centers'.

Established Areas

Developed areas within the city that have established residential and/or nonresidential uses and infrastructure. These areas may have opportunities for infill or redevelopment. As these areas age, there may be a need for improvements to services, amenities, and infrastructure, as well as general reinvestment.

F

FasTracks

A comprehensive transit expansion plan for the Denver Metropolitan Area to build new commuter rail and light rail, bus rapid transit and station parking. Additionally, FasTracks will enhance bus service for easy, convenient bus/rail connections across the eight-county metropolitan area.

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a statement on the effect of development proposals and other major actions that significantly affect the environment.

First and Last Mile (First/Last Mile)

When bus and rail services form the core of a trip, users must complete the first and last portion by another mode of transportation such as walking, biking, driving, etc. to and from the nearest station. This is referred to as the first and last mile of the user's trip, although actual distances vary by trip. Strategies to improve first/last mile connections through walking and biking infrastructure, shared use services, and facilities and wayfinding, help expand the transit experience, improve safety, and encourage transit use.

Floodplain

A plain channel and relatively flat area bordering a river that is subject to flooding.

Floodway

The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one-half foot.

Future Growth Area

All developed and undeveloped land within the Future Growth Boundary.

Future Growth Boundary

A line on a map used to mark the maximum geographic extent to which a city is planned to grow.

Future Land Use Categories

Categories that correlate to the land use designations on the Future Land Use Map. These categories describe the type, intensity, character and scale of land uses, and associated functions. May also be referred to as Future Land Use Map Categories (FLUM Categories).

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

The map in Figure 4-3 of this Plan and associated Future Land Use Categories that are a material component this Comprehensive Plan. The FLUM serves as a tool to guide future development within the city and its Future Growth Area by conveying a vision for different types of places and land uses within Thornton as well as unincorporated land in

Adams and Weld Counties.

Functional Plans

A more detailed plan which supplements the Comprehensive Plan addressing specific topics such as housing, transportation, and utilities and is incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan. These are also referred to as Master Plans.

G

Goals

The Goals of the Comprehensive Plan are broad statements that help realize the community's Vision Themes. Goals establish priorities intended to guide day-to-day and long-term decision-making at the city.

Greenfield Development

Term used to refer to development on sites or in areas that have not been previously developed, and where infrastructure needed to serve development does not exist, or has only been partially completed.

Growth Framework

The Growth Framework provides guidance on future growth and investment so that it enhances the overall quality of life for current and future Thornton residents. It also helps translate the key concepts embedded in the Vision Themes, Goals and Policies outlined in the Policy Framework into the land uses and types of places that the community envisions and desires for the future. Two key components of the Growth Framework are the Future Land Use Map with associated land use category descriptions and the Placemaking Guidelines.

H

Heritage Trail System

A world-class urban bicycle and pedestrian path that connects neighborhoods and entertainment amenities within the community of Thornton.

Historic Preservation

An endeavor that seeks to preserve, conserve and protect buildings, objects, landscapes or other artifacts of historical significance from the destruction or insensitive encroachment by contemporary development. This may also include the physical rehabilitation of a historic structure.

Hospice

See 'Nursing Homes, Convalescent Homes and Hospices'.

Housing Needs Assessment

The 2019 City of Thornton Housing Needs Assessment and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

I

Implementation Framework

Strategies in the Comprehensive Plan that the city and its local and regional partners intend to pursue in order to implement the Plan.

Infill development

Development on a vacant or substantially vacant tract of land surrounded by existing development.

Infrastructure

The underlying foundation or basic framework of a city, including streets, parks, bridges, sewers, streetlights, and other utilities.

Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)

A contractual agreement between the City and another governmental entity for achieving coordinated planning and the efficient provision of urban service.

J

Jobs to Housing Ratio

The ratio of the number of jobs to the number of housing units within the city.

L

Landscape

The whole of the exterior environment of a site, district, or region, including landforms, trees and plants, rivers and lakes, and the built environment.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for building high-performance, sustainable buildings. LEED was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council

(USGBC), the leading organization promoting the green building industry.

Live, Work, and Play

A term to express the concept of mixed-used development that locates housing within walkable distance to needed and desired businesses, services and amenities. As such, residents can work, dine, recreate, and/or shop where they live. This benefits residents as well as the local economy.

Low-impact Development

Systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.

M

Manufactured Home

A factory-built, single-family structure that meets the Federal Manufactured Home and Safety Standards Act.

Manufactured Home Community

A parcel or tract of land having as its principal use the rental, leasing or occupancy of space by two or more mobile homes on a permanent or semipermanent basis, including accessory buildings, or uses customarily incidental thereto.

Master Plans

See Functional Plans.

Metro Vision

Metro Vision is the DRCOG region's current plan to guide growth, transportation and environmental quality into the future. Metro Vision is the foundation of all of the DRCOG's long-range planning activities.

Mixed-Use Development

The development of a neighborhood, parcel of land, building, or structure with a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such as, but not limited to residential, office, small manufacturing, retail, restaurants, public facilities, and recreational uses in a compact, human-scale, walkable urban form.

Mobility Hub

A place of connectivity, serving as a focal point in the transportation network that seamlessly integrates different modes of travel including walking, biking,

transit, and shared mobility. These hubs are intended to facilitate mobility choices and placemaking between high-frequency transit stops and concentrations of employment, housing, shopping, and/or recreation.

Multifamily Dwelling

A structure containing multiple dwelling units for the use of individual households. An apartment building or condominium building is an example of this dwelling unit type. This use does not include duplexes. Multifamily developments are intended to have the highest residential density in the city typically in the range of 15 dwelling units per acre or higher.

Multimodal Transportation

The consideration of more than one mode to serve transportation needs in a given area and is included within the meaning of intermodal.

N

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

The 2017 Thornton, Federal Heights, and Northglenn Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

Non-managed Neighborhoods

Residential areas that are not managed by an entity (such as an owner's association, special district, manufactured home community association, apartment management, etc.) responsible for maintaining and enforcing standards and covenants for the physical appearance of the neighborhood such as landscaping and exterior building condition.

North Area Transportation Alliance (NATA)

A Transit Management Organization established in August 2009 by 14 individual member government/business organizations in the north Denver metropolitan area. The organization seeks to promote alternative modes of transportation while achieving traffic congestion through traffic management and consensus-driven focus.

National Register of Historic Places

The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history or with unique artistic or architectural value.

North Metro Rail Line (N Line)

A commuter rail line that is part of the Regional

Transportation District’s (RTD) FasTracks transit expansion program. The first phase of the N Line, which includes 13 miles of this proposed 18.5 mile line, seven stations and five new Park-n-Rides, is anticipated to open in 2020 and will provide service from Union Station through Denver, Commerce City, Northglenn, and Thornton.

Nursing Homes, Convalescent Homes and Hospices

An establishment, in single or multiple facilities, which provides food, shelter, and care to five or more persons who are not related by blood, marriage, or adoption to the owner or operator of the establishment and, in addition, provides minor medical treatment under the direction and supervision of a physician. This use does not include a hotel or similar place that furnishes only food and lodging, or either, to its guests; or a hospital.

O

Open Space

An area of land that is kept in or returned to its natural state to protect or preserve wildlife habitat, to protect, preserve, or enhance wetlands, or to provide, preserve, or support view, vista or wildlife corridors. Open space may include agricultural uses and natural features located on a site, including, but not limited to, meadows, forested areas, steep slopes, floodplains, hazard areas, unique geological features, ridgelines, unique vegetation and critical plant communities, stream corridors, wetlands and riparian areas, wildlife habitat and migration corridors, areas containing threatened or endangered species and archeological, historical and cultural resources.

Opportunity Zone

Opportunity Zones are tax incentives to encourage those with capital gains to invest in low-income and undercapitalized communities. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act included a new federal incentive—Opportunity Zones—meant to spur investment in undercapitalized communities. Any corporation or individual with capital gains can qualify. The program provides tax benefits for investing unrealized capital gains in Opportunity Zones.

P

Placemaking

A term used by architects and planners to describe the process of creating squares, plazas, parks, streets and waterfronts that will attract people because they are pleasurable or interesting. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community’s assets to create good public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and wellbeing.

Placemaking Guidelines

The Placemaking Guidelines are used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map as a tool to help convey the more nuanced aspects of individual land use categories as they apply to varied community contexts and site considerations in different areas throughout the city. They provide an additional level of guidance about the desired character, mix of uses, anticipated amenities, and look and feel of places.

Plan

The term ‘the Plan’ in this document refers to the Thornton Comprehensive Plan unless otherwise described. See also “Comprehensive Plan”.

Planned Development

Planned Development is one of the city of Thornton’s zone district categories regulated by Chapter 18 of the Thornton City Code. This zone district is also referred to as a PD District. The PD District allows for innovative development projects that could not be built under the regulations of a categorical zone district.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission of the city of Thornton, Colorado.

Planning Director

The Planning Director for the city of Thornton, Colorado.

Policies

The Policies are statements that provide specific direction on how the Comprehensive Plan’s Goals will be carried out. The Policies provide targets and guidance to support aspirations of the Vision Themes and are intended to guide or direct city actions.

Policy Focus Areas

General policies related to land use choices that guide the Growth Framework.

Policy Framework

A citywide policy framework that reflects the

long-term vision and aspirations of the community. It identifies the Vision Themes, Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Primary Employer

Primary Employer refers to commercial businesses that produce more goods and/or services than can be consumed by the local economy, and therefore export a significant portion of them. Primary Employers bring external funds into the local economy.

Primary Uses

Within each Future Land Use Category, the Primary Uses are intended to be predominant. Primary uses reflect either existing or desired land uses (or both) and are based on considerations such as location, adjacent uses, and other factors. These uses define and enhance the built character of the area.

Promotoras

A promotora is a lay Hispanic/Latino community member who receives specialized training traditionally to provide basic health education in the community. By joining with neighbors to create relationships built on trust, they serve as liaisons between the community and service providers. During the community outreach for Thornton's Comprehensive Plan, promotoras expanded beyond the traditional role of health education to obtain input on broader community needs and desires.

Q

Quality of Life

The attributes or amenities that combine to make an area a good place to live. Examples include the availability of political, educational and social support systems; good relations among constituent groups; a healthy physical environment; and economic opportunities for both individuals and businesses.

R

Redevelopment

The removal and replacement, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse of an existing structure or structures to accommodate modern uses and improve infrastructure associated with them. Redevelopment also serves to enhance the quality of the economy, availability of products and services, and the

provision of jobs in areas where it takes place.

Regional Activity Center

See 'Activity Centers'.

Regional Transportation District (RTD)

This public organization serves the regional transportation area of Denver by providing light rail, commuter rail, park and ride, and rapid bus transit programs.

Revitalization

The imparting of new economic and community life in an existing neighborhood, area, or business district while at the same time preserving the original building stock and historic character.

S

Scenic Byway/Corridor

An area visible from a highway, waterway, railway, or major hiking, biking, equestrian trail, or publically accessible right-of-way that provides vistas over water and expanses of land such as farmlands, woodlands, wetlands, or mountainous terrain.

Senior Housing

Residential dwellings that are age restricted to persons 55 years of age or older. This use does not include nursing homes or other facilities that provide medical or living assistance care.

Sense of Place

See 'Placemaking'.

Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment Activity Center

See 'Activity Centers'.

Single-Family Detached Homes

This is a one-unit residential structure detached from any other house (i.e., with open space on all four sides). A house is considered detached even if it has an adjoining shed or garage.

Single-Family Attached Housing

This is a one-unit residential structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures. This category includes duplexes, row houses, and townhouses.

Smart City

A city that incorporates the use of technology and information to monitor and enhance the quality and

efficiency of city services over time.

Station Area Master Plan (STAMP)

A plan adopted by Thornton City Council for development of the land around a North Metro Line Station. These plans promote transit-oriented development that encourages density and multimodal connections to maximize train access.

Strategies

The Strategies provide detailed recommendations that support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Strategies are identified for each Vision Theme and indicate anticipated implementation responsibilities, timing, and required resources.

Supporting Uses

Supporting Uses contribute to the overall vitality and functionality of Thornton's neighborhoods, centers, and corridors. These uses are not intended to be the predominant use in any Future Land Use Category. The amount of area devoted to Supporting Uses (and the overall mix of uses) will vary by location and category. Not all of the identified Supporting Uses will be viable or appropriate on a given property. Rather, they should be considered within the broader community context and specific site conditions.

T

Thornton Arts and Culture Center (TACC)

The Thornton Arts & Culture Center is home to performances, classes, art exhibits in the Oz Gallery, and the Volunteer Thornton program. TACC is shared by the Senior and Arts & Culture Divisions.

Thornton Arts, Sciences and Humanities Council (TASHCO)

TASCHO is an entity formed by the City of Thornton for the purpose of promoting cultural and scientific activities in the Thornton.

Thornton Development Authority (TDA)

The urban renewal authority for the city of Thornton.

Transit

Systems of publically accessible transportation modes in a given area.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

TOD is one of the Future Land Use Categories in this Plan. However, it is also frequently used as a

general term to describe a concentration of compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development at nodes along train or bus routes. Such developments are within an easy walking distance, typically up to ½ mile, of the transit station. Development patterns in these areas enable and encourage people to live with minimal dependence on automobiles and tend to concentrate uses nearest the transit hubs.

U

Universal Design

The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Urban Centers

Urban Centers are specific geographic areas in the Denver Metro area that have been identified in the Denver Regional Council of Governments' (DRCOG) Metro Vision Plan. These areas are proposed to be of higher-density, mixed-use, transit and pedestrian-friendly design. Thornton currently has four identified Urban Centers.

Urban Design

The discipline between planning and architecture that gives three-dimensional physical form to policies described in a comprehensive plan and focuses on design of the public realm created by both public spaces and the buildings that define them.

Urban Growth Area/Boundary

The urban growth boundary/area as defined in Metro Vision, identifies where urban development will take place in the DRCOG region over the next 25 years.

Urban Renewal Areas (URAs)

Urban renewal areas are established by the city to remove blight and promote revitalization. URAs enable the use of urban renewal funds to be used for the redevelopment of commercial property. Thornton has three urban renewal areas.

V

Vision Theme

The Vision Themes establish the long-term aspirations of the community through eight topics that emerged from the visioning process for the

Comprehensive Plan. They inform and provide the basic organizing structure for the citywide Goals and Policies in the Plan.

Visitability

Visitability refers to single-family or owner-occupied housing designed in such a way that it can be lived in or visited by people who have trouble with steps or who use wheelchairs or walkers. A house is visitable when it meets three basic requirements: one zero-step entrance, doors with 32 inches of clear passage space, and one wheelchair-accessible bathroom on the main floor.

W

Wayfinding

The process of using spatial and environmental information to find our way in the built environment.

Workforce Housing

Residential units which are available at either rental rates or sales prices which are achievable to the majority of people working in the same region without placing them into a condition of being excessively cost burdened by expenses directly associated with their dwelling unit (either rent or the combination of principal, interest, taxes, and insurance).

Z

Zoning

Regulatory tool adopted by the city to direct and shape land development activities. Thornton's zoning and development standards are contained within Chapter 18 of the Thornton City Code and reflected on the city's official Zoning Map.