



Welcome to Week 1 of Thornton's Inaugural Planning Academy!

If not already completed, please go to the following webpage to submit the Pre-Academy Quiz before class begins.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/zvaDpFba8y>





Long Range Planning

C o m p r e h e n s i v e
P l a n n i n g

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Learning Objective

- Learners will understand how Thornton uses the Comprehensive Plan to manage growth in a responsible and sustainable manner

Agenda

- Overview of Long Range Planning
- 2020 Thornton Comprehensive Plan
- Class Exercise: Ideas for the 2030 Thornton Comprehensive Plan

Key Question

Why does Thornton need Planning?

Long Range Planning

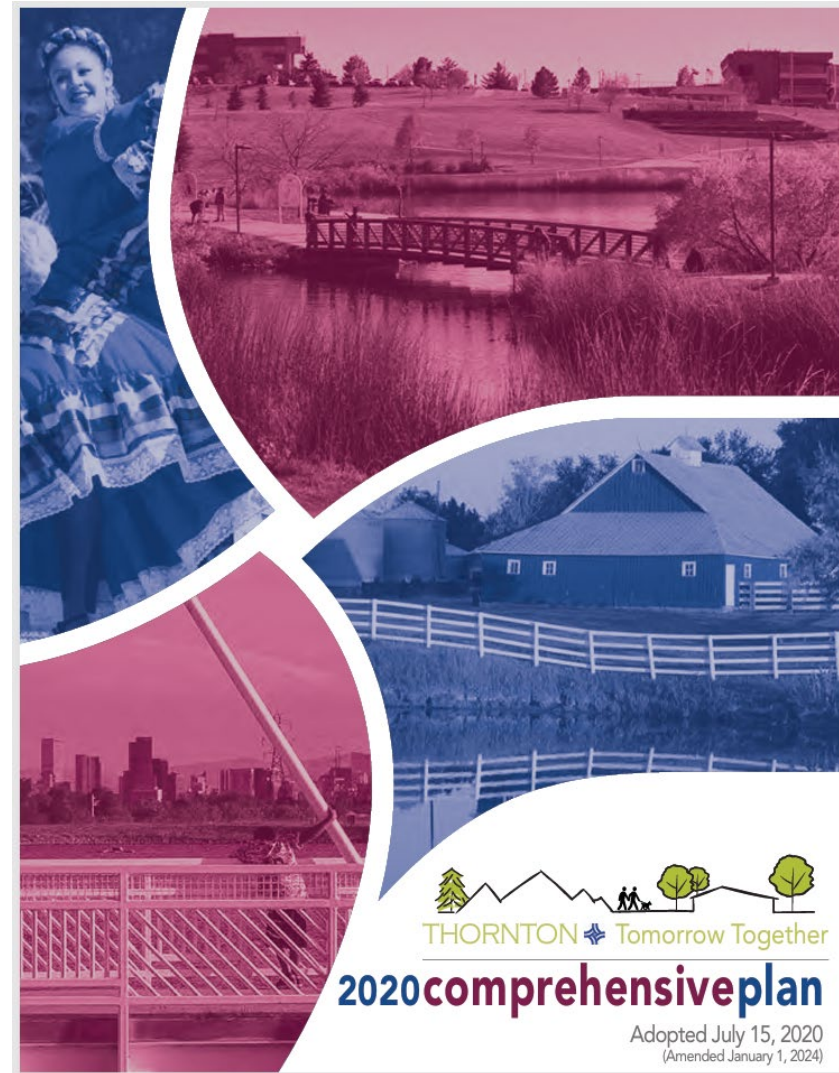
Current Planning



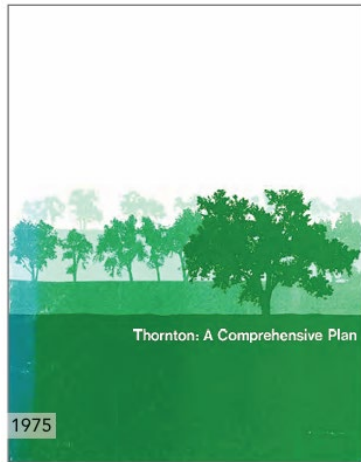
Long Range Planning: Why we do it...

- To assess the **city** in its current state
- Understand the **vision of the community** through engagement
- **Manage growth** and land use
- Coordinate **infrastructure planning and capital investments**
- Provide **economic planning & resiliency**
- Protect our **resources and environment**

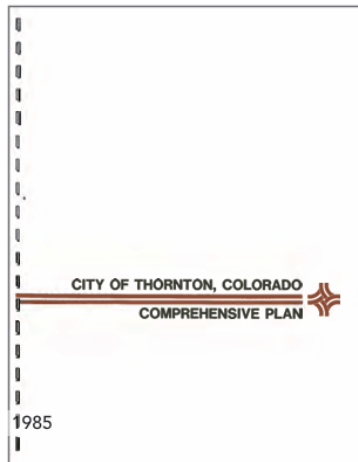
Thornton's Comprehensive Plan



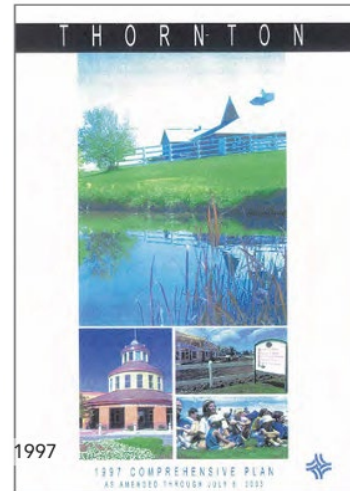
Thornton's Comprehensive Plans



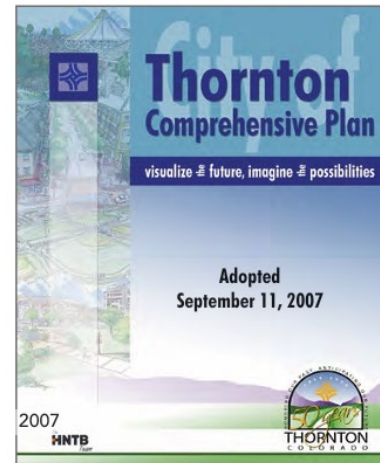
1975



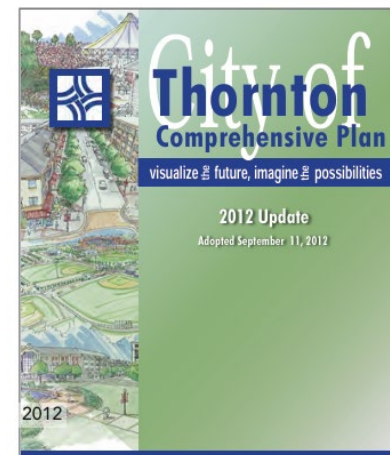
1985



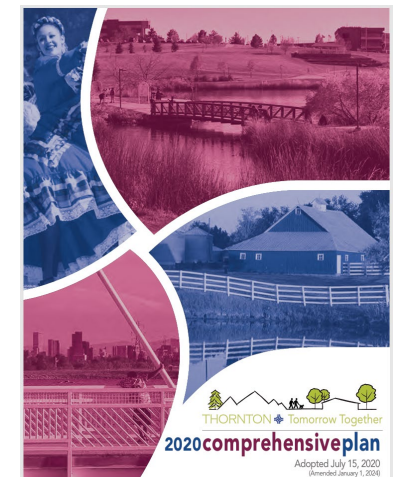
1997



2007



2012



2020

Community Profile

Understanding ourselves -- a “Snapshot in Time”

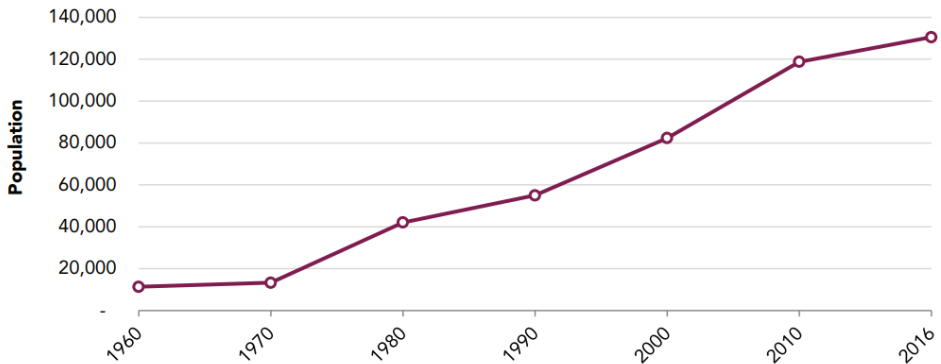
The following statistics inform the Comprehensive Planning Process.

- Population
- Age Distribution
- Annexations and Land Use
- Growth Opportunities
- Utility Service Areas
- Parks
- Housing
- Employment
- Income
- Education

Community Profile

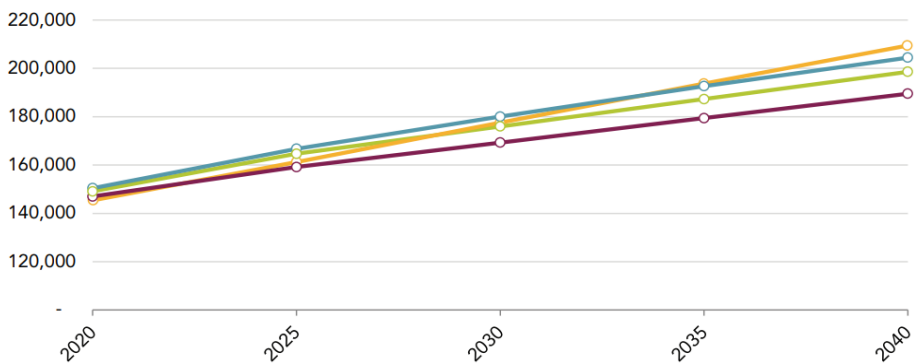
Historic Growth

Source: Department of Local Affairs, 2016; Clarion Associates



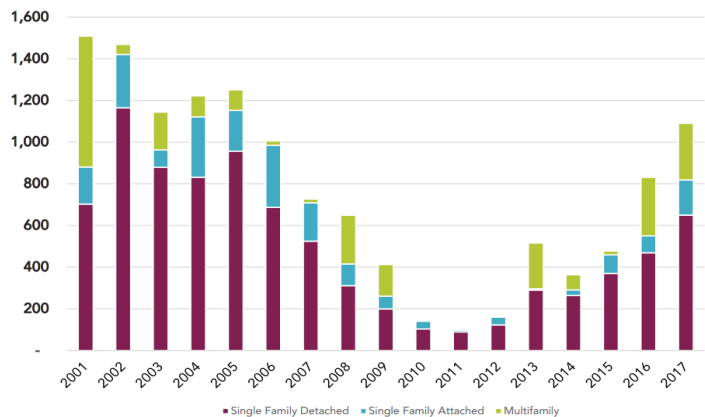
Population Growth Forecasts

Source: city of Thornton, 2018

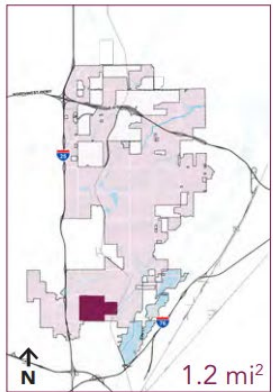


Approved Residential Units (2010-2017)

Source: city of Thornton Population Estimate and Housing Inventory Summary

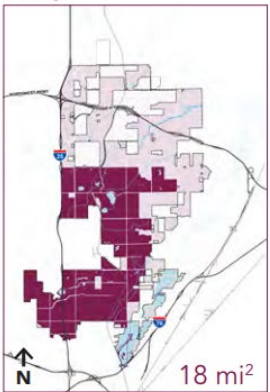


1956



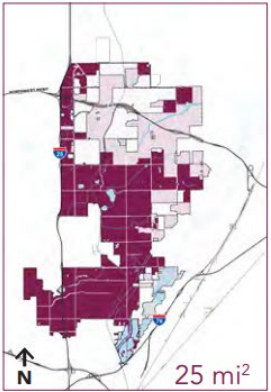
Current City Limits

1976



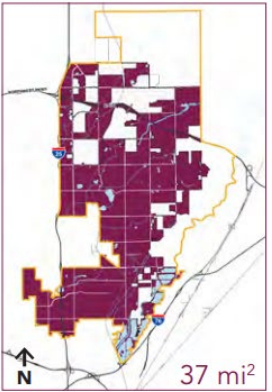
Annexations

1996



Future Growth Boundary

2018



Current Population: 155,000 (approx.)

Key Question

What topics does the
Comprehensive Plan address?

Vision Themes



Cultivating Identity and Image

- Creating a sense of community, beauty and pride
- Enhance and celebrate Thornton's character and history
- Public art, special signage, and community events that people associate as “uniquely Thornton”



Providing Great Services and Amenities

- Provide diverse and unique amenities
 - Such as parks and trails accessible for all ages and abilities
- Encourages creation of community gathering spaces
- Reflects desire for “people-oriented” places, community arts & entertainment
- City government that seeks opportunities to better its operations and offerings



Fostering Economic Vitality

- Support for small businesses
- Attract employers that provide good-paying jobs
- Land designated for employment uses
- Work with school districts for schools and other educational opportunities
- Expand Retail – places to shop and helps City's tax base
- Locate shops and jobs near homes to reduce drive times



Providing Resources and Building Relationships

- Increased community support for youth, seniors, and others in need
- City partnership with other organizations to connect people to resources
- Opportunities to develop and support leadership that reflects the diversity of our community



Creating Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods

- Diversity of housing options and high-quality neighborhoods
 - Goal is to ensure people across range of ages, life states, abilities and incomes find good housing
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Revitalization of established neighborhoods



Growing Smarter and Greener

- Development that is environmentally and economically sustainable
- Fiscally responsible growth pattern
- Encourage infill and redevelopment
- Water conservation practices
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy in City facilities and operations



Connecting Community, People, and Places

- Improve effectiveness and equity of:
 - Accessing Thornton's community services
 - People's ability to engage in civic affairs
- Improve transportation networks including walking, biking, transit, and other modes
- Collaboration with other government and agency partners



Building a Safe and Healthy Community

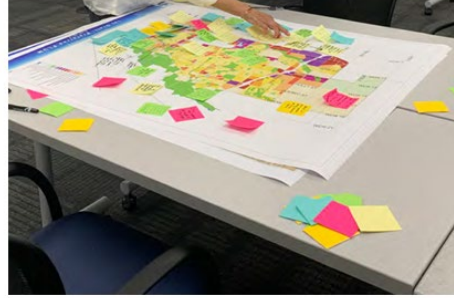
- Safe, crime resistance neighborhoods
- Plans for long-term resiliency to potential hazards
- Increase access to healthy, affordable food
- Amenities the provide for all residents to lead an active lifestyle



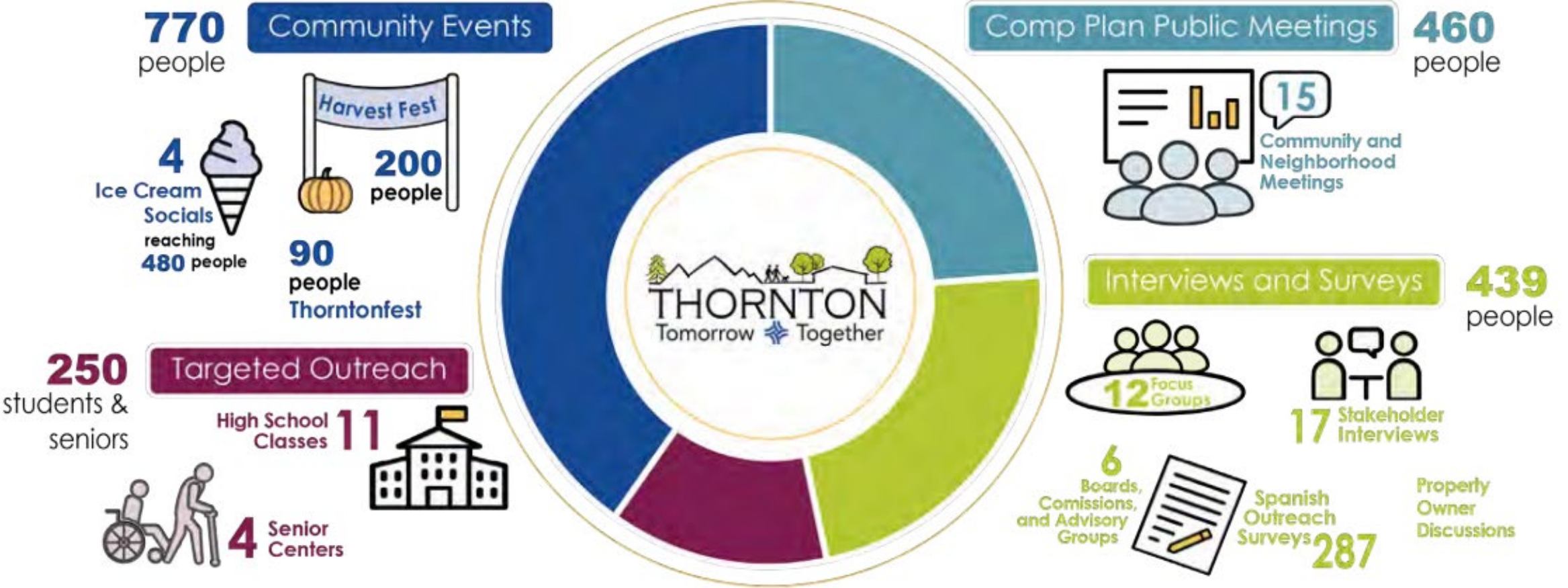
Key Question

How do we ensure that the Comprehensive Plan represents the residents of Thornton and their vision?

Comprehensive Plan – Community Engagement



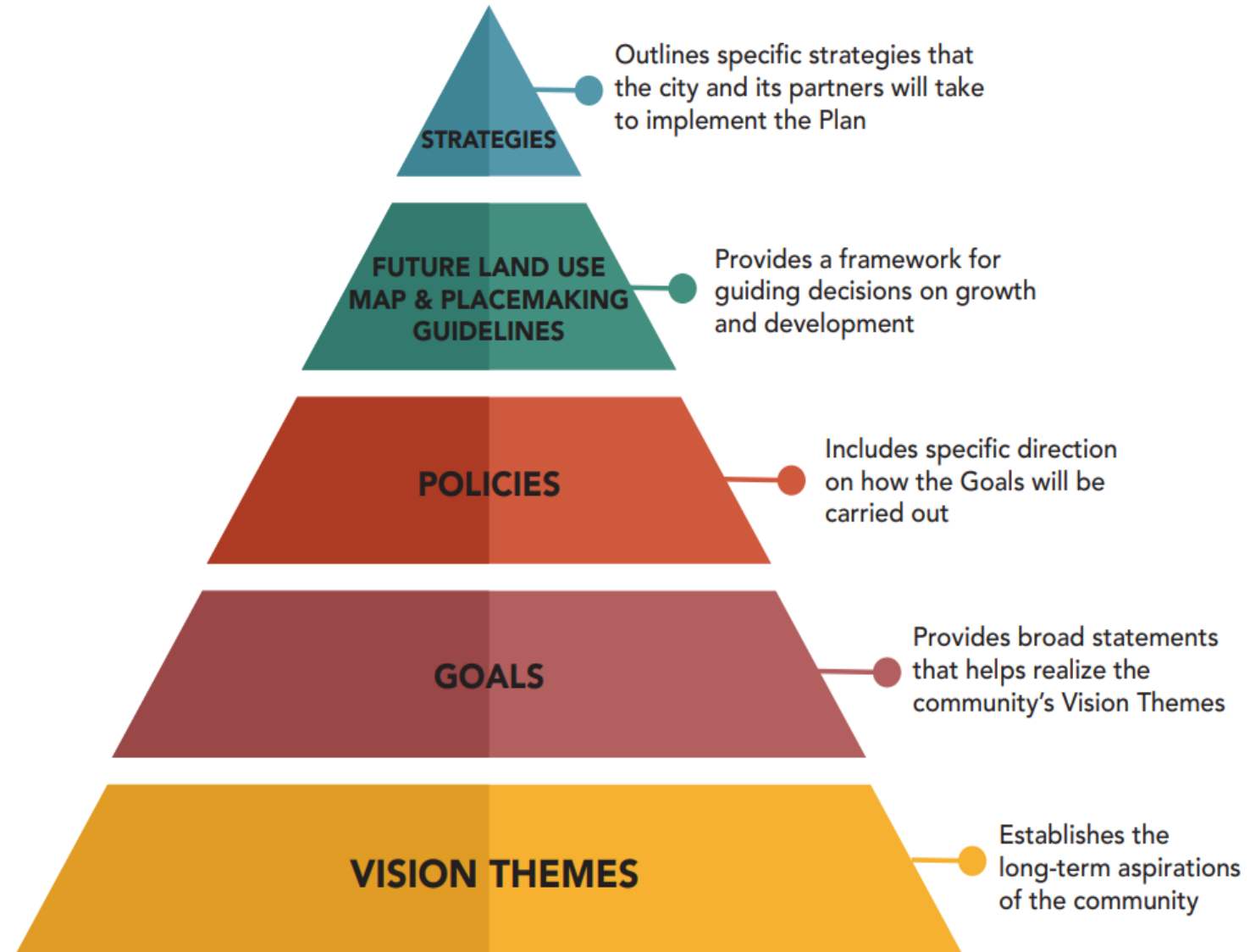
Comprehensive Plan – Community Engagement



Key Question

How does the Comprehensive Plan use the community's vision to guide the city's day-to-day decisions?

Comprehensive Plan Organization



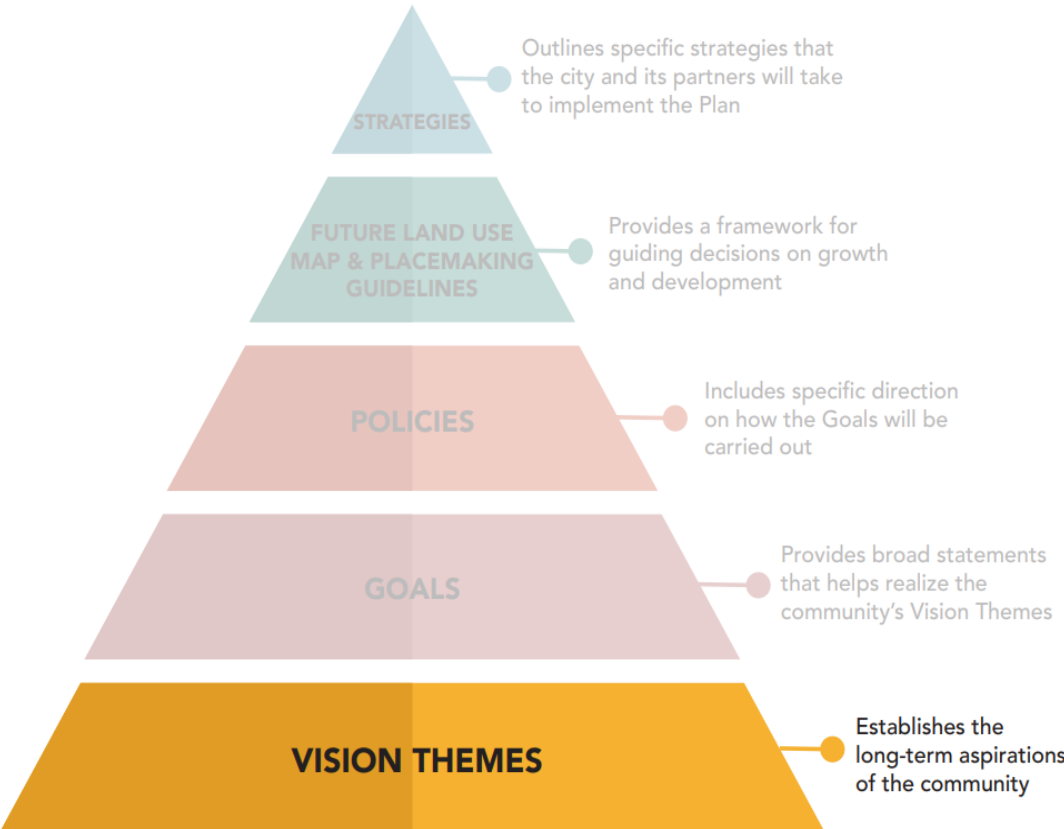
Vision Themes



VISION THEMES

Establishes the
long-term aspirations
of the community

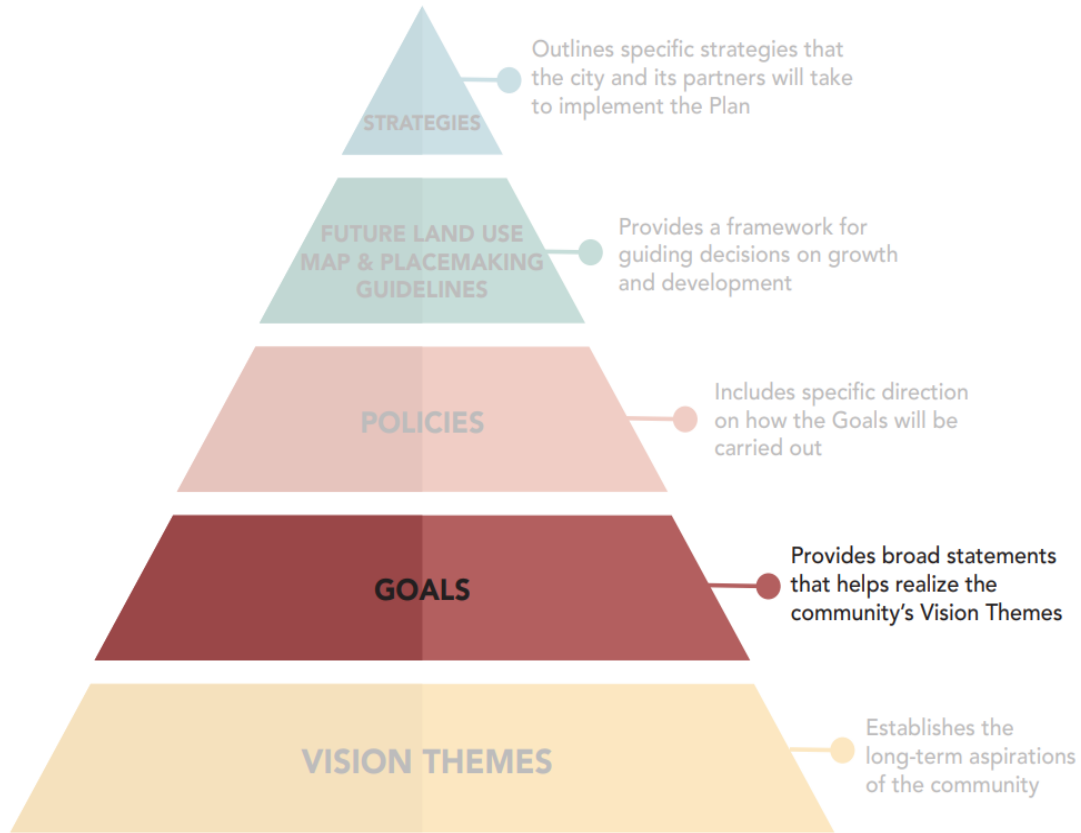
Vision Themes



Goals



Goals within QDN Vision Theme



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.

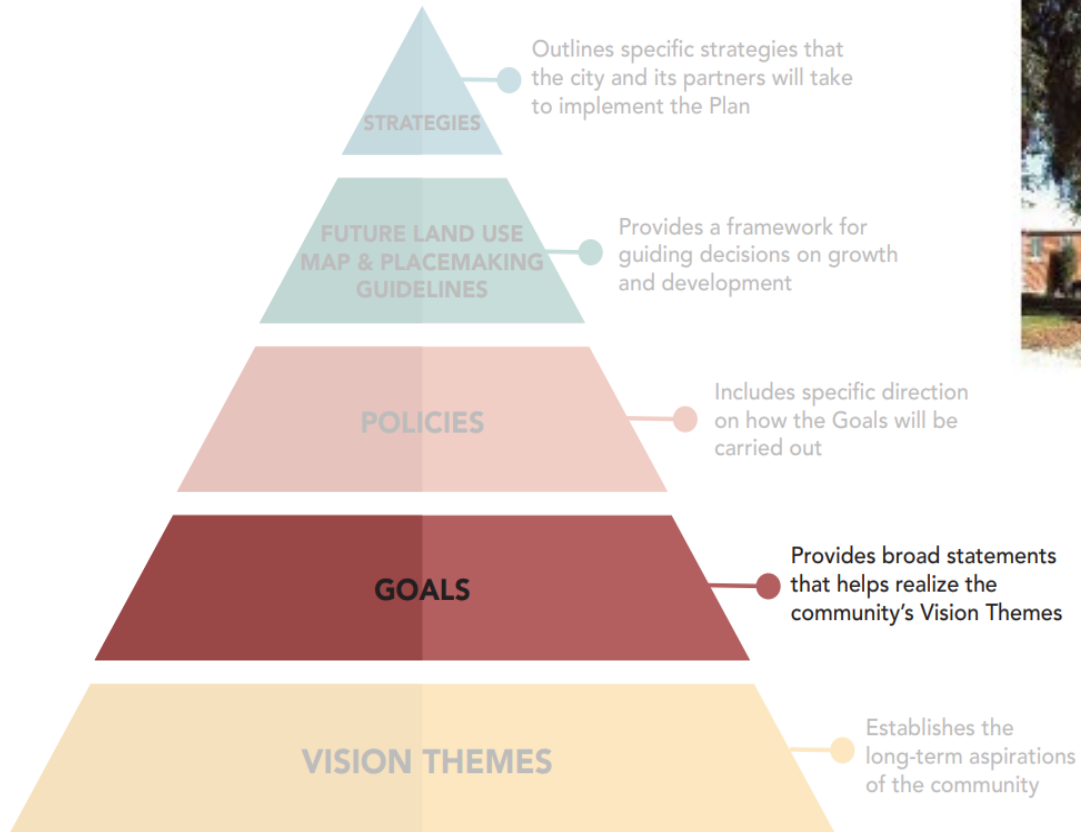


QDN 3. Promote the development of new neighborhoods that offer a range of lifestyle options and amenities.



QDN 4. Advance the creation of walkable neighborhoods.

Goals within QDN Vision Theme

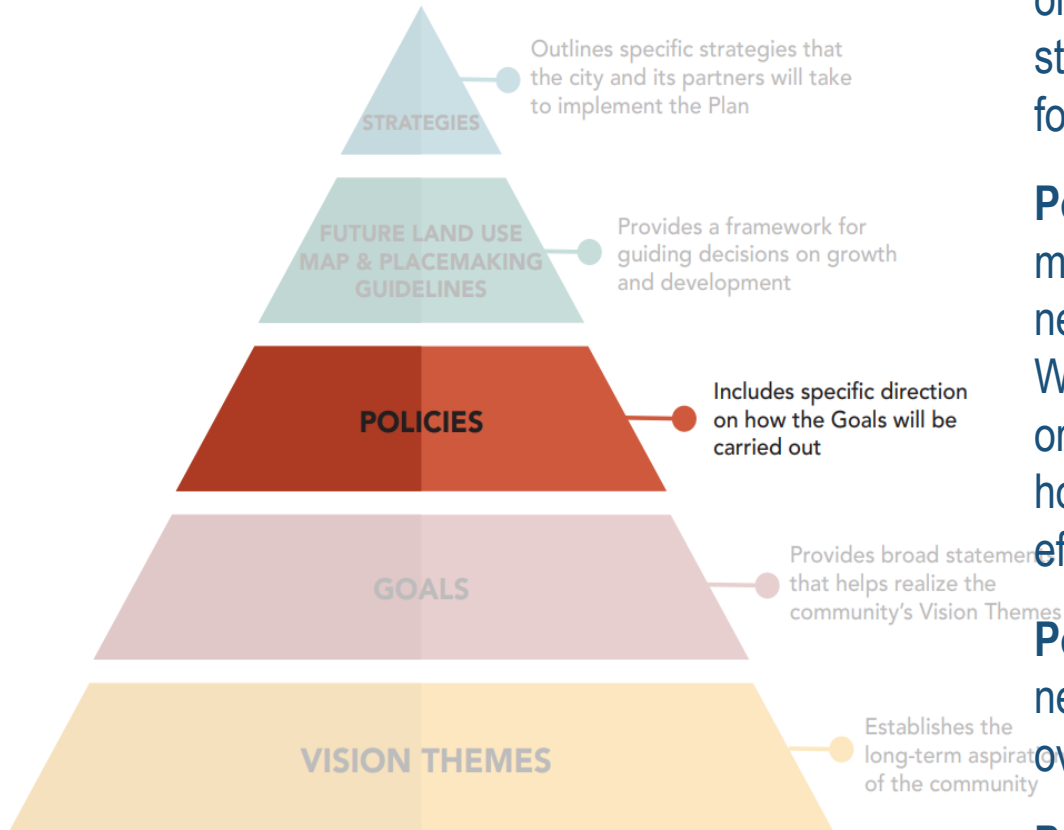


QDN 2. Promote revitalization and reinvestment in established neighborhoods.

Policies



Policies



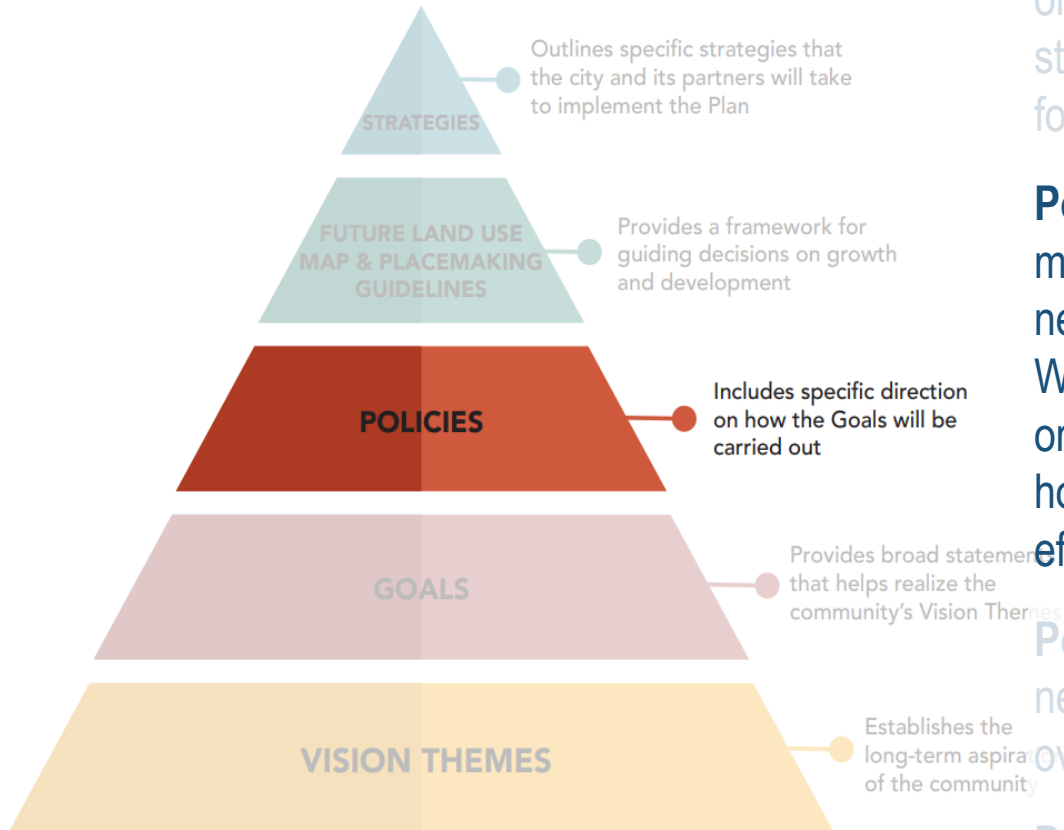
Policy QDN 2.1 - Partnerships. Engage neighborhood residents and partner organizations to create and implement strategies that promote neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. Look to previous efforts and identify lessons learned for future initiatives.

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.

Policies



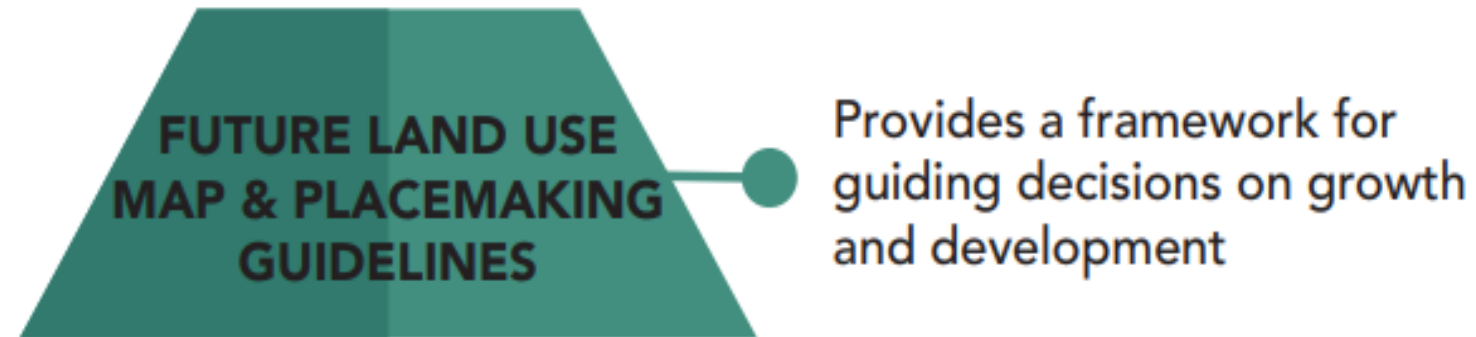
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Growth Framework



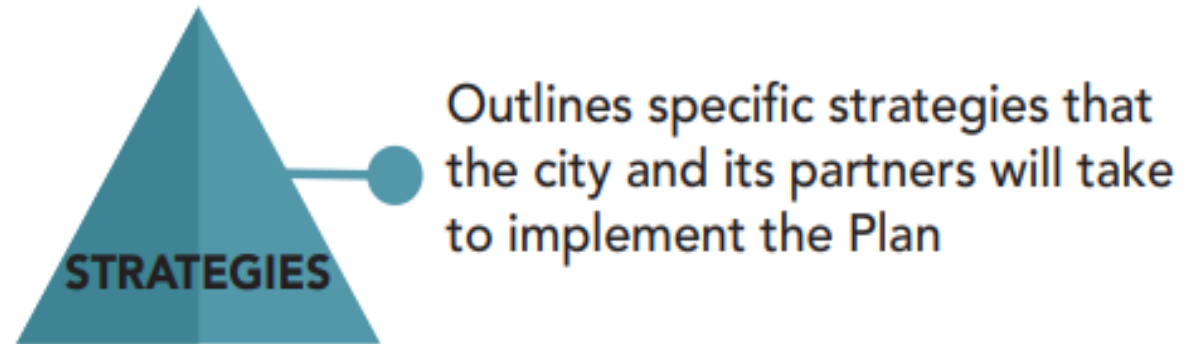
Growth Framework

We'll come back to this...

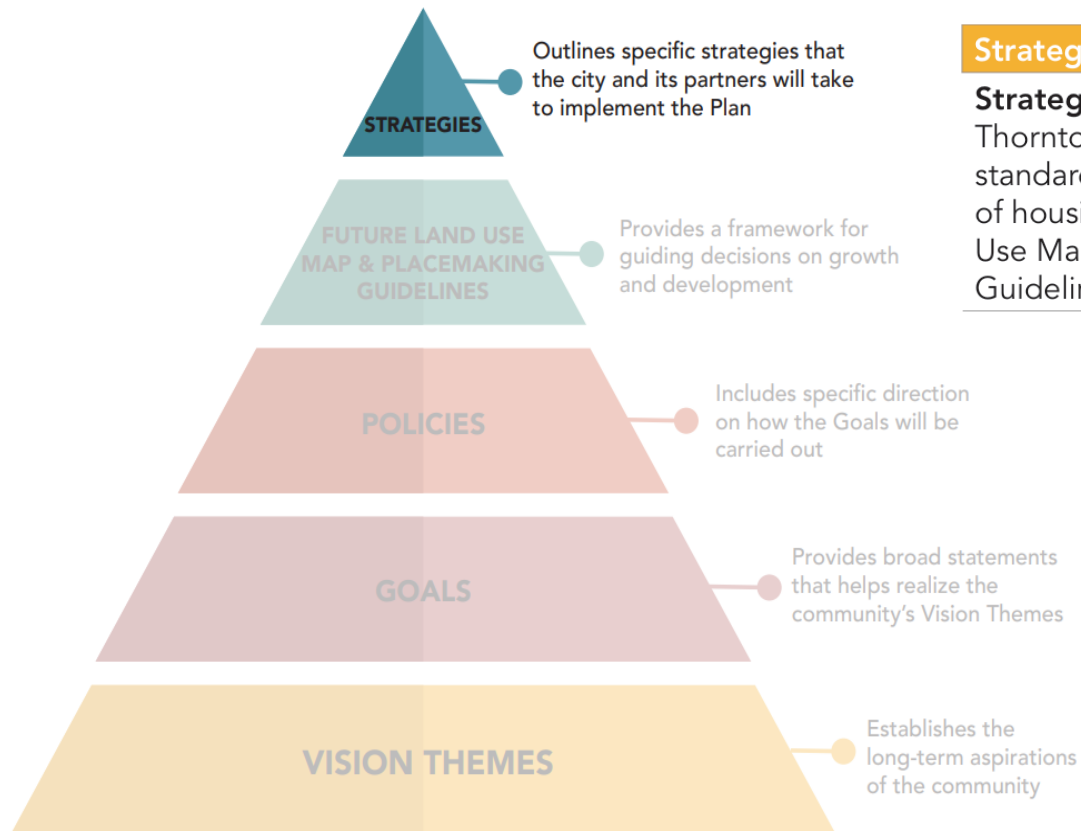
**FUTURE LAND
MAP & PLACEMAKING
GUIDELINES**

Provides framework for
guiding decisions on growth
and development

Strategies



Strategies

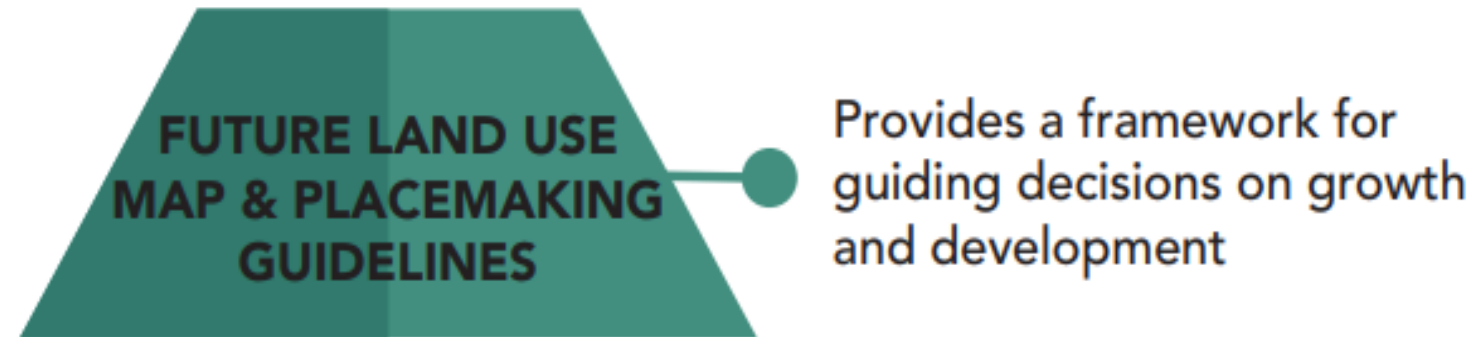


Strategy	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Strategy QDN-h. Review and update the existing Thornton City Code, and other applicable city standards, to help implement the desired mix of housing types reflected on the Future Land Use Map and in the supporting Placemaking Guidelines and area plans.	Lead: City Development Involve: Parks, Recreation and Community Programs	Near-term	City Funds

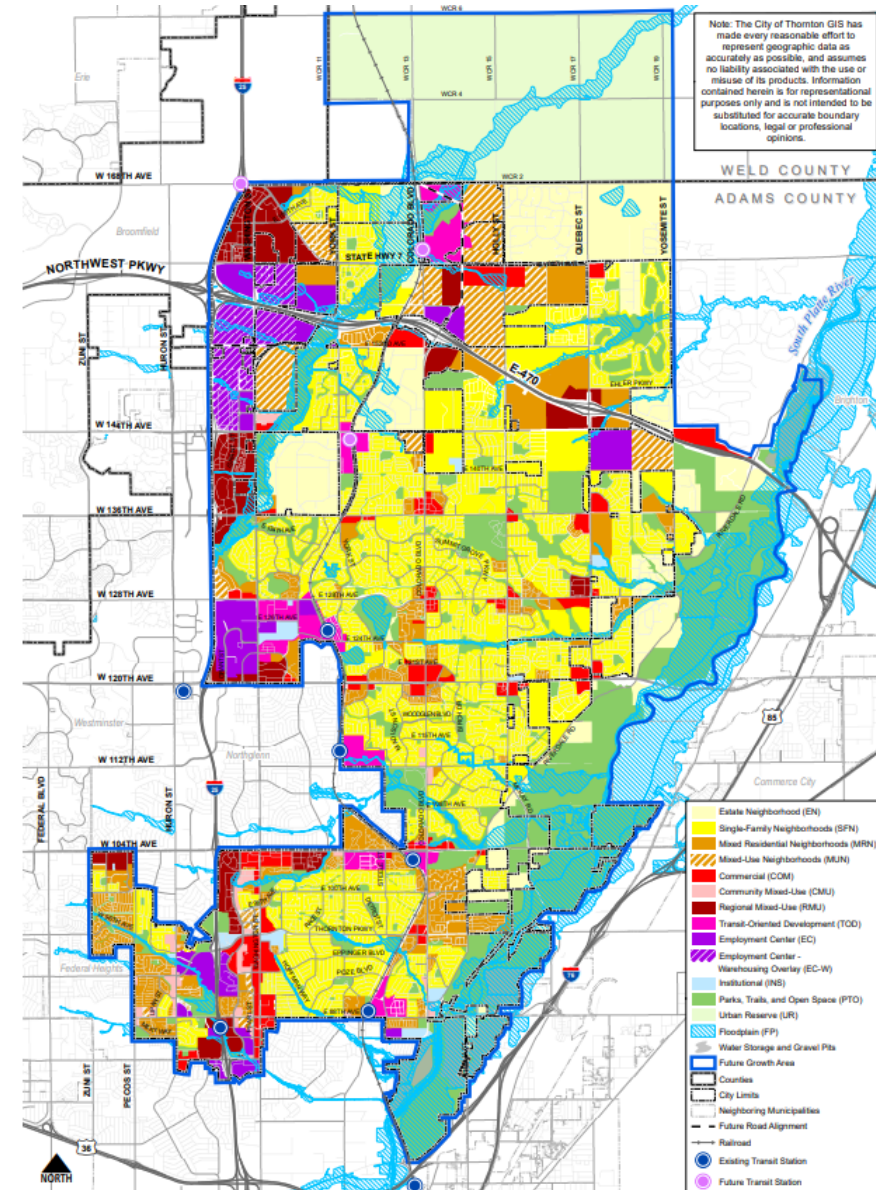
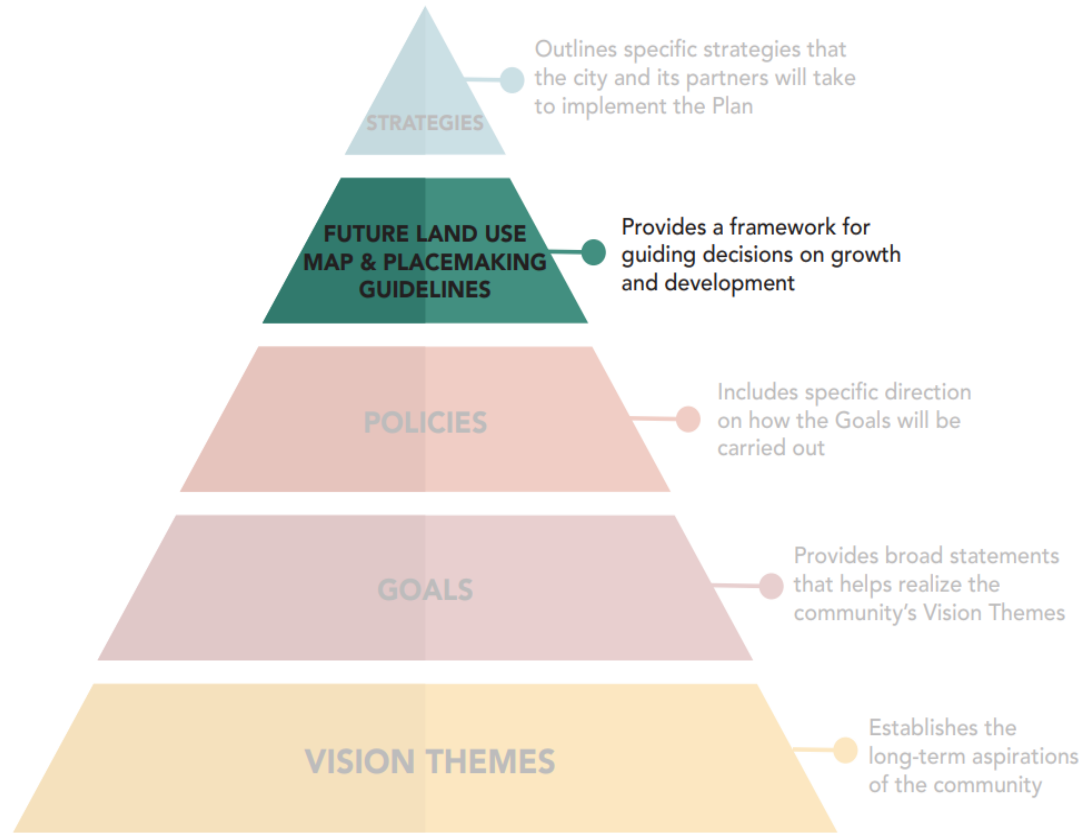
Key Question

How do city planners use the Comprehensive Plan to guide development in the city?

Growth Framework



Growth Planning - Future Land Use Map



Growth Planning - Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Map Categories

Estate Neighborhood	Transit-Oriented Development
Single-Family Neighborhood	Employment Center
Residential Mixed Neighborhoods	Employment Center Overlay
Mixed-Use Neighborhoods	Institutional
Commercial	Parks, Trails and Open Space
Community Mixed-Use	Urban Reserve
Regional Mixed-Use	Floodplain

Growth Planning - Future Land Use Map

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Growth Planning - Future Land Use Map

- A graphic representation of the city's growth framework
- Guides annexation, land uses, and general building form
- Translates the community vision into a map guiding different areas
- *Not regulatory in nature*
- *Not specific and detailed like zoning*
- *Not a guarantee of development approval*

Growth Planning - Future Land Use Categories

Mixed-Use Neighborhoods (MUN)



Growth Planning – Placemaking Guidelines

Placemaking Guidelines outline:

- *Building Form*
- *Placemaking and Connectivity*
- *Infill Opportunities*

City of Thornton Comprehensive Plan | 4. Growth Framework

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.



Growth Planning – Placemaking Guidelines

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES: COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS



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

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

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| A Better integrating commercial and residential uses provides walkable amenities for residential developments. | D Small commercial nodes within or on the edges of the neighborhood can replace larger strip-style development. | Land Use |
| B Major intersections provide a prominent location for a node of commercial activity. | 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. | Red: Mixed-Use with Active Ground Floors |
| C Large blocks can be divided with streets and pedestrian pathways to increase multi-modal connectivity. | F Public parks of various sizes provide an opportunity for recreation and community gathering. | Pink: Multi-Family Residential/Office with Active Ground Floors at Key Intersections |
| | | Yellow: Residential Neighborhoods |
| | | Orange: 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)

Future Land Use Map vs Zoning Map

Future Land Use

- Guiding Document
- Recommendations are not binding
- Forward-Looking
- Includes land in the city and outside of the city, but within its Growth Boundary
- General Land Uses

Zoning and Development Code

- Regulatory – City Code
- Implements the guidance of the Comp Plan
- Includes only land in the city
- Specific dimensional standards

Class Exercise

Question:

What would be important to you to address in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan?

Class Exercise

Personas:

1. Small retail business owner which employs 24 people at two Thornton locations. Lives in a townhome in Thornton. Married with two children, one 20 and studies business at CU Boulder, the other is 14 and just starting high school in Thornton. The younger one is very involved in theatre and musical performing arts. Spouse is a part-time Uber driver.
2. Manager of large business, 250 employees at Thornton facility, anticipates growing to 350 at the Thornton site in the next two years. Princeton MBA. Lives in the foothills. Not married, no kids, 42 years old. Plays the cello very well and often for volunteer community orchestras and musical theatre performances. In a serious, long-term relationship with a professional soccer player.

Class Exercise

3. Young adult, single, apartment dweller. Moved to Thornton from Michigan six months ago for work. Recent college graduate with early career financial consulting job with a specialization in corporate bonds. Second lieutenant in the Air National Guard. Avid angler.

4. Single family homeowner. 50 years old. Married with one high school daughter who is engaged in outdoor sports. Parents are not college educated, but the daughter earns excellent grades and plans to become a physical therapist. The family and manages 18 rental homes in Thornton, which provide their primary income.

Class Exercise

5. Married couple, 78 years old, retired. Immigrated from Peru to go to university in Colorado. Have lived in the same home in Thornton for 45 years. Kids moved away but visit frequently with young grandkids along. They rent out part of their basement to a young couple. Additional stable income from investments and Social Security, but not wealthy. Physically and socially active and intend to remain so as long as possible. Avid card players, cyclists, and kayakers.

6. Single parent with two elementary-aged children. Nurse working at a hospital in Thornton. Apartment dweller. Working on a BS in nursing. Spouse has the kids half time. Speaks French and Italian. Advanced, competitive chess player who often travels to participate in organized competitions.

Class Exercise

7. Family of seven. Parents are in their mid 50s with kids that range in age from 13 to 22. The youngest two children, both boys are adopted from Guatemala. They are good students, very musical, and are both competitive baseball players. Their eldest child is autistic and is unable to drive, but excels at math, science, and piano performance. He graduated from CSU with a BS in astronomy and has been accepted to a master's in astrophysics at CU Boulder. The second eldest is in her second year at Metro State studying education and wishes to become a special education teacher. The parents are both physical therapists and run their own practice in Thornton, employing a total of eight people. Their third child works part time for the practice while in her senior year at Horizon High School. She wishes to follow in her parents' footsteps professionally.

Long Range Planning

Functional and
Area Planning



THORNTON
PLANNING ACADEMY

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

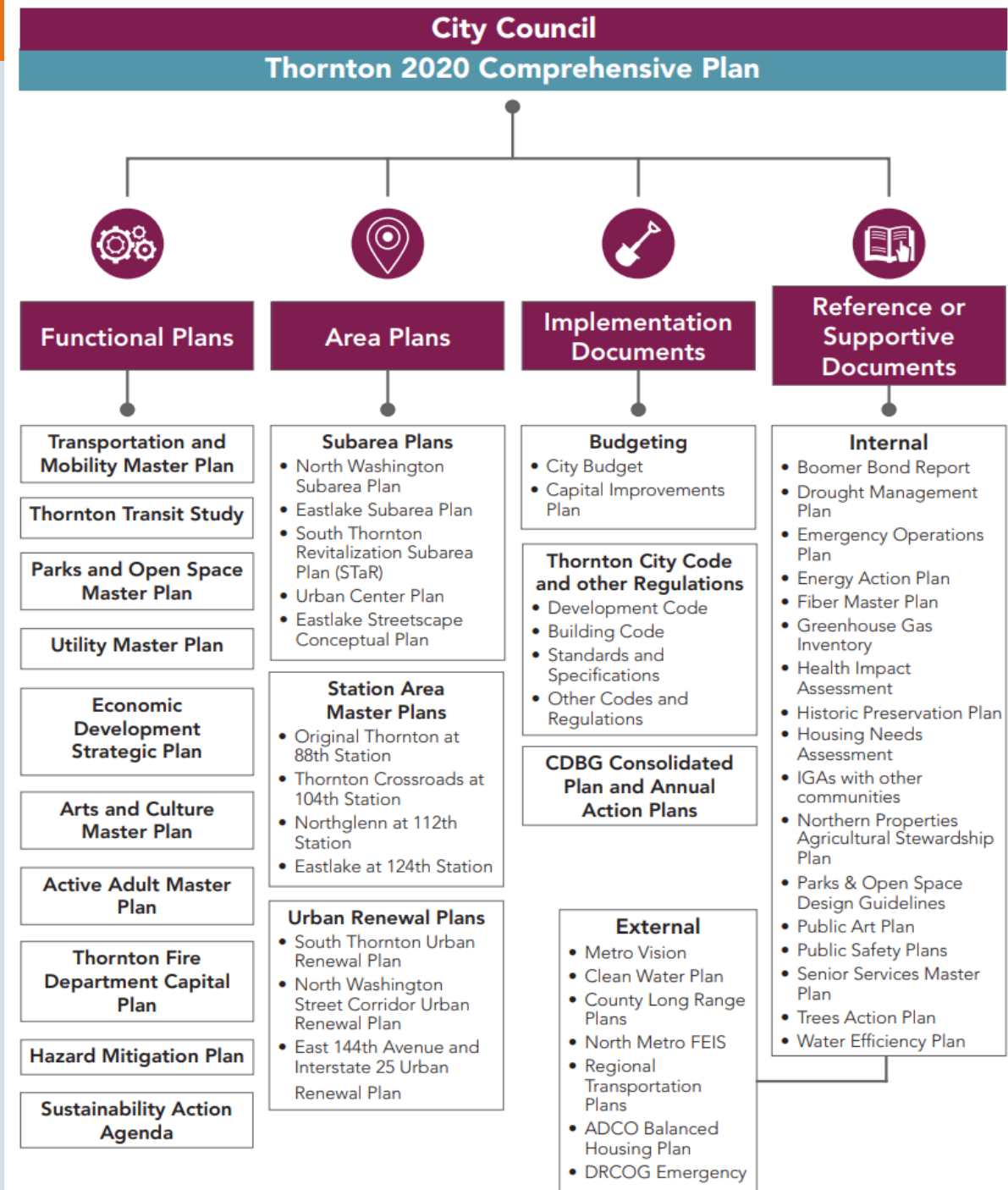
Learning Objective

- Learners will understand how Thornton uses the Area Plans to support implementing the city's Comprehensive Plan

Agenda

- Overview of Area Plans
- Review of planning process and guiding principles
- Class Exercise: Ideas for updating a Station Area Master Plan

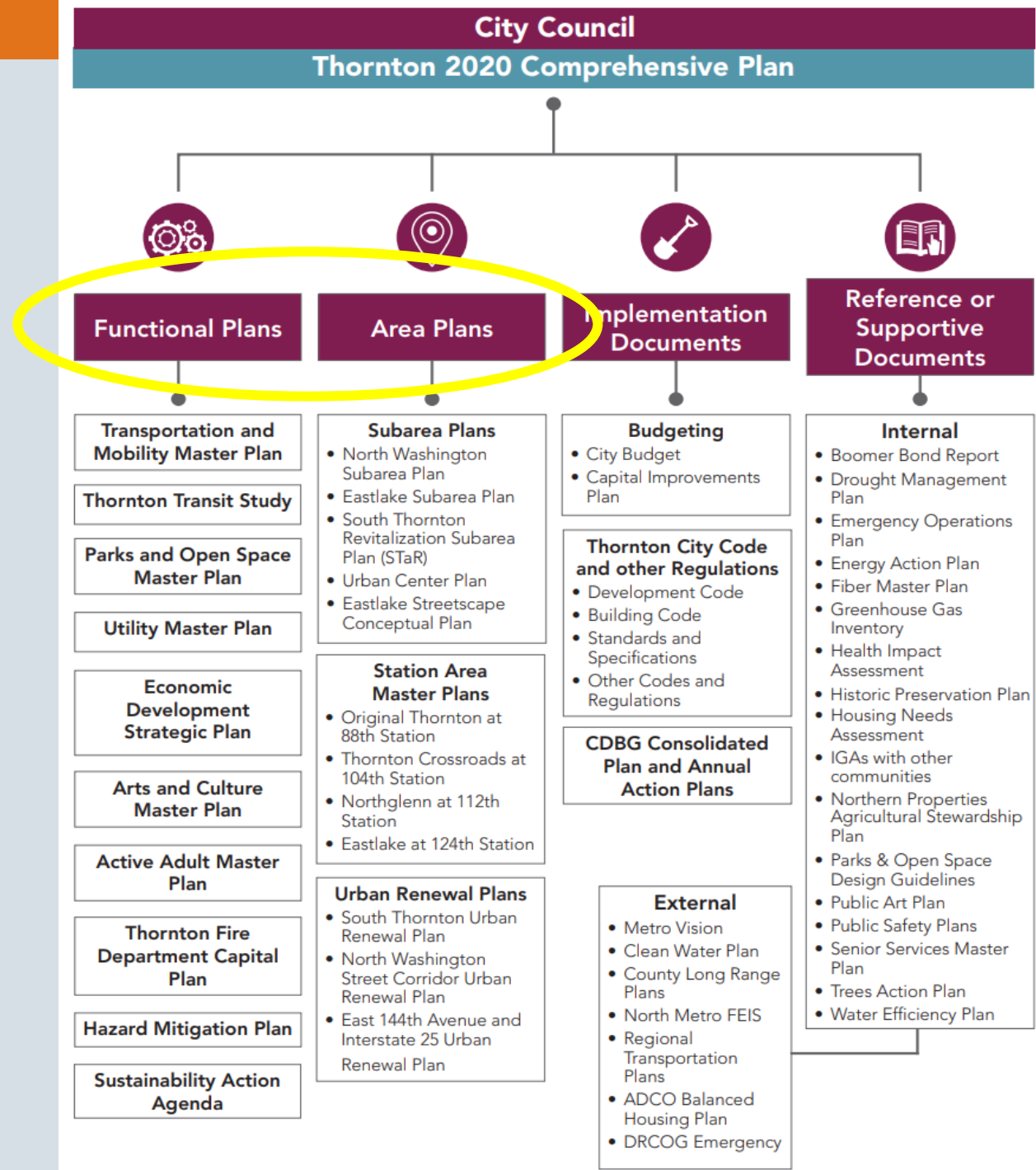
Thornton's Family of Long-Range Plans



Thornton's Family of Long-Range Plans

Functional and Area Plans

What are they and how are they different?



Functional Plans Examples

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
MASTER PLAN



Utility Master Plan

Project No. 17-467

Volume I – Integrated Master Plan
The City of Thornton

Project Number: 60560104
March 2020



City of Thornton, CO

2024-2029 HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Historic
Preservation
Plan

Plan Acceptance Date: December 3, 2024



Thornton Water
Efficiency Plan 2025



Thornton, Federal Heights, Northglenn
Hazard Mitigation Plan

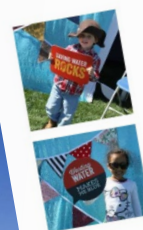


CITY OF THORNTON

DROUGHT
MANAGEMENT PLAN

March 2023

Prepared by:
THORNTON WATER RESOURCES



ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN

2026



Area Plans Examples

South Thornton Area



Urban Renewal Plan
Thornton, Colorado
October 9, 2012
Amended and Restated October 27, 2013

Thornton Urban Center Study



ACCEPTED
27 August 2013



City of Thornton

Eastlake Streetscape Conceptual Plan

April 2023



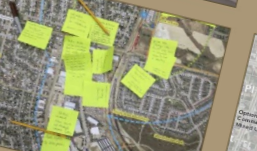
2017 EASTLAKE SUBAREA PLAN

February 28, 2017



Original Thornton at 88th Station Area Master Plan
January 13, 2015

112th AVENUE
STATION AREA MASTER PLAN
FEBRUARY 28, 2017



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan
January 13, 2015



Eastlake at 124th Station Area Master Plan Update
October 27, 2015

Example Area Plan

Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan (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. The plan focuses on creating a walkable station area with a mix of land uses within a half-mile walking distance of the station.



steer davis gleave

Station Area Master Planning in Thornton

Background Information

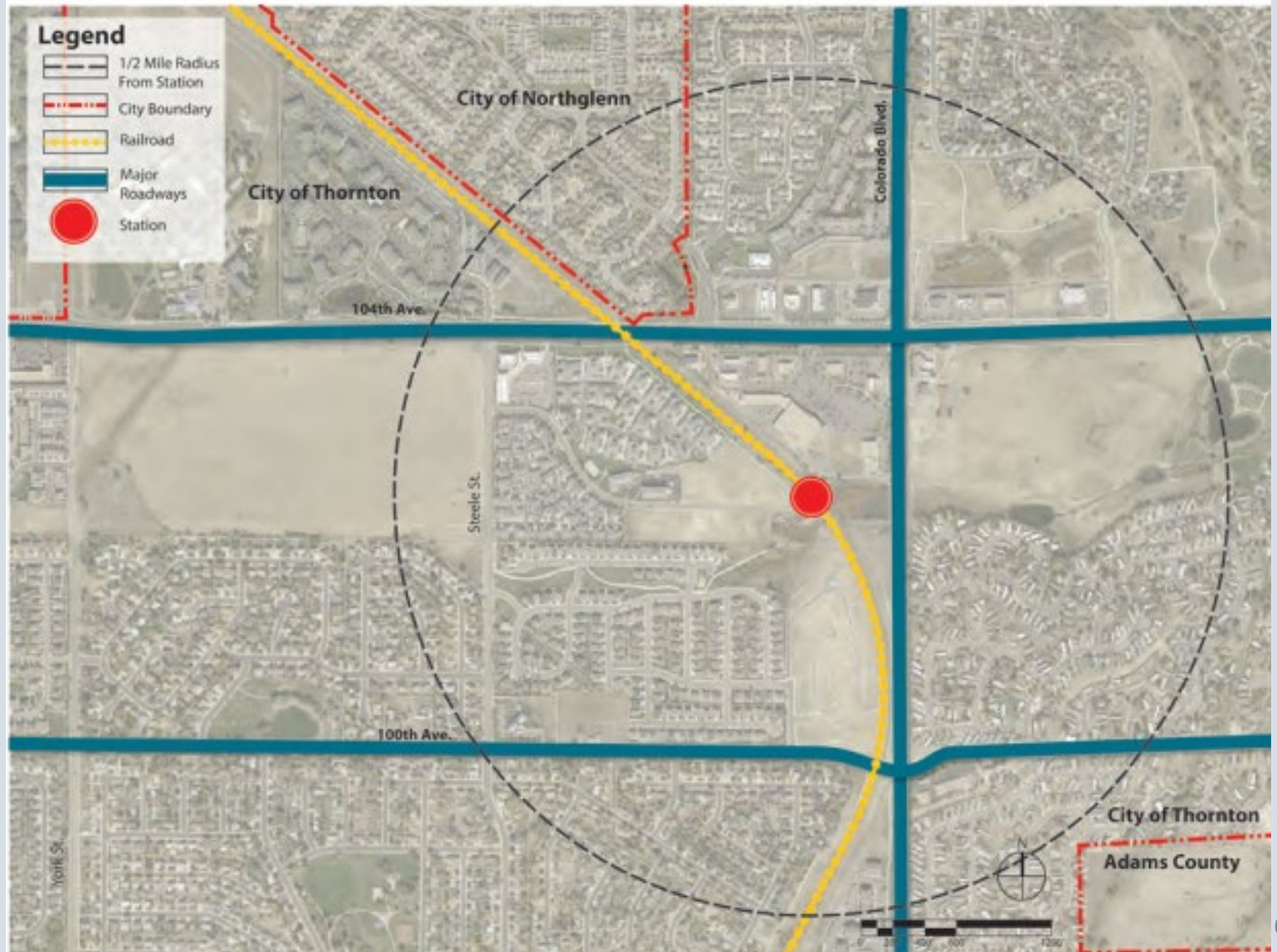
Why was this STAMP created?



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Defining the Area

Figure 2.1: City of Thornton Jurisdiction Boundaries



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Planning Process



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Stated Purpose of the Plan:

Vision & Timeline: Provides a clear vision and planning framework for future private development and public investment over the next 25 years.

Guide for Leadership: Blueprint for City staff and elected officials to guide policy, regulatory, and investment decisions.

Framework for Development: Flexible framework to support private investment in developments and redevelopments.

Community Guidance: Offers guidance on desired land uses, transportation infrastructure, and station area amenities based on community needs.

Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Vision Statement

A mixed-use regional transit hub which enhances existing development by expanding commercial services and housing opportunities; while balancing multimodal connectivity.

Guiding Principles

Mix of Uses



**Vertical Mix of Uses – Ground Floor Retail
with Upper Floor of Residential**



**Horizontal Mix of Uses – Walkable
Commercial Areas Next to Residential**



**Commercial Mix Use – Ground Floor Retail
with Upper Floor Office and Restaurants**

Guiding Principles

Residential Densities and Mix of Housing Options



Guiding Principles

Develop Great Public Spaces



Public Art



Outdoor Seating, Dining & Plazas



Gateways & playgrounds

Guiding Principles

Mobility and Circulation



Pedestrian Safety & Walkable Elements



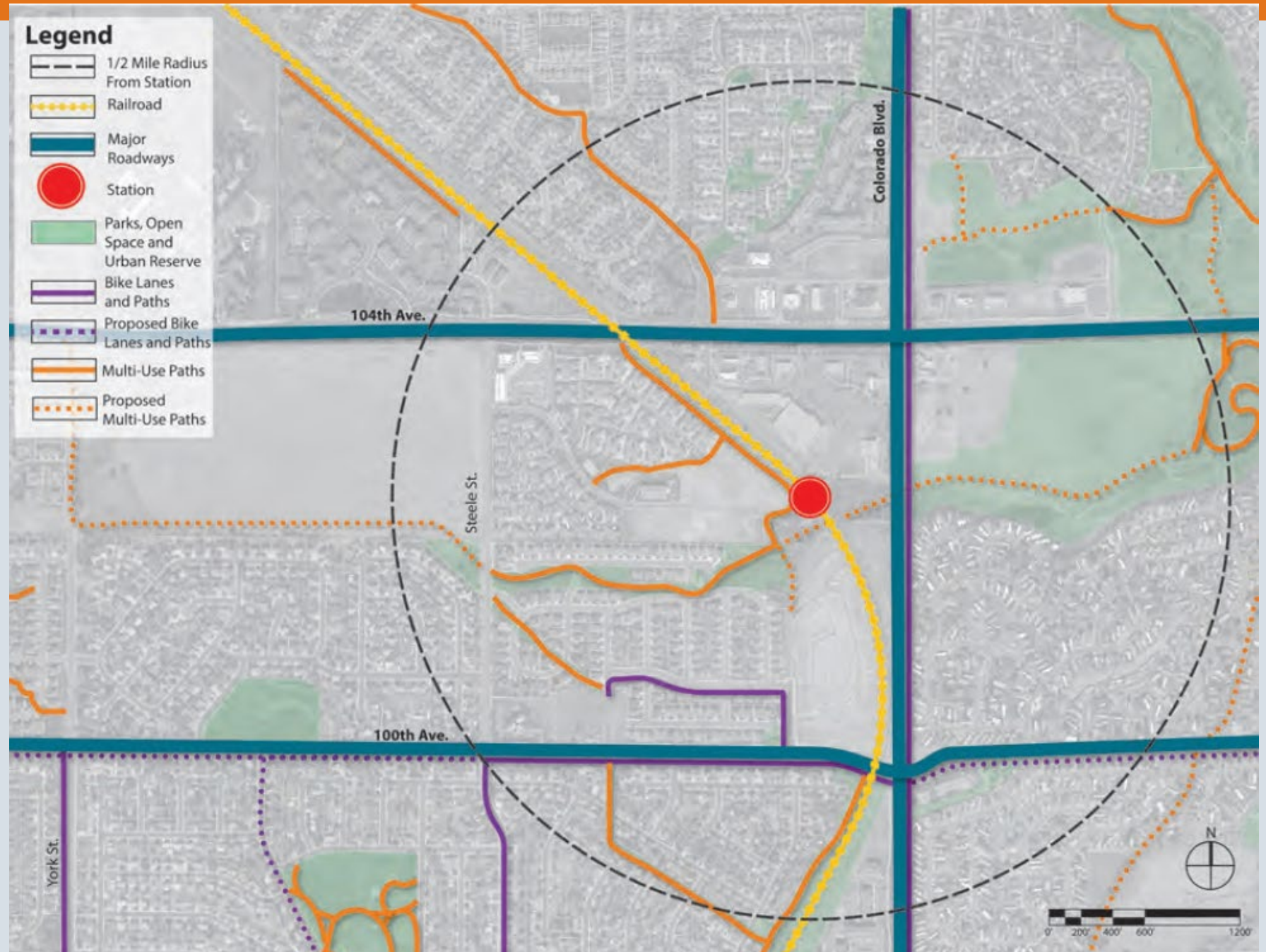
Dedicated Ped/Bike Infrastructure



Good Quality Transit & Connections

Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

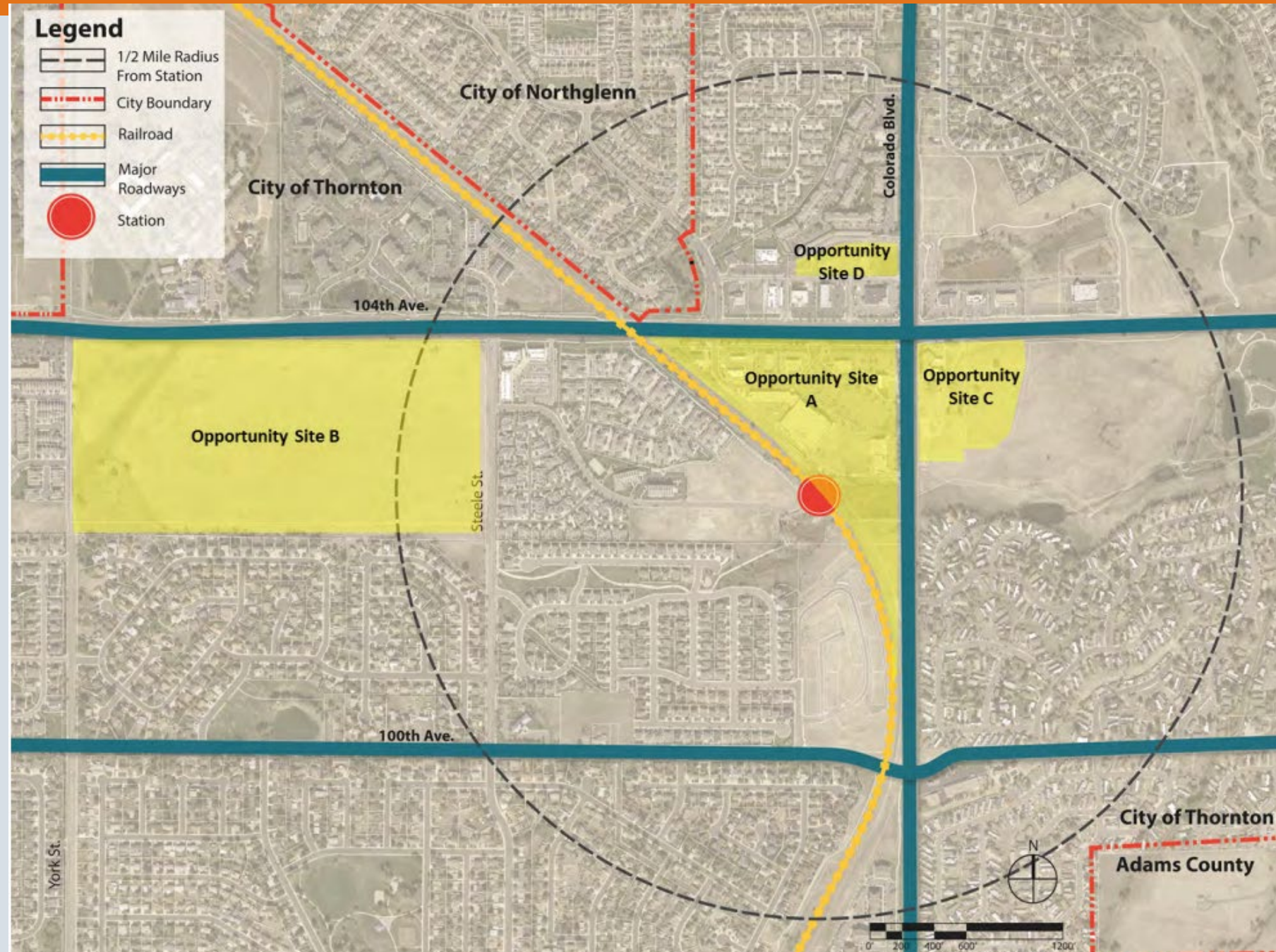
Pedestrian and
Cycling
Infrastructure



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Land Use
Concept
Development

Opportunity Sites



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Opportunity Site B

Figure 4.7: Opportunity Site B



Development Concepts – Opportunity Site B





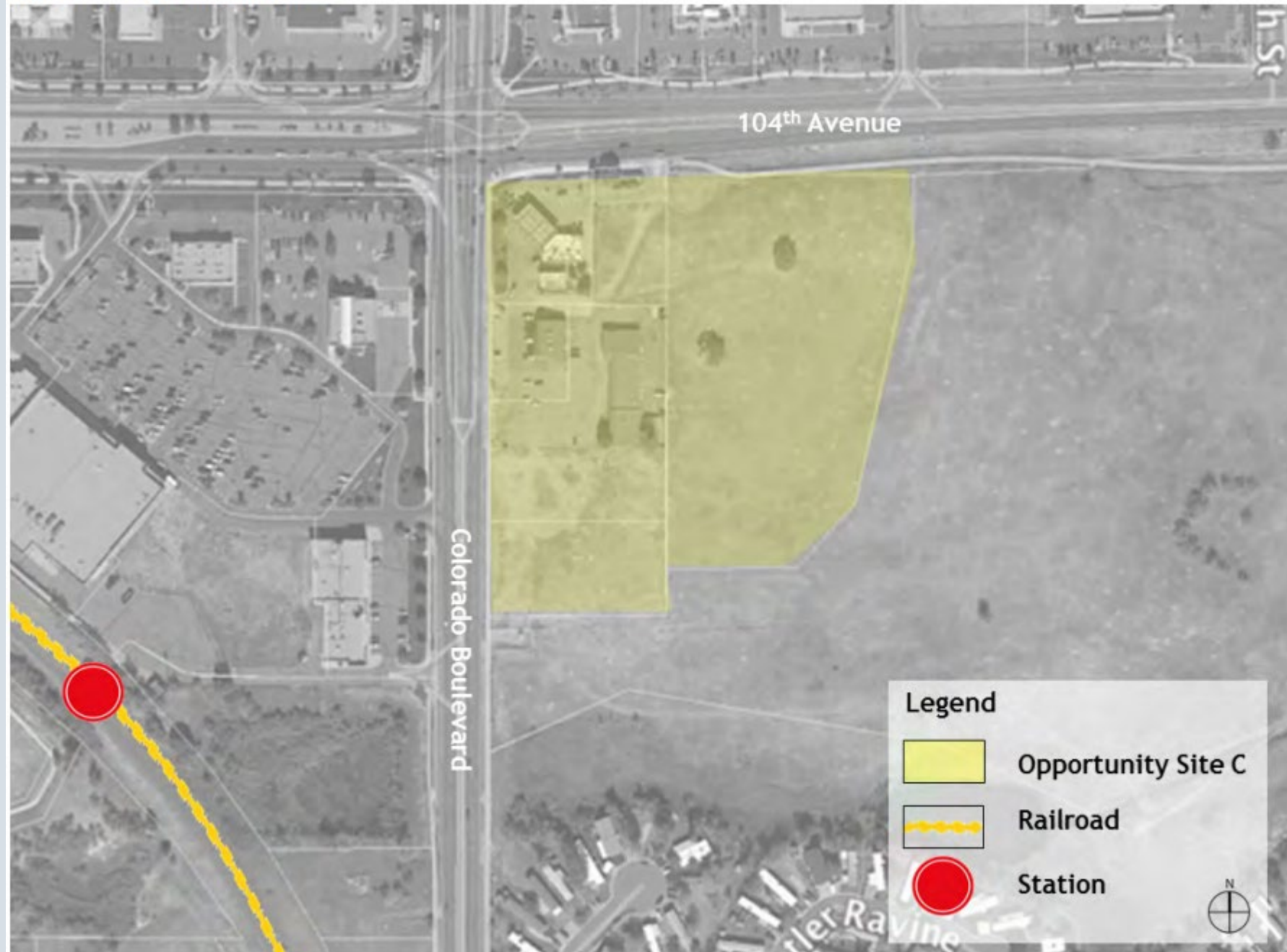
Actual development on Opportunity Site B



Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area Master Plan

Opportunity Site C

Figure 4.10: Opportunity Site C



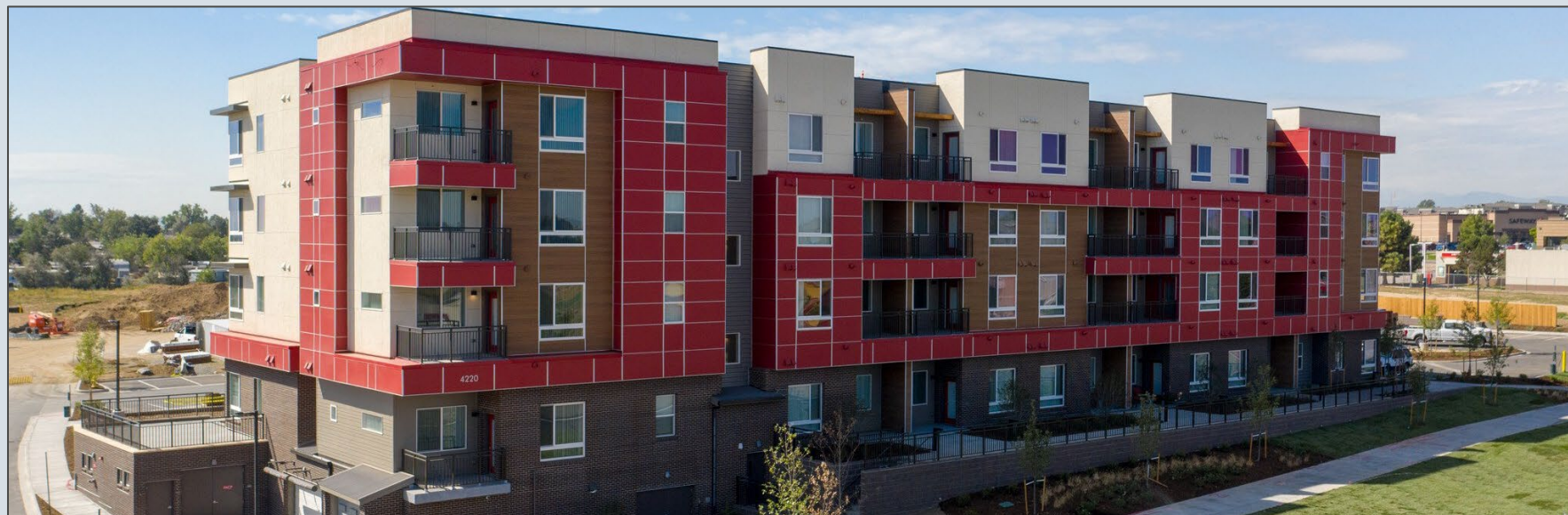
Development Concepts – Opportunity Site C



Development Concepts – Opportunity Site C



Actual development on Opportunity Site C



Class Exercise

Question:

Imagine you live within a 15-minute walk of the Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station.

The City of Thornton is planning to update the Station Area Master Plan.

What features and qualities of development are important to you and should be included in the updated plan?

Class Exercise

Personas:

1. Small retail business owner which employs 24 people at two Thornton locations. Lives in a townhome in Thornton. Married with two children, one 20 and studies business at CU Boulder, the other is 14 and just starting high school in Thornton. The younger one is very involved in theatre and musical performing arts. Spouse is a part-time Uber driver.
2. Manager of large business, 250 employees at Thornton facility, anticipates growing to 350 at the Thornton site in the next two years. Princeton MBA. Lives in the foothills. Not married, no kids, 42 years old. Plays the cello very well and often for volunteer community orchestras and musical theatre performances. In a serious, long-term relationship with a professional soccer player.

Class Exercise

3. Young adult, single, apartment dweller. Moved to Thornton from Michigan six months ago for work. Recent college graduate with early career financial consulting job with a specialization in corporate bonds. Second lieutenant in the Air National Guard. Avid angler.

4. Single family home owner. 50 years old. Married with one high school daughter who is engaged in outdoor sports. Parents are not college educated, but the daughter earns excellent grades and plans to become a physical therapist. The family and manages 18 rental homes in Thornton, which provide their primary income.

Class Exercise

5. Married couple, 78 years old, retired. Immigrated from Peru to go to university in Colorado. Have lived in the same home in Thornton for 45 years. Kids moved away but visit frequently with young grandkids along. They rent out part of their basement to a young couple. Additional stable income from investments and Social Security, but not wealthy. Physically and socially active and intend to remain so as long as possible. Avid card players, cyclists, and kayakers.

6. Single parent with two elementary-aged children. Nurse working at a hospital in Thornton. Apartment dweller. Working on a BS in nursing. Spouse has the kids half time. Speaks French and Italian. Advanced, competitive chess player who often travels to participate in organized competitions.

Class Exercise

7. Family of seven. Parents are in their mid 50s with kids that range in age from 13 to 22. The youngest two children, both boys are adopted from Guatemala. They are good students, very musical, and are both competitive baseball players. Their eldest child is autistic and is unable to drive, but excels at math, science, and piano performance. He graduated from CSU with a BS in astronomy and has been accepted to a master's in astrophysics at CU Boulder. The second eldest is in her second year at Metro State studying education and wishes to become a special education teacher. The parents are both physical therapists and run their own practice in Thornton, employing a total of eight people. Their third child works part time for the practice while in her senior year at Horizon High School. She wishes to follow in her parents' footsteps professionally.

Announcements

We will be sending out an email later this week with bios for the staff members that will be teaching the next session. Please respond with your own bio if you haven't already provided one.

We will also be requesting that everyone complete an online evaluation for each of the class sessions. More details to come.

Next Week

Topic: Current Planning

Prep Materials can be found on the Planning Academy webpage under *Session 2 - September 23.*

A smart phone or tablet will be utilized for a portion of the class. Please bring if you have one.