



7.0

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The City of Westminster seeks to maintain the integrity and variety of existing neighborhoods; create high caliber, cohesive, new neighborhoods; and emphasize connectivity of existing and new neighborhoods to amenities, services, and multimodal transportation options. This focus on neighborhoods supports not only the *Great Neighborhoods* guiding principle, but also the plan cornerstones of *Managed Growth*, *Thriving City*, and *Healthy Places*.

These plan cornerstones are supported by thoughtful design enhancements to the public realm, integrated planning for capital investments, and a focus on balancing varied community needs. Well-designed and constructed physical elements contribute to a safe, attractive, and engaging environment that residents, workers, and visitors can all enjoy. Neighborhood design that is sensitive to social and cultural contexts also contributes to establishing a sense of place and identity. Established gateways and vibrant streetscapes can provide a clear and welcoming entry into the community by reflecting shared values and civic pride. The preservation of scenic views, as well as cultural and historical landmarks, add to a community's collective sense of history and character. This chapter provides policy direction for maintaining and improving the city's physical and visual composition, with emphasis on maintaining high-quality and diverse neighborhoods, nurturing a strong community identity, and highlighting views and amenities.

GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

Great Neighborhoods typically have a multitude of characteristics such as:

- Identity shaped by its physical setting, streets, architecture, history, and residents;
- Housing types to support different needs, preferences, and lifestyles;
- Gathering places that may take the form of parks, plazas, sidewalks, shops, or dining establishments;
- Access to services including recreation, education, public safety, and other amenities that support quality of life;
- Proximity to opportunities for retail, personal services, and employment to fulfill daily needs; and
- Mobility options that may include travel by foot, bicycle, transit, or automobile.



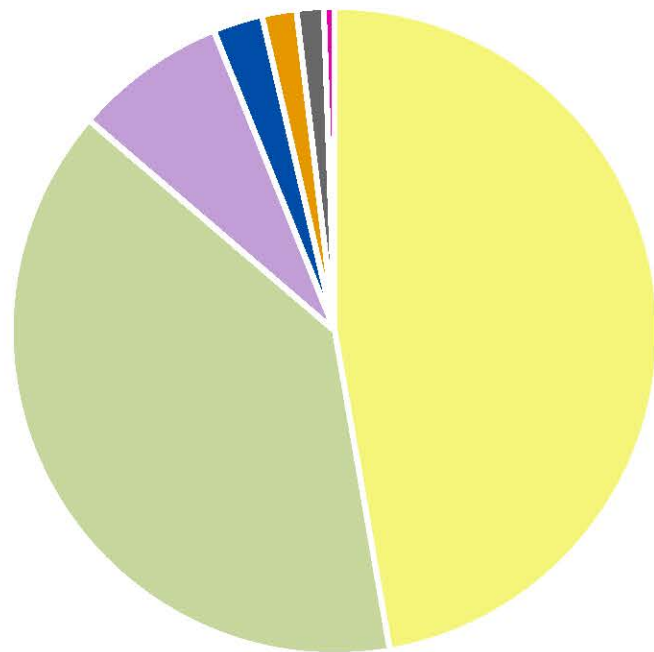
Bradburn Village

OVERVIEW

For the purposes of this Plan and its goals, the term neighborhood refers to geographic areas tied together by community-identifying elements such as schools, churches, shopping areas, parks, cultures, and/or identifiable boundaries. Within Westminster there are a range of neighborhood types and scales that offer a variety of living environments, housing types, and levels of affordability.

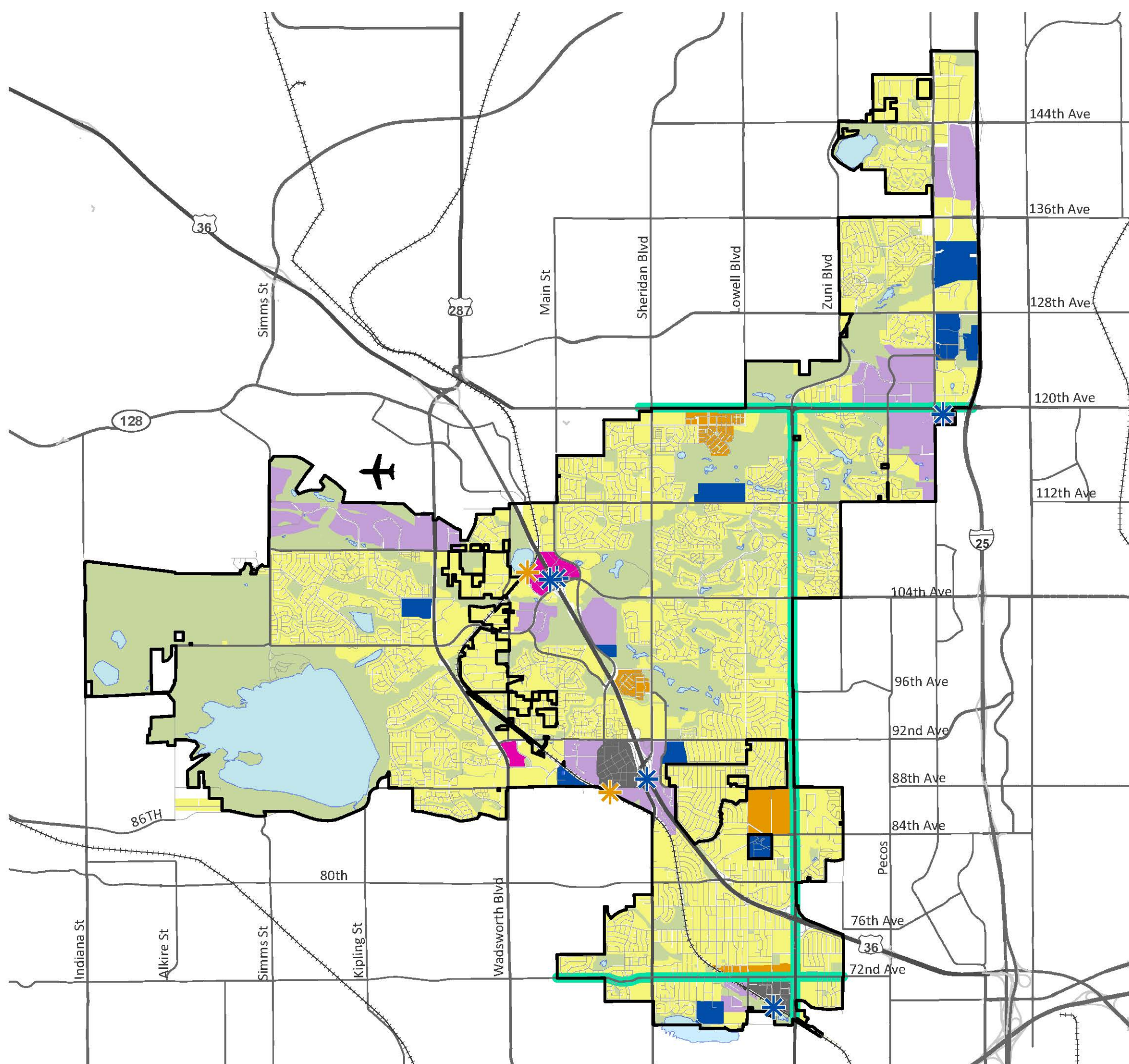
Reflecting broader changes in society, an increasing proportion of housing will need to meet the changing demands for multigenerational, or specialized units, and to provide options for affordable and workforce housing. Contextual and integrated architectural and site design can weave together different uses and housing types to promote diversity and variety to build *Great Neighborhoods*.

Chart 7-1. Distribution of Generalized Development Character from City Structure Map 7-1



- Suburban (47%)
- Parks and Open Space (39%)
- Employment (8%)
- Major Institution (2%)
- Mixed-Use Neighborhood (2%)
- Specific Area Plan (1%)
- Mixed-Use Opportunity Area (1%)

Map 7-1. City Structure

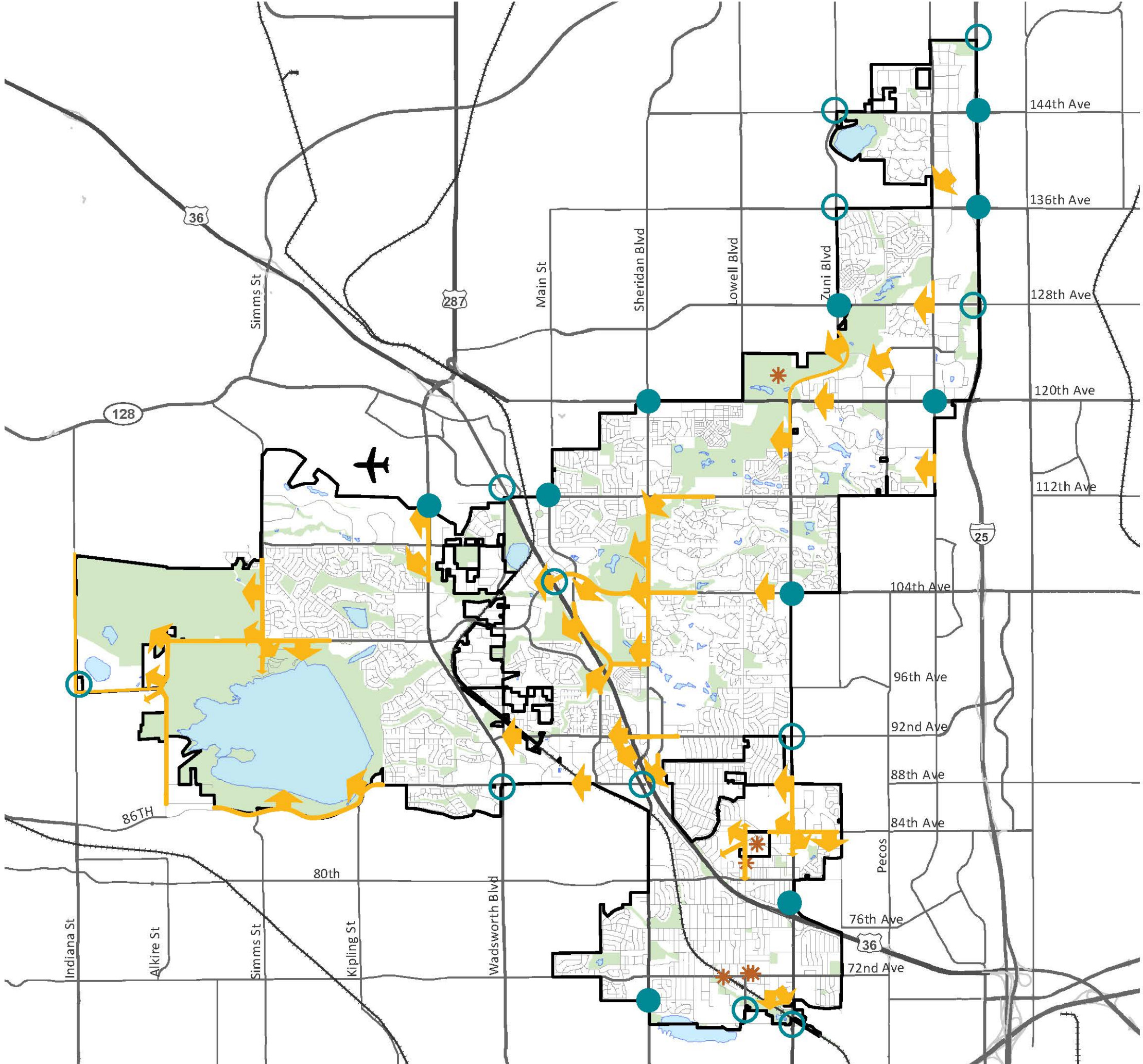
















Legend

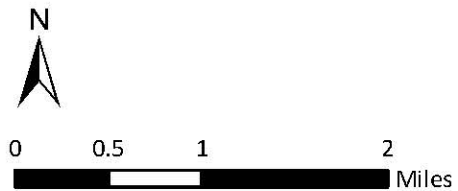
- Suburban
- Mixed-Use Neighborhood
- Mixed-Use Opportunity Area
- Major Institution
- Employment
- Parks and Open Space
- Specific Area Plan
- ✦ Future Transit Stations
- ✦ Transit Stations
- Highway
- Major Roads
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Multimodal Corridor
- Water
- Westminster



Map 7-2. Viewshed, Gateways, and Historic Context



- Legend**
-  National Register of Historic Places
 -  Highway
 -  Major roads
 -  Local roads
 -  Railroad
 -  Water
 -  Parks and Open Space
 -  Westminster
 -  Primary View
 -  Secondary View
 -  Tertiary View
 -  View Corridor
 -  Existing Gateway
 -  Gateway Opportunity





7.1 COMMUNITY DESIGN & BUILT FORM

This section provides direction for overall design of the city's built environment in the context of neighborhoods. The goals and policies provide a framework for community design and are further delineated by the design guidelines and standards found in the Westminster Municipal Code (W.M.C.), which may be updated from time to time. General design direction for specific mixed-use and activity centers in the city is provided in chapter 8, Community Places, with further detail provided in specific plans for those areas.

The remaining inventory of vacant land in Westminster is dominated by smaller parcels bypassed by previous developments for various reasons including ownership, limited infrastructure, or other site constraints. Neighborhood planning in Westminster historically involved large subdivisions consisting of hundreds of acres and identified locations for housing, parks, and civic uses, as well as potentially non-residential uses such as neighborhood-serving retail or office sites. With the exception of the 235-acre Pillar of Fire property, there are no remaining opportunities for such large-scale neighborhood planning in Westminster. Therefore, consideration needs to shift to the remaining infill and redevelopment sites and how these locations may connect to the existing fabric in complementary ways. Similarly, with review of proposed future developments, the evaluation will need to shift from considerations of the parcel in question to consideration of the broader surrounding neighborhood context. A general framework for this is the Neighborhood Unit concept introduced in Chapter 3, Land Use & Growth.

The unique parts that collectively form a Neighborhood Unit may be established on different timelines; therefore, the Neighborhood Unit concept can be used to evaluate infill development and the degree to which proposals complement the area in support of the *Thriving City* and *Great Neighborhoods* plan cornerstones. Bringing smaller neighborhood elements together is what creates a distinct sense of place that gives a community an identity. It is often found that residents in vibrant, active neighborhoods are more likely to support local businesses, work together to solve neighborhood issues, and contribute more to the local community.

Implicit in the Neighborhood Unit concept is a community that works for all. The concept of 8/80 cities are becoming increasingly popular around the world. The 8/80 paradigm espouses that if communities are designed to work well for an 8-year old and an 80-year old, then wellbeing for the greater population can be achieved. 8/80 cities improve the quality of life for people in cities by bringing different populations together to enhance the built environment, resulting in more vibrant, healthy, and equitable communities.

8/80 PARADIGM

8/80 cities prioritize people's well-being. It is grounded in the belief that if everything we do in our public spaces is great for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, then it will be great for all people. 8/80 cities strive to improve the quality of life by bringing residents together to enhance mobility and public space resulting in vibrant, healthy, and equitable communities.



Westminster Station Facilities

7.2 GOALS & POLICIES

RELEVANT PLANS

The following plans are incorporated by reference and are not repeated in detail:

- Affordable and Workforce Housing Strategic Plan
- Sustainability Plan
- Westminster Community Enhancement Plan
- Arts & Culture Plan
- Harris Park Community Vision Plan
- Transportation & Mobility Plan
- Neighborhood Plans
- CDBG Consolidated Plan

See complete list of plans and policy documents in Ch. 9.

CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS



Education



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



Health



Resilience



Safety



Climate

The following goals and policies provide direction for all aspects of physical planning. Goals are defined as desired ideals and a value to be sought. Policies articulate a course of action that guides governmental decision making to meet the goal. To further define how policies can be implemented in the short- and long-term, specific strategies can be found in the Implementation Action Plan. They are not inclusive of all actions and options.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY



Goal HN-1 Ensure new residential neighborhoods, redevelopment, and infill areas support the neighborhood unit concept with multimodal transportation options and access to meet the everyday educational, recreational, civic, employment, and service needs of its residents.

- 1.1 Design new neighborhoods with an easily accessible focal point, such as a park or civic space that provides a unique identity and opportunities for community gathering.
- 1.2 Focus residential development greater than 5 units per gross acre in areas within walking distance of neighborhood services and shopping, employment, parks or open space, and multimodal transportation options—including transit. Typically, this distance should be no more than a quarter mile, or five-minute walk along safe, direct pedestrian paths, and streets.
- 1.3 For lower density residential areas, focus neighborhood design that allows fulfillment of residents' daily needs within a 20-minute walk from each home (also see Ch. 3, Land Use & Development, Goal 3, Policy 3).
- 1.4 Plan for impacts of changing technologies in the areas of transportation, shopping, and employment.

Goal HN-2 Enhance and maintain the character of the city's existing residential neighborhoods, balancing the need to accommodate infill development.

- 2.1 To ensure compatibility between different scales of development provide a transition in building height and massing where higher intensity development is located adjacent to low-scale development.
- 2.2 Support enhancement programs and efforts to strengthen existing or aging residential neighborhoods throughout the city.



- 2.3 Support flexibility in building design and type to allow neighborhoods to continue meeting the needs of the community such as senior housing, intergenerational families, and special needs housing.
- 2.4 Support the organization of Home Owners Associations (HOA) and Neighborhood Associations to advocate for the needs and improvements of existing neighborhoods.

HOUSING DIVERSITY



Goal HN-3 Provide opportunities for a range of housing types and affordability to accommodate all incomes, lifestyles, and age groups within the city.

- 3.1 Continue to provide a variety of neighborhood types with a diversity of housing choices.
- 3.2 Blend “missing middle” housing types within other types of development to ensure neighborhoods that are resilient over time to demographic changes.
- 3.3 Support diverse housing opportunities to serve a range of household sizes, compositions, and needs.
- 3.4 Strive to preserve and maintain existing affordable rental and ownership housing.
- 3.5 Maintain and improve the affordable housing options throughout the city, as detailed in the Affordable and Workforce Housing Strategic Plan.
- 3.6 Pair supportive community and neighborhood resources with affordable housing.

Goal HN-4 Continue Westminster’s tradition as a caring community by ensuring housing options for seniors and residents with special needs.

- 4.1 Support housing options that meet the accessibility and functional needs of households with seniors and residents with special needs.
- 4.2 Expand housing options for the aging population to facilitate aging in place such as ADUs and intergenerational households and housing products for downsizing households.
- 4.3 Support a continuum of care from independent living to assisted living to transitional facilities.
- 4.4 Locate senior housing within residential areas to provide proximity to generations to support seniors and at locations with close proximity to senior services, medical facilities, and public facilities such as libraries.

RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTIONS

The objective of the program is to eliminate deteriorating conditions resulting in blight and to improve the level of safety, stability and appearance of neighborhoods, as well as promote an increased pride in Westminster. Rental properties are systematically inspected if:

- They are six-years-old or older
- They contain four or more units
- Four or more rental dwellings within any townhome or condominium community owned by a single owner

Individual townhomes and condominiums (up to three units under a single ownership within any townhome or condominium community), duplexes, and single-family units are inspected on a complaint-only basis, or can be inspected on a proactive basis.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM



Goal HN-5 Maintain and enhance Westminster’s positive image and character through attractive streetscapes. (Also see TM Goal 2 and associated policies)

- 5.1 Continue to develop and support enhanced streetscape, development continuity, and revitalization of key commercial corridors.
- 5.2 Improve the visual and physical character of residential corridors throughout the city, to include provisions to support multimodal transportation.
- 5.3 Create a strong sense of entry into and passage through the city at key locations, identified on Map 7-2, through gateway elements, streetscape enhancements, development scale and orientation, lighting, signage, and public art.

VIEWS



Goal HN-6 Preserve views to the mountains, natural amenities and scenic skylines from the public realm.

- 6.1 Maintain scenic vistas from rights of way, public facilities and public lands to Open Space, the mountains, Downtown Denver, and the Front Range area, as shown on Map 7-2.
- 6.2 Ensure views designated on Map 7-2 are integrated into planning for new development. This may include dedication of land, setbacks, height restrictions, modified building orientation or placement on a lot.

COMMUNITY HERITAGE



Goal HN-7 Identify, recognize, and protect Westminster’s unique and irreplaceable historic and cultural heritage and diversity.

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Acknowledge and support Westminster’s multi-cultural heritage and community diversity in planning city facilities, programs, events, and resources.