

# 6.0

## City Identity and Design



*High quality community design enhances the public realm and everyday livability. These elements contribute to a safe, attractive and engaging environment that residents, workers and visitors can all enjoy. Aspects of community design also contribute to establishing a sense of place and identity. Gateways and streetscapes can indicate a clear entry into the community defined by street, landscape and development character. Likewise, views into and out of the city, and preservation of cultural and historical landmarks add to a city's sense of place, history and identity. This chapter provides policy direction for maintaining and improving the city's physical and visual composition, with emphasis on maintaining a high quality built environment, building a strong identity and highlighting views and amenities.*



*One of the city's most identifying elements is the relationship of the built realm to open space. This relationship is reflected in views across the city, throughout development and in the city's public art.*

## Overview

The city has transformed significantly over the past 40 years. Along with its geographic expansion and intensification of development, the city has created an extensive network of parks and open space that is an integral component of the city's physical fabric. This preservation of the natural environment underlines the city's identity as an active community that values natural resources and promotes a meaningful relationship between the built and natural environment. The city has also worked to develop gateways and streetscapes that are well-designed, underline the city's unique identity and create a sense of continuity throughout the community. The Comprehensive Plan looks to maintain, enhance and build on these efforts to further improve the city's presence and identity in the Denver metro area.

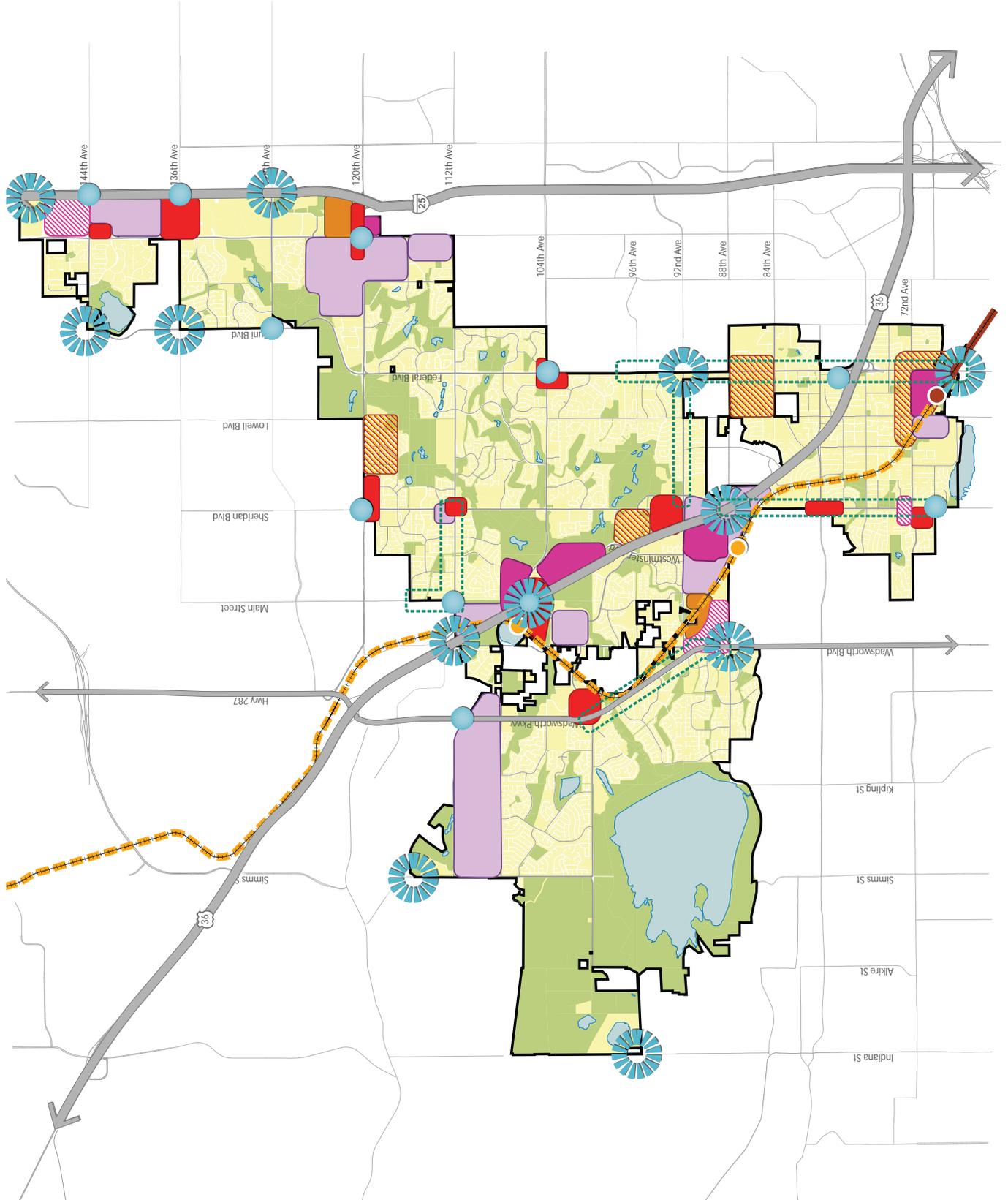
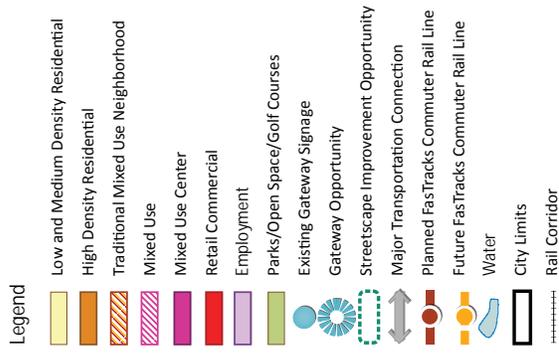


## 6.1 CITY STRUCTURE

Westminster occupies a strategic location between Boulder and Denver with vistas that capture the mountains and entire Front Range area. The city extends over a significant geographical area, from the 2,327-acre Standley Lake Regional Park on the west end to development along I-25 in the north east. The city's overall structure is organized by an arterial street grid juxtaposed against the natural meandering creek corridors that weave through the city. Occupying this framework is a range of neighborhoods and distinctive districts, with non-residential development focused on major transportation corridors. Although the city does have a small historic core, it does not serve as a central organizing element for the entire city.

The Comprehensive Plan builds upon this framework with new and intensified activity centers that establish and improve the city's visual presence at key gateways into the city. The focal element of the city is a new downtown at the crossroads of US 36 and Sheridan Boulevard, planned to be the cultural and physical center of the city. As the downtown intensifies and other areas in the city develop, Westminster will evolve into an increasingly more dynamic community with a strong sense of place and as an emerging center of activity between Denver and Boulder. Figure 6-1 provides an overview of the city's planned physical framework.

Figure 6-1: City Structure



Updated 4/13/15





## 6.2 COMMUNITY DESIGN AND BUILT FORM

Streets, landscape and the development beyond comprise the visual and physical fabric of a city. The quality of design and organization of these components directly impacts the perception and experience of a place. From the design of a residential neighborhood to the character and quality of development along commercial corridors, the design of the built realm plays an important role in the way people live in and experience the city. If a neighborhood is designed well and connects people to amenities and services, inhabitants are more likely to walk or bike to a destination than drive. Similarly, the design of employment and commercial areas can impact whether workers and visitors walk or drive to a destination, whether businesses choose to locate in a specific location, and whether people choose to come to Westminster for shopping or services.

This section provides direction for overall design of the city's built realm as well as more specific direction for neighborhoods, employment centers and commercial corridors. The goals and policies provide a framework for community design and are further delineated by the city's existing design guidelines and standards. Design direction for specific mixed-use and activity centers in the city is provided in the Focus Areas chapter.

### Neighborhoods

Westminster has a range of neighborhood types and scales that offer a variety of living environments, housing types and levels of affordability. The Comprehensive Plan looks to maintain the quality and variety of existing neighborhoods and create high quality, cohesive new neighborhoods. Connections to and from neighborhoods to nearby parks, schools, shopping and services are emphasized both for existing and new development. For new neighborhoods designed with the Traditional Mixed Use Neighborhood Development (TMUND) designation, these elements should be integrated into the neighborhood, with a mix of housing types, parks and community facilities as well as a neighborhood focal point. New residential neighborhoods should also integrate access and location of amenities into their overall design. Residents should be able to walk or bike to amenities along safe, comfortable connections. For developments with higher density residential components, these connections are essential, particularly in terms of encouraging walking over driving to services, amenities and transit.

Architectural and site design are also important aspects of neighborhood quality. The City has established a framework of design guidelines that encourage high quality neighborhood and architectural design for single family attached and detached, multifamily, senior housing and TMUND neighborhoods. Street and building orientation, landscaping, pedestrian connectivity and walkability, and high quality architecture and materials are all emphasized.



*The quality and variety of residential neighborhoods are a significant factor in attracting employers, workers and new residents to the city. Over the years, Westminster has worked to preserve, improve and create well-designed, attractive neighborhoods throughout the city.*



*Employment centers like Westmoor Corporate Park and Park Centre are attractive and take advantage of views and access to open space.*



*Many corridors in the city include older and outdated commercial strip malls. The Comprehensive Plan encourages updating these centers with building and site improvements and infill, or redevelopment to mixed-use activity centers.*

## Employment Centers

Key existing employment centers in the city include Westmoor Corporate Center, Church Ranch Business Park and Park Centre. The North I-25 area is an emerging employment center, with expansion of the St. Anthony's North Medical Center providing a key anchor for the area. High-intensity employment is also envisioned along the US 36 corridor within the Church Ranch Focus Area south of Big Dry Creek and in Circle Point.

The quality and character of the city's employment centers play a significant role in whether businesses choose to locate and remain in the city. It is important that these areas establish a strong sense of place through building design and placement, landscaping and wayfinding. They also must provide convenient access from major transportation corridors and transit as well as to everyday services. Internal and external pedestrian and bicycle connections are also important, particularly in campus-like environments where employment areas can often be closed off from surrounding development. Site design should emphasize the building relationship to landscapes, natural settings and views, with views of parking minimized. Finally, architecture, particularly of office and R&D facilities, should be enhanced with ample articulation, changes in height and massing, and high quality materials.

## Commercial Corridors

The city has multiple well established commercial corridors that traverse the city. The most significant of these corridors are Federal Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard and Wadsworth Parkway. Much of the commercial development along these corridors predates the more contemporary freeway orientation of retail in the city along US 36 and I-25. Developments range from single use service commercial uses to significant mid- and large-box retail shopping centers. Many of the larger retail centers are suffering due to a combination of age, competition with centers located closer to freeways, and changes in the retail industry that place less emphasis on mid-box stores.

The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes a greater mix of uses along these corridors, as delineated in Chapter 2: Land Use, and the Land Use Diagram. However, design of development along these corridors will also have an impact on potential for revitalization and new activity. The Plan emphasizes greater continuity of development, through improvements to streetscape, bringing more buildings up to the street edge, building orientation, attention to access for all modes and a mix of uses, where appropriate.



### *Federal Boulevard*

Federal Boulevard, or US 287, is a primary north-south regional corridor that extends from 120th Avenue in Westminster south to Bowles Avenue in Littleton. The street serves as a key retail, service commercial and, further south, industrial artery through the region. In Westminster, south of 94th Avenue, uses are primarily retail and service commercial, with some multifamily and vacant land. Much of the commercial development within Westminster is older and could be improved by redevelopment, intensification and/or façade improvements. Buildings are set back in linear shopping strips or commercial pad development, with minimal landscaping and pedestrian amenities along the street edge. In some areas, a lack of sidewalks (both sides of the street between 82nd and 88th avenues) and curb cut frequency further impacts street continuity and pedestrian safety. In other areas, the existing sidewalk is narrow (4 feet) and adjacent to the street curb, creating an uncomfortable pedestrian environment.

The Comprehensive Plan envisions a more consistent development character along the street, with buildings brought closer to the street edge, high quality materials and improved site landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Streetscape improvements, such as undergrounding utilities, detached wide sidewalks, decorative street lights and right-of-way landscaping, along the full extent of the corridor in the city would also improve its visual quality. A cohesive plan for the street would help tie in separate planning efforts for the Westminster Station Area and Northgate and Pillar of Fire neighborhoods. Planning for the corridor should be conducted in coordination with Federal Heights, Adams County and CDOT.



*Many areas along Federal Boulevard comprise older commercial strip centers set back from the street.*



*Sheridan Boulevard includes an eclectic mix of retail commercial, service uses and office development. Creating a more cohesive experience along this corridor is an important consideration for land use and urban design decisions.*

### ***Sheridan Boulevard***

Sheridan Boulevard, or State Highway 95, extends north to Broomfield and south to Centennial. Through Westminster, the primary commercial portion of the street extends from just south of 72nd Avenue to just north of 92nd Avenue with the Westminster City Center Marketplace and Walmart-anchored shopping center. Developments are similar to those along Federal Boulevard, with some larger shopping centers near 92nd, 88th and 72nd avenues. Between 75th and 82nd avenues, the development is set back from the street with narrow pedestrian amenities, inconsistent landscaping and, in some areas, frequent curb cuts.

Over time, as redevelopment occurs, new development will be brought closer to the street edge and streetscape improvements will emphasize wider sidewalks and consistent landscaping. Significant opportunities for revitalization and potential development include the Labelle's Plaza at 88th Avenue, as described in Chapter 2: Land Use, as well as the northern corners at 72nd Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard, where mixed-use development is encouraged. Improvements to these sites, in particular, will focus on a vertical mix of uses (where proposed), improved walkability and pedestrian access, and connections to transit. Additionally, the city will focus on efforts to create an improved streetscape along the corridor, particularly between 75th and 82nd avenues.



### *Wadsworth Parkway*

Wadsworth Parkway, State Highway 121, extends south to Highlands Ranch and to the north as US 287. As a true regional connection, Wadsworth Parkway (Wadsworth Boulevard south of 92nd Avenue) has a significant role in many of the cities it passes through. In Westminster, the character of the street is primarily commercial, with some residential development. Commercial development along the corridor is primarily larger in scale than along Federal or Sheridan boulevards. Retail centers include mid- and large-box anchors that provide both community- and regional-serving retail. Many of these centers are older, have limited visibility due to variations in grade and have persistent vacancies.

The Comprehensive Plan looks to encourage redevelopment of many of these centers with mixed-use or new commercial development. As described in Chapter 2: Land Use, the vision for the 80-acre Brookhill Shopping Center is of a mixed-use district with a range of residential and commercial uses. The physical presence of development along the corridor will be emphasized along the street edge, along with unified landscaping and connections to open space, trails and sidewalks. Although a newer street, the corridor could also benefit visually from streetscape improvements like a raised landscaped median and street trees that are closer to the right-of-way. A key opportunity for right-of-way landscape improvements is the west side of the street between 94th and 98th avenues.



*Although development along Wadsworth Parkway is relatively newer than that along Sheridan and Federal boulevards, some centers are beginning to show their age. Others will benefit in the future from improvements or infill.*



*Creating a strong identity and city image is a priority for the city as it continues to attract high quality employment, commercial development and residential uses. Infrastructure and streetscape design are key opportunities to create high impact statements throughout the city.*

## 6.3 IDENTITY AND GATEWAYS

Westminster is a unique community with an extensive amenity infrastructure, from its trails and open spaces to its distinctive civic venues and activity centers. Residents, workers and visitors are attracted to the city’s public realm, public art, and ample parks and recreation opportunities. However, ensuring the city’s character and identity are visible at the city’s edges and gateways is equally as important as the internal composition of the city. Establishing a strong identity within the Denver metro area begins with the city’s visual presence along major transportation corridors, including freeways and regional arterials. This section builds on the city’s Community Enhancement Plan, adopted in 2006, providing direction for an improved public realm in the city with emphasis on the city’s edges and gateways.

### Streetscape Design

Street design has a strong influence on the perception of the city. Regardless of mode of transportation, residents, workers and visitors must travel on streets—the experience on these streets is often the first impression of a community. The combination of street design, level of comfort and ease of travel, and the quality and character of development along the street edge all have an impact on how the city is perceived. Many of Westminster’s major arterials have been designed or improved with high quality streetscape schemes, including 72nd Avenue, 104th Avenue/Church Ranch Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard and Westminster Boulevard. These streets have been designed with raised landscaped medians, decorative street lights and wide “amenity zones” with a detached sidewalk and landscaping along the edge of the street. As new development occurs throughout the city, including infill and redevelopment in older portions of the city, there will be opportunities for improving streetscape design.

As streetscape improvements are implemented, Westminster’s street network will become an extension of the community’s identity and character, with enhanced planting, distinctive lighting and pedestrian furnishings, and public art, where appropriate. These improvements are a distinct opportunity to underline gateways and distinguish the city from other communities. Key streets that are both significant arterials and gateways for the city include Federal Boulevard, the southern portion of Sheridan Boulevard, 72nd Avenue (initial plans underway), 92nd Avenue and 120th Avenue. A cohesive scheme for each of these streets should be developed. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan encourages improved right-of-way landscaping, decorative screen walls and enhanced development character along US 36 and I-25.



## Gateways

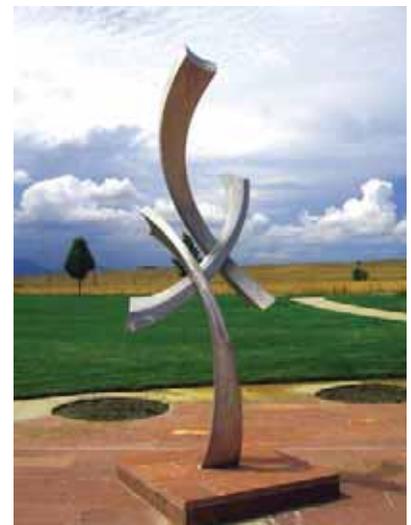
Gateways are a critical part of establishing the identity of the city. Gateways can be linear or singular elements, from specially-designed streets or landmarks to signage or public art. Currently, the city has developed signage at most major gateways into the city and has worked to create distinctive bridges along major arterials and highways like US 36 and I-25. New gateway signage and elements will build on these efforts and will be focused at certain regional entrances into the city and at major districts and employment centers. Key gateway design opportunities are identified on Figure 6-1.

The palette of gateway elements in the city will vary. For some gateways, such as those along major city streets, elements will include signage, landscaping and potentially public art. In other areas, gateways will be defined by a combination of landmark elements and the built environment. Several key gateways into the city are along the US 36 and I-25 corridors. Currently, the quality of the public realm and the city’s “edge” is in need of improvement. Existing older fencing could be replaced with decorative sound walls and landscaping in the right-of-way could be enhanced to create an attractive edge to the city. Additionally, higher-intensity development at key gateways along these corridors will be encouraged to create a physical and visual presence that captures attention.

## Public Art

Public art plays an important role in relating the story and identity of the city, and in creating opportunity for residents and visitors to participate and share in its development. The city’s public art program supports public art provision through a development impact fee. Provision of public art throughout the city began in 1991 with the enactment of a hotel tax (i.e. accommodations tax) that would fund the Community Enhancement Fund. This fund provides money to support a variety of programs to improve the physical appearance of the city. Over the years, this fund has been used to purchase public art pieces. The city has also received grant funds from the Denver metro area Scientific and Cultural Facilities District to purchase art. In 2001, City Council enacted a requirement that all non-residential development should provide public art. Westminster is one of only a handful of cities nationwide with such a program. The program has been highly successful—over 150 pieces of public art are located throughout the city.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the continued growth of historical, cultural and geographic awareness in the city by emphasizing public art in all areas of the city. In particular, public art within major activity nodes and regional destinations, within established neighborhoods and along major



*Westminster has prioritized community enhancement over the years with new uniquely designed infrastructure, gateway monuments and signage and a vast collection of public art that exceeds 150 pieces of art.*



*There is no shortage of breathtaking views in the city, with several bluffs and vantage points along major east-west and north-south corridors. Views encompass the Front Range and Rocky Mountains as well as Downtown Denver.*



*Ample views are also available within the city into open space and conservation areas, from Ketner Lake, above, to the Ranch Open Space, middle, and Heritage Golf Course, below.*

pedestrian corridors will play a key role in articulating the city's identity. Likewise, public art in key public spaces, transit stations, gateways and transportation corridors (such as Lowell Boulevard south of US 36) are opportunities to express the city's identity and character. Additional support from the city may include competitions, exhibit space and public facilities for cultural events and art shows.

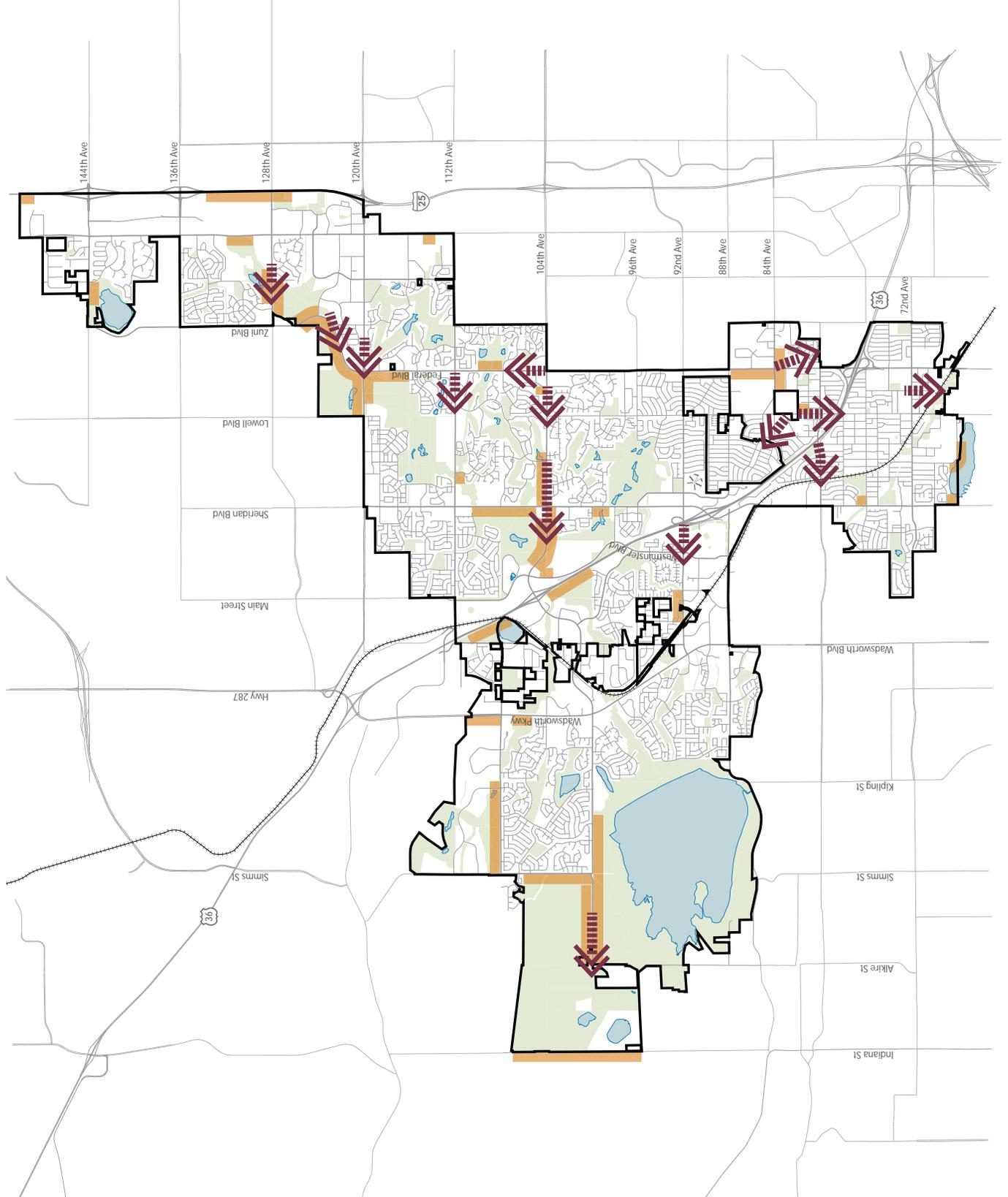
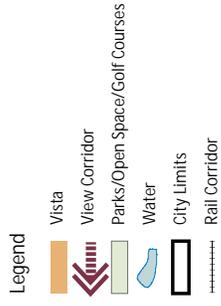
## 6.4 VIEWS

Scenic vistas are a key element of Westminster's identity—whether to expansive open space areas within the city or to the mountains beyond. The city's varied topography provides breathtaking panoramic views to the Rocky Mountain Front Range and Downtown Denver. Views are enjoyed from most areas of the city, although the best publicly accessible views are found at points along many of the city's arterial streets and open spaces. In particular, spectacular views of the Rocky Mountains can be found along most of 104th Avenue, the eastern end of 120th Avenue, 128th Avenue east of Huron Street, and from US 36, Federal Boulevard and Sheridan Boulevard. Other significant western views are located at Standley Lake, Westminster City Hall and City Park. Views of the Denver skyline can be seen while traveling south along Federal and Sheridan boulevards, east along 84th Avenue and south along portions of Lowell Boulevard at 82nd Avenue.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies view corridors along portions of the city's major street network and from key public spaces, as shown in Figure 6-2. The designation of these view corridors preserves the most significant views from the public realm. Areas with a designated view corridor may be subject to additional setback requirements, height restrictions and modified perimeter landscaping or site configurations to ensure that new development will not restrict views. Development proposed within these corridor areas will be evaluated to preserve views wherever possible.

It should be noted that view corridors are not intended to preserve views from private properties or individual buildings, but rather, from the public realm, including the street network, trails, open spaces and public facilities.

Figure 6-2: Views



Updated 4/13/15





## 6.5 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Preserving and celebrating the city’s cultural and historic core adds depth and authenticity to Westminster’s identity in the Denver metro area. The city’s evolution from the 160-acre village of DeSpain Junction to the 21,655-acre city it is today represents a rich history of settlement and homesteading, ranches and orchards—some of which continues to be thematically represented in new development and retained through historic preservation efforts. This section provides goals and policies that encourage and support continued preservation and efforts to retain the city’s cultural and historic identity.

### Historic Context

In 1890, the village of DeSpain Junction was renamed Harris (after real estate developer CJ Harris)—the vestiges of which are present today as the Harris Park district in the vicinity of 73rd Avenue and Bradburn Boulevard. The city officially incorporated in 1911, at which time the name was changed to Westminster, after Westminster University that was founded in 1908 and closed prematurely in 1917. As the City of Westminster expanded, other ranch and farm homesteads were folded into the city limits including the Town of Semper, Mandalay Gardens (Church Ranch), and a portion of the Westminster University (now known as the Pillar of Fire) property. Recognizing and preserving the city’s past is of significant interest to the community. In 2003, the Westminster City Council established the Historic Landmark Board and adopted the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Since that time the city has been actively involved in identifying and partnering to preserve and restore many historic artifacts, buildings and property. Historic properties, Local Landmarks and National Register sites are shown on Figure 6-3. Additional detail of historic properties is available on the city’s website at [www.cityofwestminster.us/ExploreWestminster/HistoricPreservation.aspx](http://www.cityofwestminster.us/ExploreWestminster/HistoricPreservation.aspx).

Although mostly located outside the limits of the city, the Westminster University (Pillar of Fire) building and associated historic structures remain of significant historic value to the city given its ties to its origins and namesake. Given this high level of historic importance, the city continues to explore opportunities to work with the property owners to ensure its functional presence for years to come.

### Harris Park Historic Area

The city’s original status as a recognized jurisdiction occurred in 1890 with the recording of the original Harris town plat that encompassed an area bounded by 80th Avenue, Lowell Boulevard, 72nd Avenue, and Quitman Street. This area became known as Harris Park.



*Above, the Bowles House. Middle, the Pleasant DeSpain School House. Bottom, the Pillar of Fire (former Westminster University building).*



*Improvements to the city's historic resources have included streetscape improvements along 73rd Avenue, above, as well as renovation of the Westminister Grange Hall, below.*

Within this area emerged the small, agriculture-based commercial center at 73rd Avenue and Bradburn Boulevard, and in later years, the Lowell Boulevard/73rd Avenue commercial area. Collectively, these two commercial areas serve as the bookends of the Historic Harris Park Revitalization Area in which the city is making substantial investment in pursuing preservation and restoration of historic buildings and giving recognition to artifacts, stories and structures lost over the years.

These historic preservation efforts are integral to the city's pursuit of neighborhood revitalization in the historic neighborhood. The recognition of the area's history combined with historic preservation efforts has made the neighborhood an attractive location for artists to live and/or conduct business, which in turn is having a positive impact on contributing to the revitalization of the area into a dynamic, eclectic and diverse mixed-use neighborhood and local destination. As a means of attracting new investment and development activity in the Harris Park area, the city continues to prepare and implement planning tools to promote and facilitate such activity. Key proposed initiatives include designation of Harris Park as an arts district and creation of design guidelines for historically sensitive infill development and renovation.

### Other Preservation and Adaptive Reuse Areas

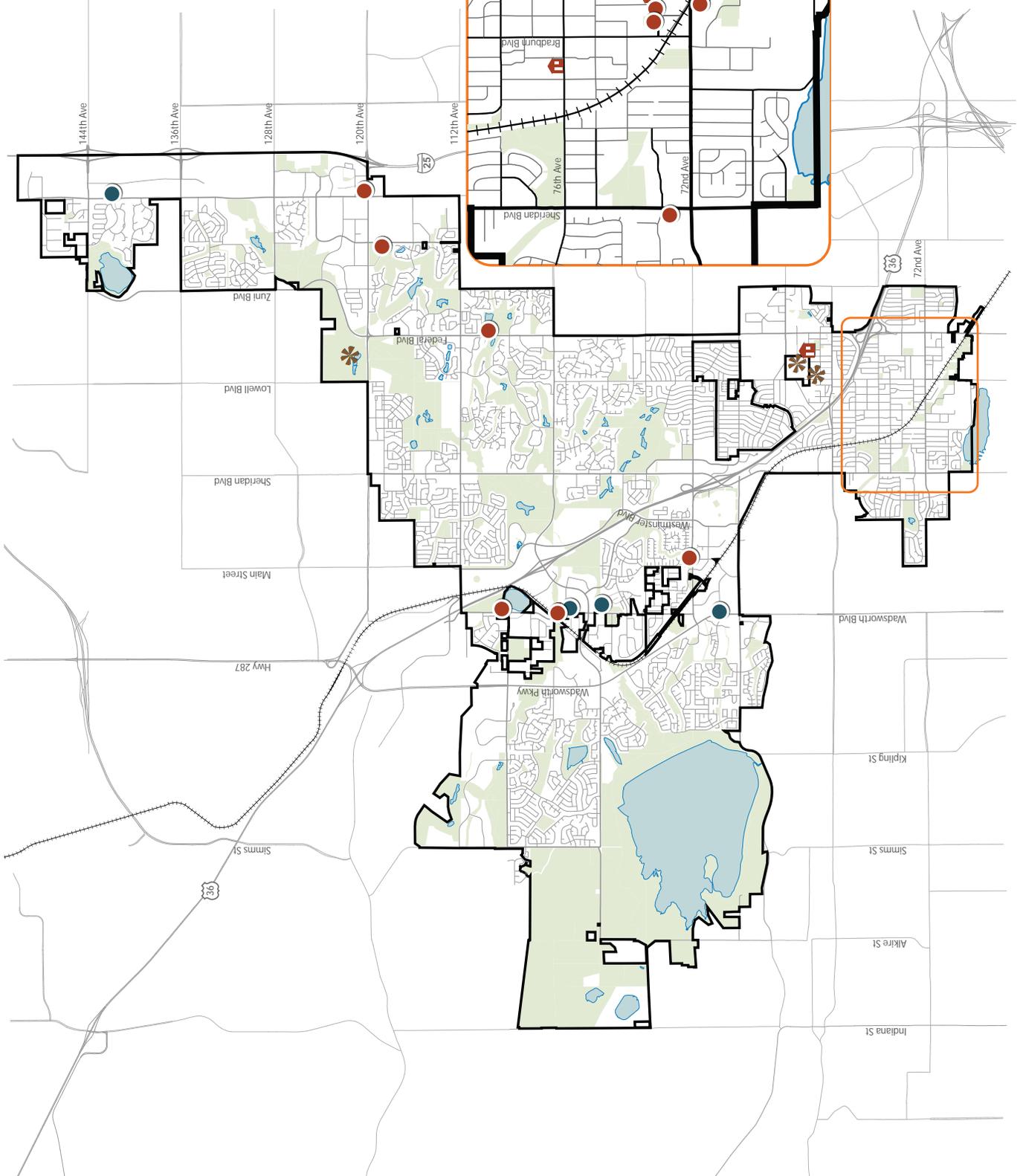
Many of the city's historic properties and landmarks are protected by being city owned, including:

- Bowles House
- Church's Stage Stop
- Marion Barn
- Metzger Farm
- Rodeo Market
- Savory Mushroom Tower
- Semper Farm
- Shoenberg Farm
- Tucker Barn
- Wesley Chapel Cemetery

Several of these city owned properties, as well as other properties in the city, have potential for adaptive reuse. These properties include Shoenberg Farm at 73rd Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard; the Adams County School District 50 property on the northeast corner of 72nd Avenue and Lowell Boulevard;

Figure 6-3: Historic Context

- Legend
- Property of Historic Significance
  - Local Landmark
  - Locally Landmarked Residence
  - National Register of Historic Places
  - Parks/Open Space/Golf Courses
  - Water
  - City Limits
  - Rail Corridor



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and the remaining Church Ranch property at the southeast corner of Church Ranch Boulevard and Old Wadsworth Boulevard.

The Shoenberg Farm property presents a unique reuse opportunity utilizing a number of historic structures that once supported an 800-acre dairy and egg production facility for what is now known as the Denver National Jewish Hospital. The city has acquired seven of the remaining nine historic structures and has fully restored two of them (the barn and concrete silo). Additional restoration work is underway on the milk house, with the remaining structures to be restored as funding permits. Collectively, these historic buildings provide a unique adaptive reuse opportunity to create a unique venue and community attraction for the City of Westminster.



The Adams County School District No. 50 property on the northeast corner of 72nd Avenue and Lowell Boulevard provides another assemblage of historic structures that are prime preservation and restoration candidates conveying the rich history of the oldest public school district serving Westminster. The site is home to three buildings including the Harris School (currently called DeSpain School), the earliest school constructed in the city in 1892; Union High School, the first high school, built in 1929; and the first Westminster High School built in 1949. The District continues to use these facilities to date for school purposes, and subject to a District determination to relinquish any of the buildings, could serve as significant adaptive reuse opportunity. Given the historic significance of this site, the city continues to maintain a dialog and potentially partner with the District to ensure the buildings remain an integral part of the community.

*Shoenberg Farm is located just north of the intersection of 72nd Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. Remaining buildings include the city-owned and renovated barn building (left and middle) and farm house (right), among others.*



*Union High School and the original DeSpain School House are located on the Adams County School District property.*

The Church Ranch property at Church Ranch Boulevard and Wadsworth Boulevard is a remnant of the much larger ranch and stage stop that was originally established in the 1860s. The property includes several original buildings including a 5,000-square-foot barn that looks out onto Big Dry Creek and open space to the south. The city encourages adaptive reuse and potential partial redevelopment of the property that would maintain the integrity and history of the site as well as create a new unique regional and community destination. In addition to the barn site, there are several other Church Ranch-related properties along the Wadsworth Boulevard corridor, including the Mandalay School, Tucker Barn and Church's Stage Stop. The location of all of these historic sites and structures along Wadsworth Boulevard creates the potential for a future historic district or corridor between 100th and 112th avenues.

*The Church Ranch historic properties include the Mandalay School, located off of Westminster Boulevard at 103rd Avenue and Church's Stage Stop.*



The City of Westminster strongly believes the retention, preservation and visible display of its history is integral to preserving the quality of life for its residents and businesses. Accordingly, the city intends to work in partnership with property owners, organizations, and other governmental entities to expand on its successes to date in preserving the city's history. However, it must be noted that designation is currently voluntary for property owners—the city does not forcefully designate properties.



## 6.6 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The Comprehensive Plan supports an inclusive sustainable approach for future growth in the city. Policies that support and encourage sustainability are integrated throughout the Plan in the land use, economic development, transportation, parks, recreation and open space, and public facilities chapters. This section explicitly addresses the city's approach to sustainability as it relates to site, landscape and building design in the city.

### Site and Landscape Design

Sustainable site planning practices have a significant impact on energy and water consumption, stormwater runoff and reduction in project-related vehicle miles traveled. Many of the city's existing regulations and open space and stormwater management practices reflect the city's philosophy toward sustainable growth and site design. Through the city's landscape and stormwater management regulations, developments are encouraged to design sites to reduce water consumption and increase on-site mitigation of stormwater. Regulations encourage minimizing impervious surfaces on a site and employing low-impact design measures like increased planting and groundcover to increase on-site infiltration. The city's landscape regulations also encourage use of native planting that reduces the need for potable or reclaimed water for irrigation.

The location of buildings, mix of land uses and intensity of development also have an impact on sustainability. Building orientation that maximizes internal access to daylight and minimizes exposure to intense sun can have an impact on a project's energy consumption. Use of on-site alternative energy production like solar panels can also reduce a project's impact to the environment. At the development and citywide scale, site design measures that can contribute to sustainable growth include location of higher-intensity development close to transit stations and mixed-use neighborhood centers that reduce the need for vehicle travel. The Plan emphasizes pedestrian connectivity and access to transit as key elements of mixed-use activity centers, neighborhood design and employment centers.

### Building Design

Sustainable building design is also encouraged for all types of development through the city's building code, design guidelines for land use types and the city's historic preservation efforts. "Green" building design impacts all aspect of the built form—from the exterior materials of a building to the internal mechanical systems. The city encourages high quality, durable building materials, high-efficiency water fixtures and efficient building systems for all development. Where possible, developments are encouraged to achieve



*Although not the only aspect of sustainability, sustainable design is an important aspect of ensuring Westminster continues to live within its resource means.*



a LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) rating or similar equivalent to maximize the exterior and interior building quality, which is especially important for employment uses, where people spend a significant amount of time.

Historic preservation efforts in the city also reflect the city's efforts to support a sustainable social and physical environment. The city encourages improvements to the many older structures within the Harris Park district and surrounding older neighborhoods as well as adaptive reuse of existing structures. Additionally, the city's historic preservation efforts are focused on preservation and reuse of historic and cultural remains, from the Shoenberg Farm to the Ranch Open Space and its barn structure.



The city intends to continue to support and encourage sustainable design throughout the community, with city-led building and planning efforts serving as an example for private development.

*The Comprehensive Plan sets the stage for minimizing the impact of new development, whether by allowing greater intensities or incorporating sustainable design features into development.*



## 6.7 GOALS AND POLICIES

### GOALS

- CID-G-1** Develop a built environment that is integrated with open spaces and the natural realm.
- CID-G-2** Maintain the city's high quality design and development character.
- CID-G-3** Preserve and enhance the city's existing residential neighborhoods.
- CID-G-4** Ensure new neighborhoods are designed to meet the recreational, civic and everyday needs of its residents.
- CID-G-5** Create and foster unique districts and cohesive employment centers throughout the city.
- CID-G-6** Maintain and enhance Westminster's image and character through an attractive public realm.
- CID-G-7** Continue to expand and diversify public art in the city.
- CID-G-8** Preserve the city's views to the mountains and surrounding Denver region.
- CID-G-9** Identify, recognize and protect Westminster's unique and irreplaceable historic and cultural heritage.
- CID-G-10** Reinforce the historic character and image of the Harris Park District along 73rd Avenue and Bradburn Boulevard as a special commercial/arts district.
- CID-G-11** Encourage sustainable design practices in all aspects of physical planning in the city, with a focus on site, landscape and building design.



*Integrating development into the natural environment and vice versa is a concept visible throughout the city for all types of land uses.*



*A pleasant outdoor environment with seating, active uses along the ground floor and a high quality streetscape design like the Cherry Creek North district above is encouraged in mixed use areas.*



*This small green provides a focal point within the larger Bradburn community.*

## POLICIES

**CID-P-1** Support the goals, objectives and policies of the Westminster Community Enhancement Master Plan with respect to the location and type of landscape design, public art, historical markers and other enhancements that will improve the image of the city.

### Community Design and Built Form

**CID-P-2** Integrate the city's parks, open space and trails network into new development and infill and redevelopment areas. Development should be oriented and connected to the public realm.

**CID-P-3** Require pedestrian-oriented amenities and design in mixed-use areas, such as outdoor seating, plazas, public art, ground floor retail, shading devices and enhanced transit shelters and amenities.

**CID-P-4** Promote excellence in site planning, architecture and the design of landscaping, lighting and signage in all commercial and residential developments by means of design guidelines for each type of use.

- Update guidelines accordingly to adjust for changes in development typology, such as encouraging more pedestrian-oriented multifamily developments, as well as new technology in building structures, materials and sustainability.
- Develop design guidelines appropriate for office, light industrial, and mixed-use development typologies.

**CID-P-5** Design new neighborhoods with a focal point, such as a school, park or activity center that provides a unique identity, opportunities for social interaction. Ensure the neighborhood center is easily accessible via walkable streets and trails.

**CID-P-6** Ensure that new neighborhoods are designed with a connected, walkable street grid that accommodates all modes of travel. Connections to surrounding development, including existing neighborhoods and commercial centers or neighborhood services should be emphasized through direct pedestrian paths, continuous sidewalks and crossings.



- CID-P-7** Support enhancement programs and efforts for existing residential neighborhoods throughout the city.
- CID-P-8** Provide a physical transition in building height and massing where higher intensity new development is located adjacent to single family, low-scale development. These transitions can be accommodated by:
- Increased building setbacks;
  - Enhanced landscaping or earth berms;
  - Building stepbacks of upper stories;
  - Modified building orientation that limits casting of shadows; and/or
  - Reduction in intensity of development at edges of site.
- CID-P-9** Encourage the development of employment centers with high quality architecture, landscaping and site planning.
- CID-P-10** Continue to develop enhanced streetscape, development continuity and revitalization of key commercial corridors including Federal Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard, Wadsworth Parkway and 120th Avenue.
- CID-P-11** Improve the visual and physical character of residential corridors throughout the city, with special emphasis on 92nd Avenue between Xavier Street and Federal Boulevard, and 112th Avenue between Westminster and Sheridan boulevards.
- CID-P-12** Allow creative design solutions for infill development that are compatible with and enhances surrounding existing development.
- CID-P-13** Strengthen Westminster’s identity through thoughtful design and enhancement of the community’s civic buildings and spaces.



*Building architecture in office developments can set the tone for future development and attracting businesses. The Circle Point development is a good example of high quality architecture and landscape design.*



*High quality streetscapes throughout the city, both within residential neighborhoods like Bradburn, above, or along key residential corridors like Lowell Blvd, below will enhance the city’s identity.*



*Bridges and public art are opportunities to create visual gateways and landmarks, such as for the Westminster Boulevard bridge over US 36, above, or the Wapiti Circle art piece within the Shops at Walnut Creek.*

## City Identity

**CID-P-14** Create a strong sense of entry into the city at key locations, identified as gateways on Figure 6-1. Utilize streetscape, distinctive bridge and infrastructure design, development scale and orientation, lighting, signage and public art to mark a clear transition into the city.

**CID-P-15** Develop signage and wayfinding programs and related promotional materials that create identity for special districts in the city, including but not limited to:

- Church Ranch District, extending from City Park to Wadsworth Boulevard and encompassing the Westminster Promenade east and west areas, Butterfly Pavilion, hotel district and Church Ranch Corporate Center.
- Downtown Westminster, both along its edges (primarily 92nd and 88th Avenues) and throughout the site.
- Westminster Station, encompassing at minimum the station area between Lowell and Federal boulevards, 72nd Avenue and the Little Dry Creek Park and Open Space.
- Historic Harris Park District, encompassing 73rd Avenue between Bradburn and Lowell Boulevards and emphasizing the area’s role as a cultural arts center of the city.

**CID-P-16** Develop cohesive streetscape plans for streets identified in Figure 6-1. Plans should consider:

- Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle amenities to encourage multimodal travel;
- Minimized curb cuts to emphasize continuous, unbroken curb lengths and reduce vehicle and pedestrian or bicycle conflicts;
- Provision of street trees or reduction of landscaping to preserve views;
- Unified landscape treatments, medians and plantings that minimize water use and runoff;
- Decorative street lights and enhanced street furnishings; and
- Undergrounding of utilities.



- CID-P-17** Develop enhancement plans for the US 36 and I-25 corridors to include enhanced and/or new sound walls and landscaping, at minimum.
- CID-P-18** Encourage the placement of public art where appropriate. Focus public art in key public locations, including plazas, gateways into the city, streetscapes and individual developments.
- CID-P-19** Integrate public art and visually distinct designs into bridges, overpasses and underpasses.

### View Corridors

- CID-P-20** Maintain scenic vistas to open spaces, the mountains, Downtown Denver and the Front Range area, as shown on Figure 6-3.
- CID-P-21** Maintain views into open space corridors from roadways by not planting within the right-of-way or spacing trees further apart.
- CID-P-22** Ensure that streetscape features do not block public views.
- CID-P-23** Ensure that designated view corridors are integrated into planning for new development. Preservation of view corridors may require dedication of land, building or upper story setbacks and modified building orientation and placement.
- CID-P-24** Encourage site planning of public facilities that arranges streets, public outdoor spaces and buildings in a manner that preserves view corridors and vistas.



### Historic Preservation

- CID-P-25** Protect historic and cultural resources for the aesthetic, cultural, educational, environmental and economic contribution they make to maintaining and building Westminster's identity and quality of life.
- CID-P-26** Maintain the historic character of Harris Park through preservation, restoration and improvements to facilities, structures and sites.
- Promote historic designation and restoration of buildings in the Harris Park area that could qualify for a local historic landmark designation.

*The city will continue to preserve views into and out of the city at open spaces, such as Standley Lake, above or preservation areas like Metzger Farm below. Also encouraged is the orientation of development to best take advantage of views, particularly from public or common spaces.*



*The city encourages continued efforts toward restoration and facade and building improvements in the Harris Park area.*

- Support efforts towards façade and landscape improvements to properties within the Harris Park District in order to enhance its historic character and identity.
- Develop design guidelines that foster context appropriate infill, renovation and redevelopment of properties. Ensure that new development preserves and complements the existing scale and design of historic development, particularly along 73rd Avenue.
- Designate the Harris Park 73rd Avenue area as an Arts District pursuant to the State Creative Districts initiative, which would provide access to statewide recognition and potential funding.

**CID-P-27** Work with property owners of historic sites like Shoenberg Farm and Church Ranch to look for adaptive reuse opportunities.

### Sustainable Design

**CID-P-28** Incorporate sustainable site planning, development and maintenance standards and procedures as part of updates to the Westminster Municipal Code, Landscape Regulations and design guidelines.

**CID-P-29** Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff that reaches the city's storm drain system. Maximize permeable area and minimize the amount of runoff flowing toward impermeable areas.

**CID-P-30** Design public parks, plazas and streetscapes with plantings and features that reduce water use and maximize on-site treatment of stormwater.

**CID-P-31** Require new development to connect to the city's reclaimed water system wherever possible for landscape irrigation. Ensure landscape plans address stormwater runoff and reduced water consumption.

**CID-P-32** Encourage new development to site and design buildings to reduce energy use, maximize sun access and utilize "green" building techniques and materials.

**CID-P-33** Incorporate "green" building principles and practices to the extent practicable and financially feasible, into the planning, design, construction, management, renovation, operations and demolition of all facilities that are constructed, owned, managed or financed by the city.