

The People's Corridor



The People's Corridor: Returning the Cloverleaf to the Community

Crimson Design Group

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

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approach

1.1 Our shared values

As a team, we ground our processes and outcomes in shared values that have guided our research, decisions, and designs. These include:



Equity

We advocate for fair access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes, and center historically underserved communities in decision-making and design processes.



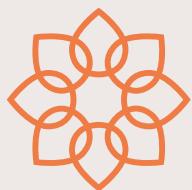
Community connectedness

We believe planning should promote inclusive relationships among community members and should enhance belonging, collaboration and mutual support.



Wellbeing

We prioritize the life of people and planet. We care about safety, resource conservation, clean air, and equitable access to healthy, resilient communities.



Anti-colonialism and anti-oppression

We challenge colonial histories, systems, and power structures. We advocate for dismantling oppressive practices to claim space for local needs and values.

1.2 Our backgrounds & perspectives

Alessandra Rodriguez Mercado is a first-year urban planning student who develops strategic planning proposals that prioritize actionable processes to create resilient and equitable cities.

Andrea Díaz Ferreyra is a first-year urban design student who creates public spaces of various scales to promote accessibility and equity.

Facundo Soraire is a first-year urban planning student whose work intersects natural-urban environments and public space.

Lily Moodey is a first-year urban planning and design studies student. They have enjoyed thinking critically and strategically about the familiar city of Denver, where their family is based.

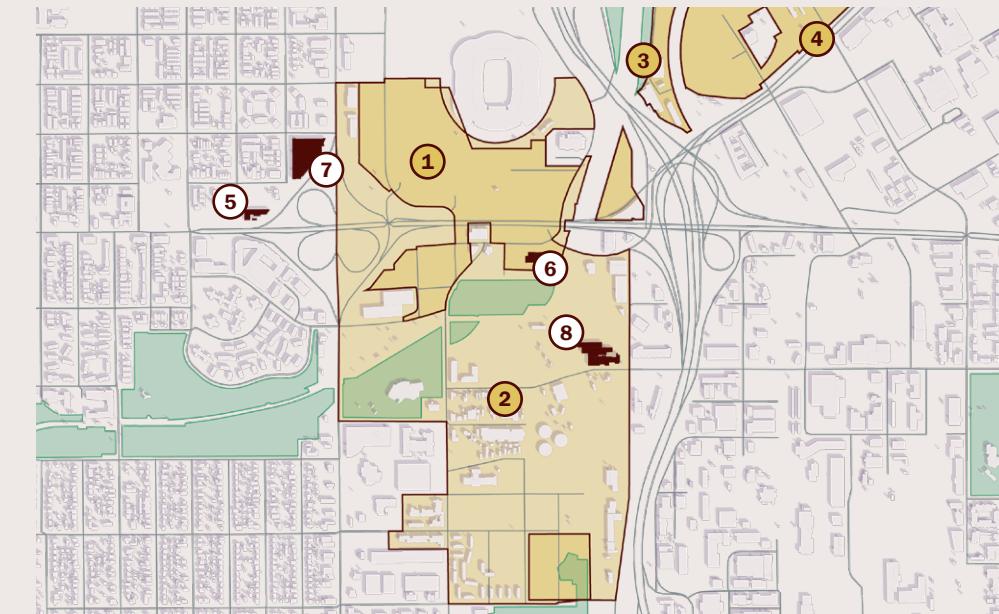
Tirzah Basit Khan is a first-year urban planning student. Coming of age as a non-driver in the suburbs of Baltimore informed her desire to work towards mobility justice for all.

context

2.1 Planning context

A suite of policy and guidance governs development at the interchange of Federal Boulevard and West Colfax, defining Denver's vision for a more integrated, sustainable, and livable urban environment. This proposal aligns with existing decisions, ensuring consistency with the city's vision for growth and development. It adds a values-driven approach to transforming the cloverleaf that prioritizes long-term and equitable stewardship of the land and community.

- **Denver's Comprehensive Plan 2040 (2019):** Guides land use, transportation, housing, sustainability, and urban design throughout Denver.
- **Denver Moves Transit Plan (2018):** Focused on transit improvements across Denver, recommends enhancing transit infrastructure, including bus rapid transit (BRT) along Colfax Avenue and increased connectivity across Federal Boulevard.
- **Complete Streets Design Guidelines (2020):** A framework for creating safer, more accessible, and efficient streets that prioritize multi-modal connectivity, sustainability, and health.
- **Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategic Plan (2014):** Promotes high-density, mixed-use development near transit hubs, with a focus on affordable housing and sustainability. Applies to intersection of Federal Boulevard and West Colfax.
- **West Area Plan (2019):** Neighborhood-level plan focuses on areas west of downtown Denver, including Federal Boulevard and West Colfax Avenue. Addresses housing, transportation, and economic revitalization, with an emphasis on community involvement.
- **Stadium District Masterplan (2019):** Planned redevelopment of the parking lots on the south end of Empower Field at Mile High including rezoning, design standards and guidelines, and an infrastructure master plan.
- **Colfax and Federal Interchange Transformation Project (2021):** The 'Neighborhood Connection Scenario' was identified by the community as the preferred alternative to the existing cloverleaf, identifying a traditional street grid with walkable blocks and direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists.



2.2 Recent, ongoing & planned development

Infrastructure masterplans:

1. Stadium District Large Development Framework:

Mixed-use development including 3.5-4.5 million sq. ft. of market rate and affordable housing, office, entertainment, public space, an enhanced riverfront and stadium-related uses.

2. Decataur General Large Development Framework:

Enhanced pedestrian and bike facilities to connect Sun Valley with its surroundings, improve internal circulation, manage intersections and enhance key multi-modal streets.

3. River Mile Masterplan (under review):

Mixed-use development including 6.65 million square feet of office, 5.58 million square feet of residential, hospitality, retail and open space, and 32 acres of parks along the river corridor.

4. Ball Arena Redevelopment (under review):

New 5,000 seat venue, 4.5 million sq. ft office, retail, and housing, open space and neighborhood connections

New and forthcoming development:

5. Wilder Apartments:

opened 2024, 196 high-end rental units

6. Alta Mile High:

under construction, 216 rental units

7. Cirrus Natural Urban Living:

opened 2024, 292 rental units

8. Zuni Steam Plant North Parcel:

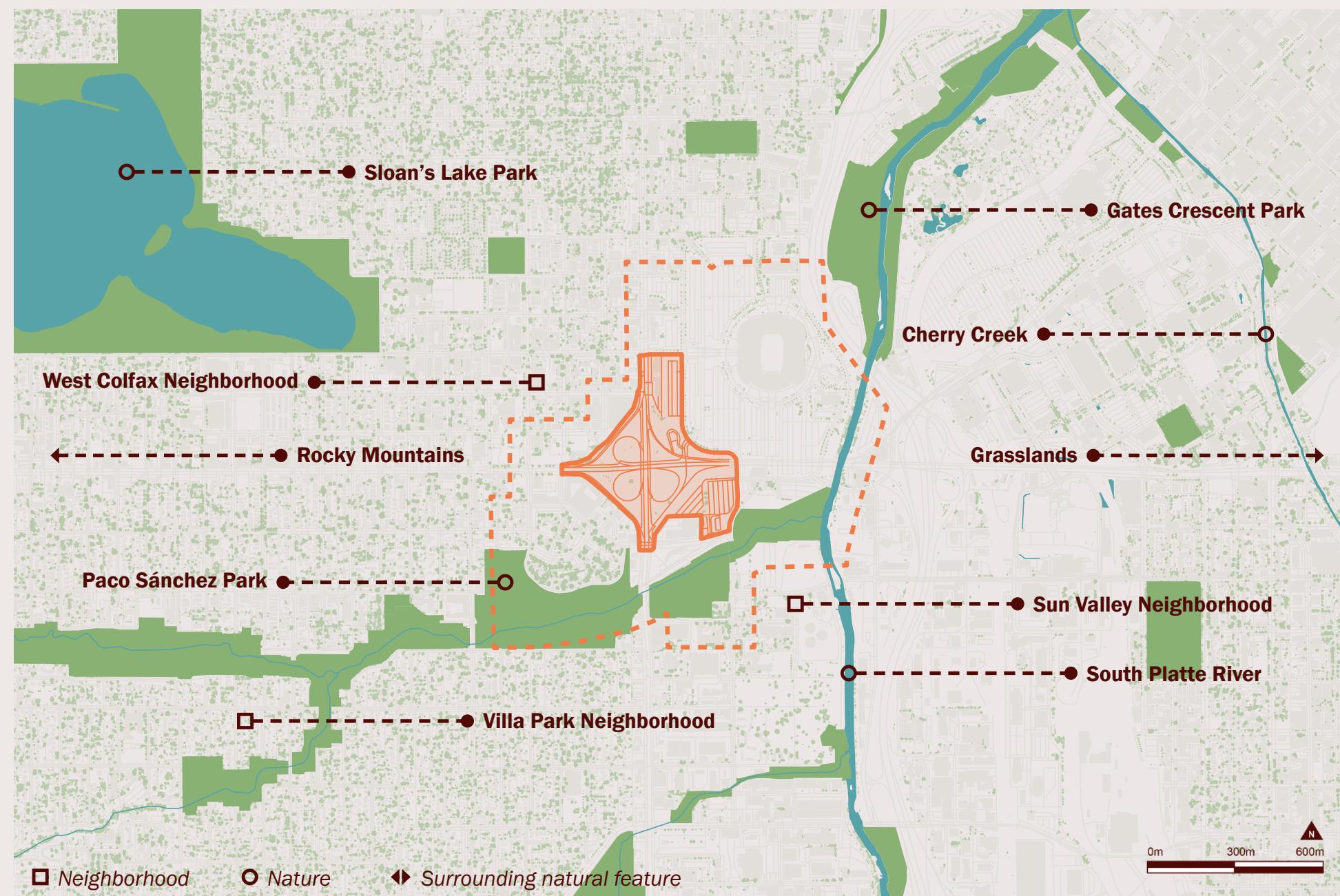
Historic power plant, City of Denver has right of first refusal to purchase site for community use

2.3 A place connected to the land...

Denver's significance is deeply connected to its location at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, nestled at the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains. This setting has shaped the region's ecosystems, natural beauty and cultural importance for tens of thousands of years.

The Denver Basin is rich in sedimentary layers formed over millennia. These layers, with their gentle slopes and rich soils, create a fertile ground for plant and animal life. The towering Rocky Mountains to the

west, with their alpine forests and wildlife create a majestic backdrop that reinforces the connectedness of the land, water, and sky. Colonization of this region severed human connection to the environment. Starting with the imposed and then broken Fort Laramie Treaty (1851), intensified through the genocidal violence of the Sand Creek Massacre (1864)¹, and perpetuated by the oppressive practices of redlining, pollution, and disinvestment, Denver's neighborhoods have been historically fragmented from the land and from each other.

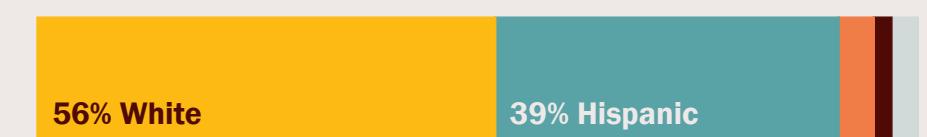


2.4 ...where residents have a right to the natural environment

Denver residents, particularly the residents of the Sun Valley, West Colfax and Villa Park neighborhoods, have a right to be connected with surrounding environments. The three neighborhoods surrounding this interchange have all been identified by Denver's Department of Parks & Recreation as high need, meaning that they meet socioeconomic and demographic indicators like low car ownership and low income that correspond to greater need for parks². While nearly 14 million people visit Colorado's state parks each year, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department reports that Black and Latino communities visit state parks at half the rate of white residents. Denver ranks 13th out of the top 100 US cities for park access, however nearly 1 in 3 Denver residents lives more than a 10-minute walk from a park. Distance from nature is felt disproportionately by people of color and low-income residents³.

Whose right?

10,018 people live in West Colfax



9,643 people live in Villa Park



1,414 people live in Sun Valley

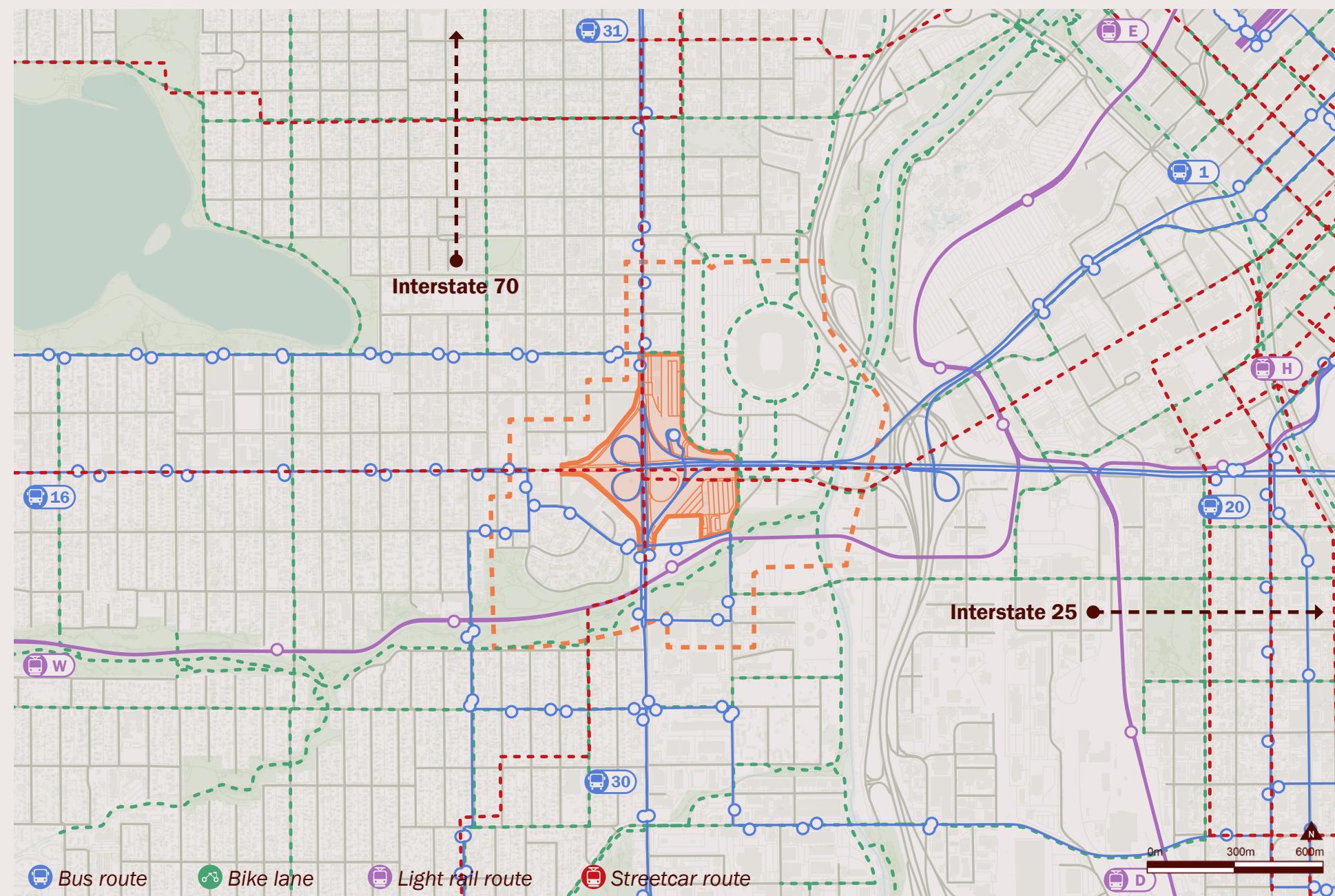


Based on 2020 Census data⁴

2.5 A regionally connected site...

The cloverleaf interchange between Colfax and Federal plays a key role in connecting people regionally by linking several major highways across the city and beyond. It primarily connects Interstate 25 (I-25), Interstate 70 (I-70), and U.S. Highway 40 (US-40). I-25 is one of the most important north-south routes in Colorado. It runs from New Mexico to Wyoming, connecting Denver to regional hubs like Colorado Springs and Fort Collins. I-25 is the primary route for commuters traveling in Colorado and across the southwestern United States. I-70

spans from Cove Fort, Utah, to Baltimore. This freeway connects Denver to cities across the country, including Kansas City, St. Louis, and the East Coast, while also providing access to key mountain destinations like Vail and Eagle, particularly for travelers headed to Colorado's ski resorts or outdoor recreation areas in the Rockies. US-40 is more locally oriented, but it also forms a significant route that runs through from New York City to San Francisco, connecting Denver to other regional corridors.



- Pre-1800s** Indigenous tribes lived as stewards of the land and established non-invasive transportation corridors
- 1858** Gold discovered in Denver; previously sparse settler colonial development rapidly intensifies west of South Platte River
- 1864** After breaking a string of treaties, colonizers murdered 230 indigenous people in the Sand Creek Massacre
- 1892** Streetcar extended past Federal Boulevard
- 1917** West Colfax Bridge constructed at Larimer Viaduct
- 1926** US-40 created to align with Colfax Avenue. West Denver grows as streetcar declines
- 1950** Streetcar service ends
- 1959** Over 200 buildings demolished in a historic Jewish and Latino neighborhood to build the cloverleaf at Colfax and Federal, designed for seamless car transport
- 1960s** I-70 built on the north edge of Denver, 3 miles north of Colfax, siphoning travelers away from Colfax and slowing investment along Colfax
- 2012** Federal bridge over Colfax replaced
- Now** Alternative interchange arrangements studied

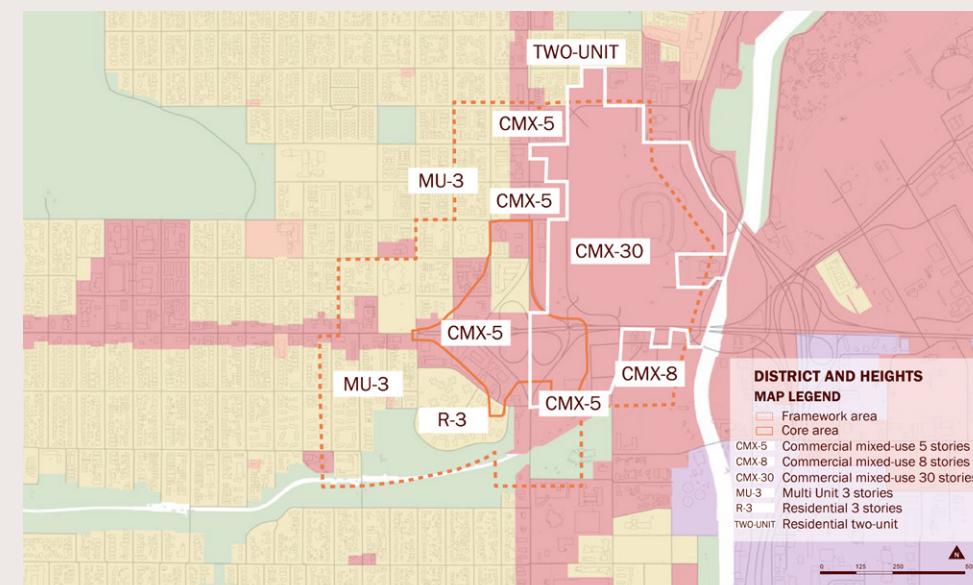
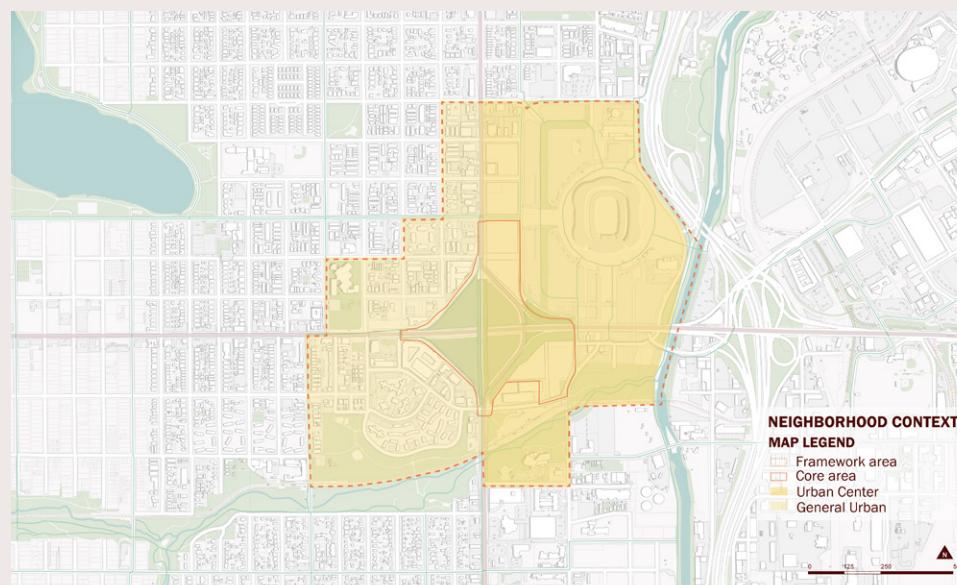
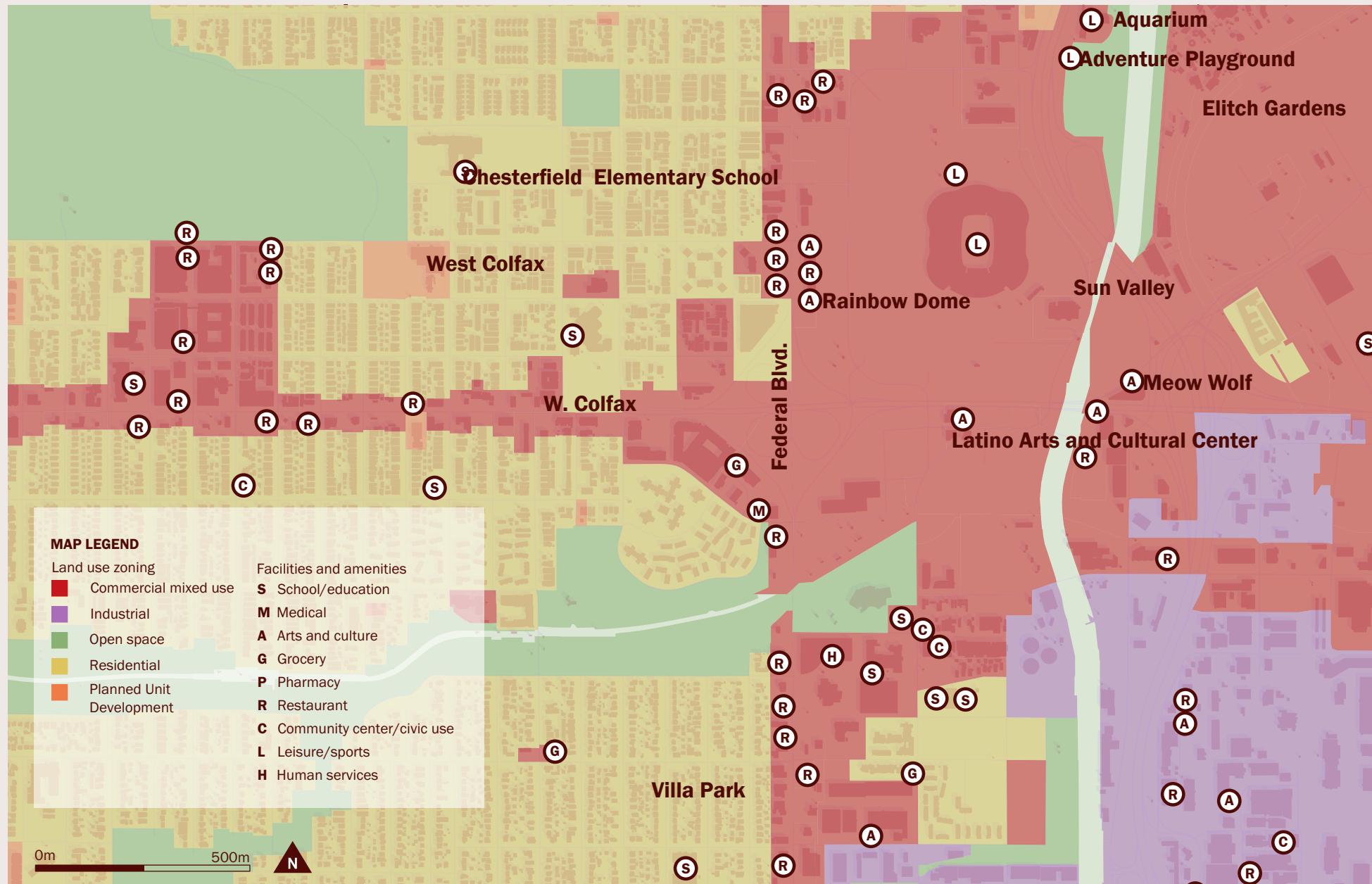
2.6 ...where vehicular violence threatens public health

Traffic through the interchange is high-speed and free-flowing, with multiple uncontrolled crossings for pedestrians. There have been:

15 vehicle-pedestrian crashes at the intersection of Federal Boulevard and Howard Place between 2015 and 2020

3 were fatal to the pedestrian⁵

Vehicle violence is a growing public health issue in Denver. The city saw a 17% increase in traffic fatalities between 2020 and 2021. As part of the City's 2022 *Vision Zero Action Plan* to eliminate traffic-related deaths and injuries, the interchange was identified as a Tier 1 priority in the High-Injury Network of streets, with some of the highest rates of car-related deaths and injuries⁶.



2.7 Zoned for residential and commercial use...

The West Colfax neighborhood is currently dominated by a residential zone, with a focus on transit-oriented development along the light rail and major thoroughfares like Colfax Avenue. Sun Valley, historically industrial, is undergoing significant transformation. Still, its industrial legacy can be seen in the predominance of local breweries. Villa Park is primarily residential, characterized by single-family homes, but also includes a growing number of community-oriented spaces and parks like Paco Sánchez Park. All of this is situated along the spine of the historic commercial corridor of Colfax Avenue, which hosts a mix of chain and locally-owned restaurants, some of which are employers for residents in these three neighborhoods.

To the southwest, Denver's largest industrial zone supports a range of arts and cultural activities alongside manufacturing. To the north and east, amenities like an aquarium, childrens' adventure playground, historic amusement park Elitch Gardens and purpose-built immersive arts exhibition Meow Wolf loosely form a leisure cluster.

2.8 ...but not yet providing the necessities for living

While the neighborhoods surrounding the cloverleaf have a good mix of locally-owned and -operated food restaurants, with a specialization in Latin American cuisine, there is a notable lack of options for groceries, fresh food, pharmacies and other basic retail. A 2016 report named all three of these neighborhoods among Denver's food deserts, where residents live over a mile from a supermarket or large grocery store, making a basic right like fresh food largely inaccessible.

High income and educational attainment are among the demographic indicators that grocery retailers prefer⁷.

44.7% of Villa Park residents have less than a high school education⁸

\$11,410 is the median household income in Sun Valley, less than 1/8 of Denver average⁹

2.9 Analysis of opportunities & challenges

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Challenge
Network of diverse natural features (parks, mountains, bodies of water, grasslands) already exists and is activated, connecting people to the city and beyond		Residents in the surrounding neighborhoods meet demographic and socioeconomic indicators pointing to the fact that they would highly benefit from having parks in their neighborhoods	
	Noticeable lack of access to essential services like groceries, fresh food, pharmacies, and basic retail, creates significant gaps in residents' ability to thrive	Introduction of amenities will likely meet strong demand, offering a chance to enhance quality of life for residents while bolstering local economic activity	New provision must be relevant to, affordable for, and accessible to all residents, with particular attention to making the local community the primary beneficiaries of any changes
Striking views of the surrounding landscape, spanning the Rocky Mountains to the west, grasslands to the east, and the skyline of downtown Denver in between	Current infrastructure and layout necessitates passing through the interchange quickly, without giving the opportunity to appreciate the site's beauty and optimal location	Federal Boulevard bridge creates a natural vantage point, uniquely framing and highlighting the surrounding natural and urban features	Protection of these views and resources from privatization or exploitation by external interests to ensure they are public and accessible to all
Proximity to major regional and national transportation routes like I-70 and I-25	Heavy reliance on highway connections can reinforce car dependency		Shifting away from car dependency requires significant lifestyle and behavior changes, especially at a site where convenience and ease of access to highways have long been expected
	Uneven topography of the site, with its hills and depressions, creates areas where stormwater pools, increasing risk of flooding	Reimagining how the city integrates water management into landscaping and irrigation, promoting sustainability	Altering the land's natural topography too drastically risks repeating a history of poor land stewardship and environmental degradation
Diverse mix of housing typologies in the surrounding neighborhoods	Lack of civic and community spaces, limiting opportunities for social interaction and public engagement	Fostering stronger community connections near where people live through mixed-use development with civic uses on the ground floor of residential buildings	Balancing development pressures while preserving the mix of housing types and affordability levels to ensure equitable growth in the area
	Intersection of two highly dangerous streets with a high incidence of car violence, posing serious safety risks to all users	The city has already recognized this issue, opening the door for targeted interventions and funding to address the problem and improve safety	Even with redesigned infrastructure, shifting driver behavior remains a significant hurdle due to deeply ingrained car-centric culture
Vibrant tailgate culture surrounding football games, which provide an affordable way for lower-income fans to engage with their community without the high cost of tickets	Large surface parking lots are underutilized for most of the year	Growing cultural moment questioning and rethinking the role of the stadium, offering an opportunity to redesign its function and better integrate it with the surrounding community	Infrastructure to support tailgate/sports culture harms the surrounding community, who don't necessarily get to benefit from the culture itself and the money that the stadium brings in

envisioning

3.1 A new kind of interchange

This proposal sees a world where the site of the cloverleaf becomes a point of connection for the community in several dimensions: for people, for nature, for urban environments. This world is not out of reach. The subsequent pages lay out specific strategies for achieving these goals while prioritizing equity and sustainability. But more important than the specific strategies is what *The People's Corridor* will do for the community as an equitable site that connects people to nature, to those they love, to their livelihoods, to ways to spend their time, and to their city and region.



The Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District (CID) in New Orleans serves as a vital precedent for our vision. This project transformed the space beneath the elevated I-10 expressway into a vibrant community hub, integrating green infrastructure, cultural preservation, and economic opportunity. By prioritizing resident-driven redevelopment, it restored social connections, provided affordable housing, and fostered minority-owned enterprises. This innovative approach to repurposing infrastructure inspired our vision to reimagine the Colfax and Federal intersection as a space that reconnects communities, supports livelihoods, and integrates nature, equity, and sustainability into urban life.

3.2 Strategies grounded in principles

The People's Corridor takes a systems-oriented approach, grounded in the realities of the site's history and its present challenges. It begins by recognizing that this site's current state—characterized by car-dominated infrastructure, underutilized public space, and limited community resources—did not occur in a vacuum. Decades of decisions that prioritized regional connectivity over local well-being, coupled with a legacy of land dispossession and violent urban planning decisions, have ultimately built a space that has no connection to the people living around it. Acknowledging this, this proposal offers a solution that not only addresses these historical wrongs but also offers tangible improvements that directly benefit the people who live and work in the area.

The guiding principles also emerge from an understanding of community sentiment gauged through quotes, reports, social media, and news stories. They are actionable responses to the site's conditions, serving as centering points. For example, protecting the view corridor reflects the importance of preserving shared public assets, ensuring the community—not private interests—benefits from the site's natural beauty. Returning land to the community addresses the need to undo the damage caused by land-use policies that prioritized cars and external economic interests over local residents. By redesigning the site to prioritize open spaces, civic uses, and integration with regional ecological corridors, *The People's Corridor* aims to shift the balance back toward the community.



Inspired by **Xuhui Runway Park**, our strategy preserves existing elements to reduce costs, honor past memories, reflect present needs, and adapt for a sustainable and community-focused future.

Protect the view corridor

Our proposal seeks to democratize the view that this neighborhood offers, both of the city skyline and the surrounding nature. Some of the key strategies used are:

- Preserve the bridge
- Avoid demolition where possible through sustainable reuse of existing infrastructure
- Resist privatization and extraction of the community's natural resources

These efforts are rooted in the belief that public access to natural and urban beauty should not be commodified or restricted.

"You definitely have to leave the city [for calming views]. I wish it wasn't like that."

Denver resident¹⁰

Return land to the community

Our proposal seeks to begin to repair the legacy of land seizure and colonialism. We hope to avoid replicating colonial logic by prioritizing justice in all ways. Some of the key strategies used are:

- Eliminate the cloverleaf
- Redesign the interchange to create an open space
- Increase access to nearby natural resources
- Integrate the site with the regional natural corridors

We hope to honor the land's historical and ecological significance, ensuring that the community can benefit from the area's natural beauty and biodiversity.

"In a meeting that packed a theater at Alamo Drafthouse with neighbors and representatives from the city and CDOT...the crowd selected an option that could result in a 'linear' park on the Federal bridge that currently spans above Colfax."

News story in *Denverite*, 02/26/2019¹¹

Invite people in to stay

Our proposal seeks to transform the way people use the space by fostering year-round use by the community, instead of encouraging people just to pass through. Some of the key strategies used are:

- Create spaces for year-round public activities
- Have an activated community cultural events calendar

These strategies will transform the site from a space designed for transience and minimal interaction to a vibrant, lived-in area where community ties are strengthened.

I wish this space was...

ACTIVATED w/ cultural pride
A place to come together
A mixed-use center bustling with activity
Farmer's Market

Selected responses from community members during a visioning workshop held by the West Colfax Business Improvement District¹²

Support life and living

Our proposal seeks to simultaneously eliminate public health risks and connect people to the resources and opportunities they need to be able to thrive. Some of the key strategies used are:

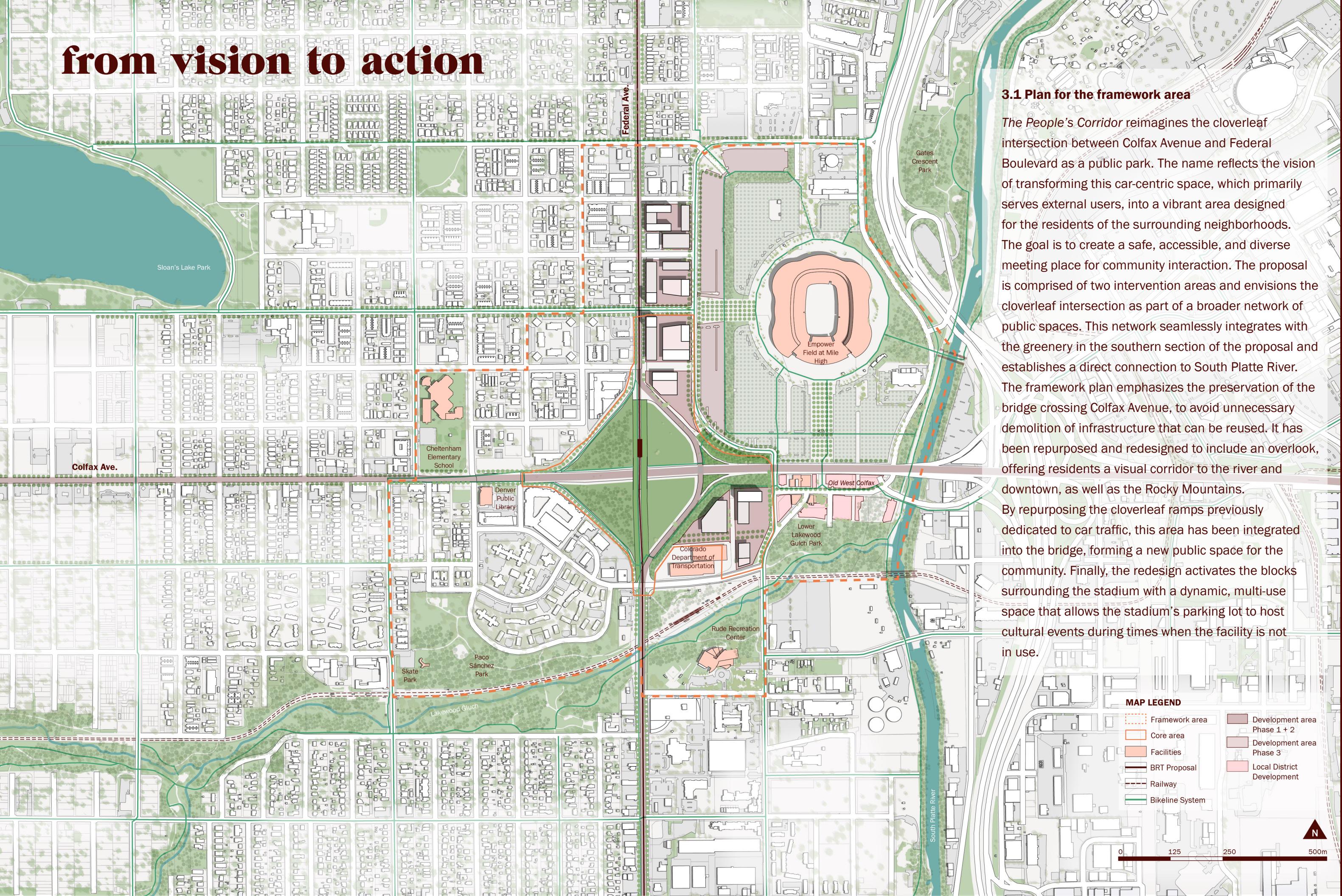
- Reduce car violence
- Promote economic development in surrounding neighborhoods
- Build mixed-use development that increases access to affordable housing, commercial and retail activities, and civic spaces
- Better connect people to their jobs, educational opportunities, healthcare, and everything else they need

By linking the site more closely to the surrounding community's needs, we aim to prioritize their multidimensional well-being.

"That's the route I take when driving downtown and I think redeveloping that intersection is a great idea. It might add an extra minute or two of delay for drivers, but **it would save the lives of many pedestrians and cyclists.**"

Reddit comment on *r/Denver*, 10/09/2023¹³

from vision to action



3.1 Plan for the framework area

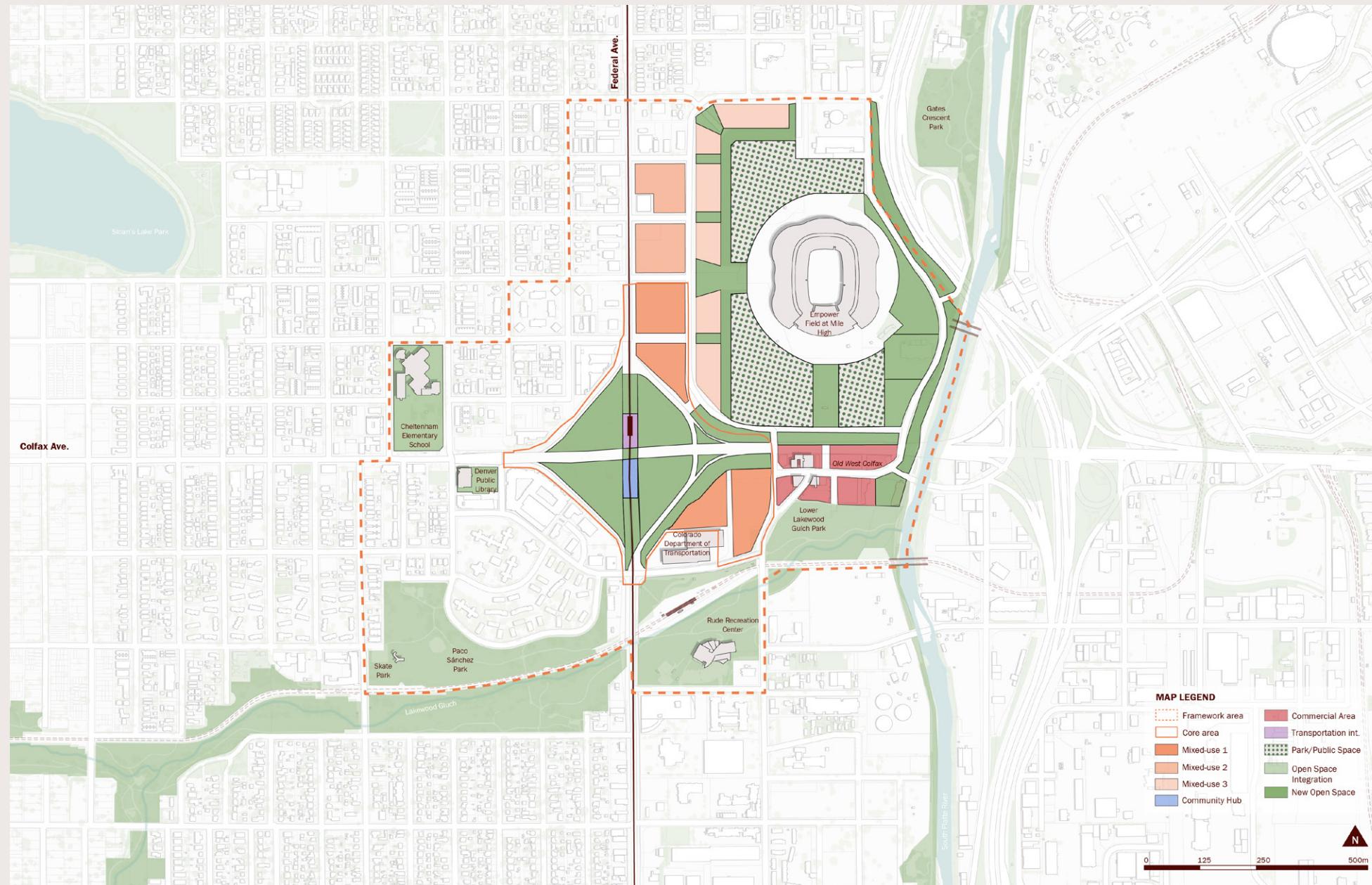
The People's Corridor reimagines the cloverleaf intersection between Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard as a public park. The name reflects the vision of transforming this car-centric space, which primarily serves external users, into a vibrant area designed for the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. The goal is to create a safe, accessible, and diverse meeting place for community interaction. The proposal is comprised of two intervention areas and envisions the cloverleaf intersection as part of a broader network of public spaces. This network seamlessly integrates with the greenery in the southern section of the proposal and establishes a direct connection to South Platte River.

The framework plan emphasizes the preservation of the bridge crossing Colfax Avenue, to avoid unnecessary demolition of infrastructure that can be reused. It has been repurposed and redesigned to include an overlook, offering residents a visual corridor to the river and downtown, as well as the Rocky Mountains.

By repurposing the cloverleaf ramps previously dedicated to car traffic, this area has been integrated into the bridge, forming a new public space for the community. Finally, the redesign activates the blocks surrounding the stadium with a dynamic, multi-use space that allows the stadium's parking lot to host cultural events during times when the facility is not in use.

MAP LEGEND

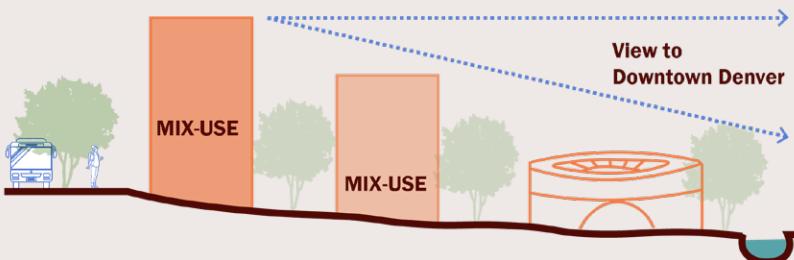
- Framework area
- Core area
- Facilities
- BRT Proposal
- Railway
- Bikeline System
- Development area Phase 1 + 2
- Development area Phase 3
- Local District Development



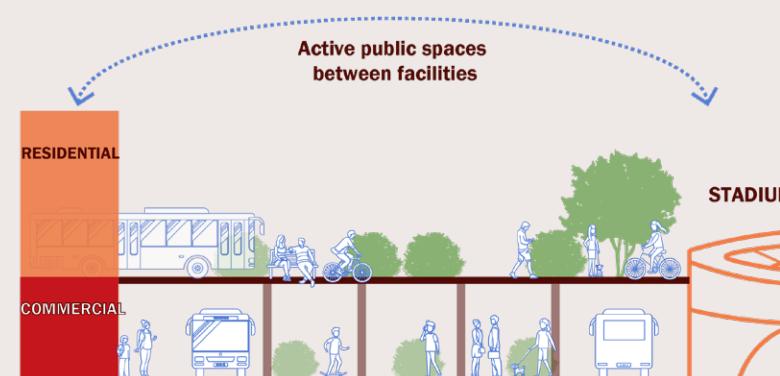
3.2 Land use reimaged

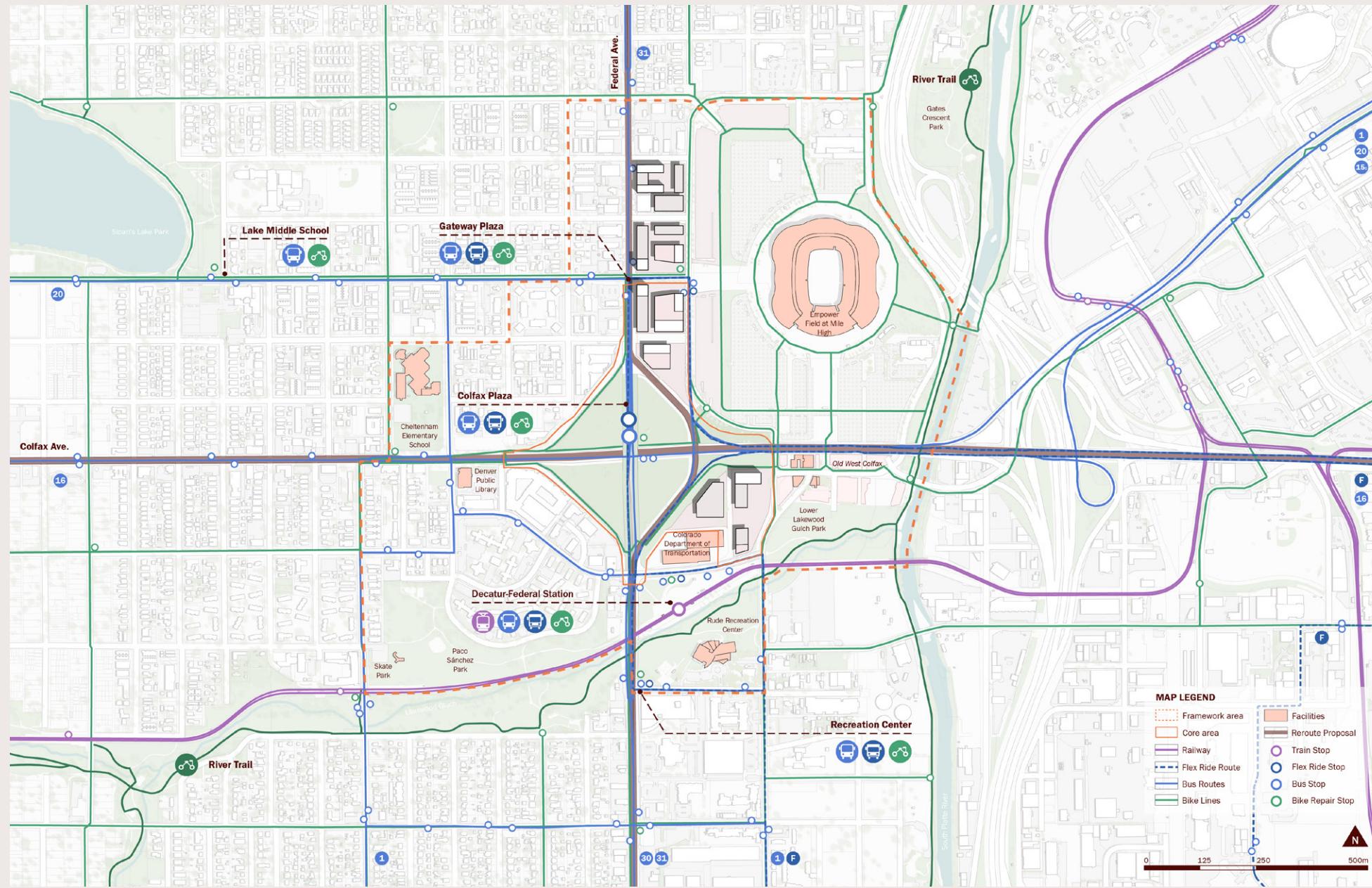
A new public space created at the cloverleaf intersection is anticipated to enhance activity nodes and, as a result, increase land value across the framework area. *The People's Corridor* incorporates modifications to the zoning regulations for the blocks surrounding the stadium to both capture this value and ensure new development delivers needed community infrastructure. The blocks parallel to Federal Boulevard have been designated for mixed-use commercial purposes, with an incrementally increased building height limit of eight stories. The adjacent parallel blocks are proposed for residential use, with a maximum height of 5 stories. This height strategy aligns with the descending topography toward the river, ensuring that all residences benefit from natural sunlight and enjoy unobstructed views of the river and the mountains. The blocks parallel to Colfax Avenue, extending toward downtown, have been rezoned for commercial use. The existing setback dimensions for the blocks have been preserved to maintain spatial harmony and consistency.

Views and height

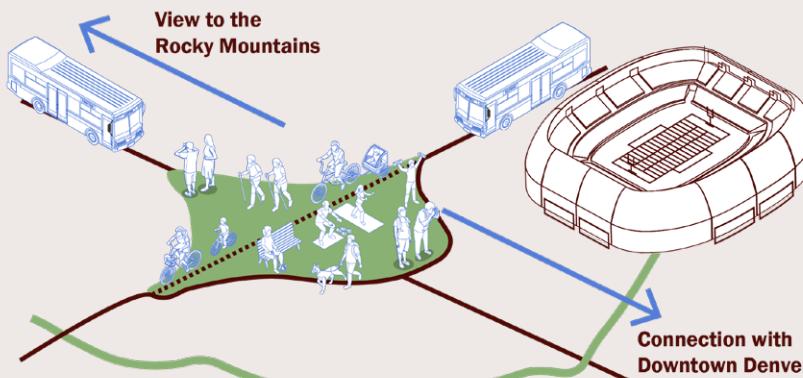


Land value for a vibrant area

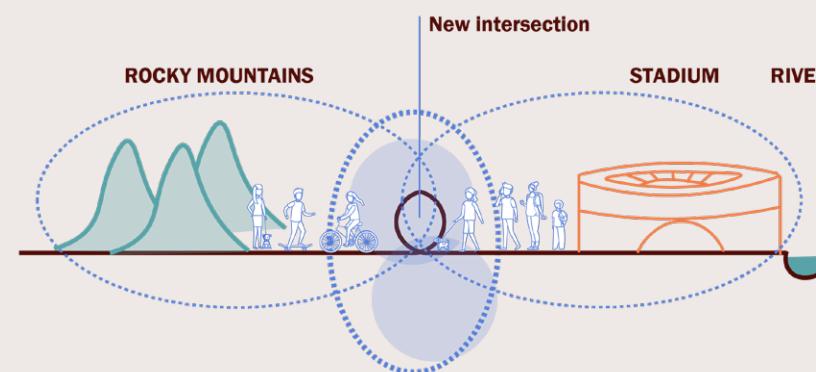




Sustainable Connection



New and healthy circulation



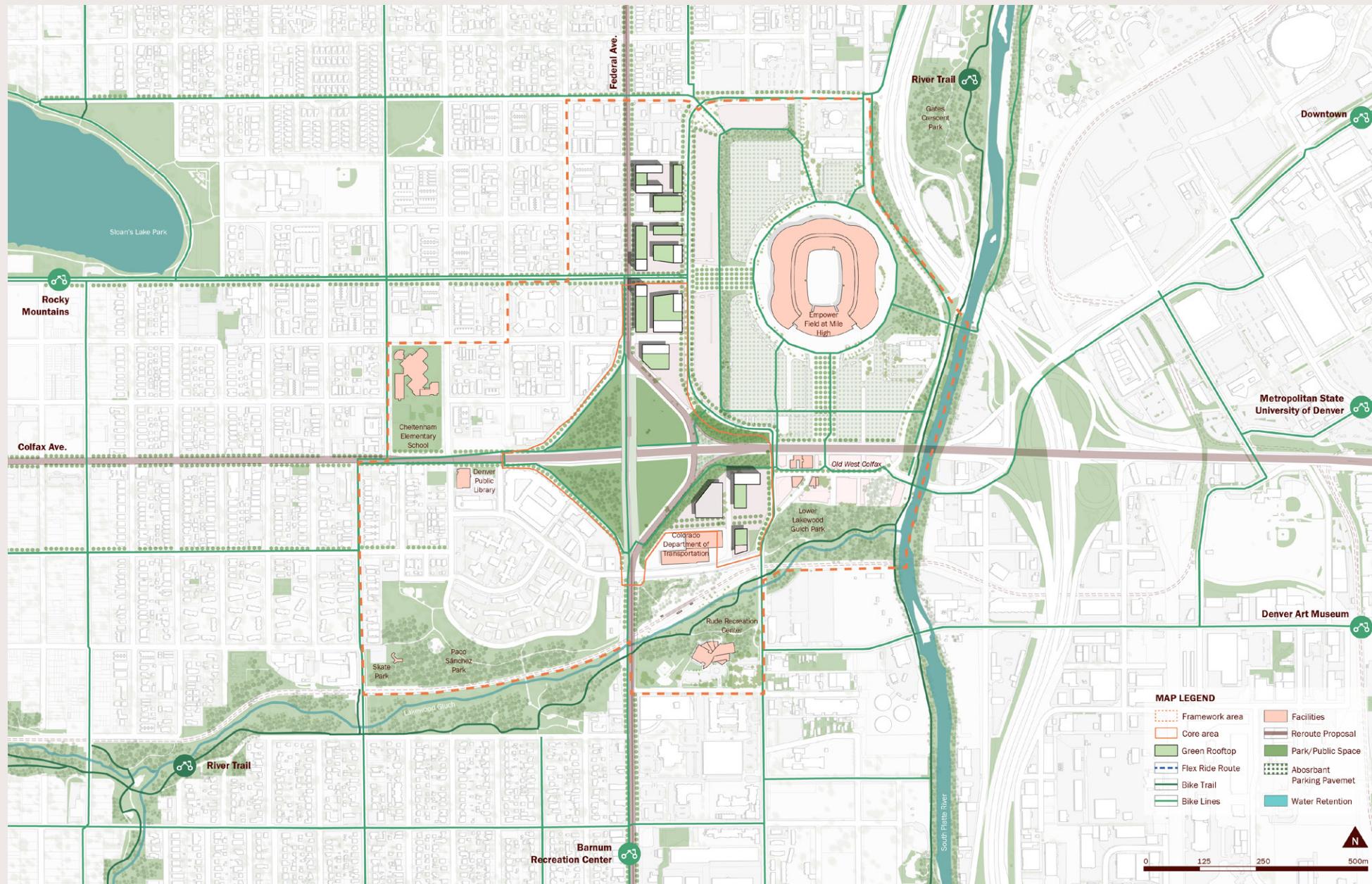
3.3 Moving through the framework area

The framework plan includes a sustainable mobility system featuring a central lane for public transport buses along Federal Boulevard, which extends across the preserved bridge. The bridge, designed as a public space platform, accommodates two bus lanes, a bike path, and green areas, enabling visitors to engage in various physical and social activities.

Additionally, an alternate connection to Federal Boulevard has been created, crossing Colfax Avenue at ground level, following the natural topography of the terrain. Through this new connection, *The People's Corridor* ensures that bus routes 1, 15, 16, 30, and 31 maintain their west-east direction. Longitudinal bike paths have been proposed to connect natural resources such as green areas, the river, and the lagoon.

Leaf for community

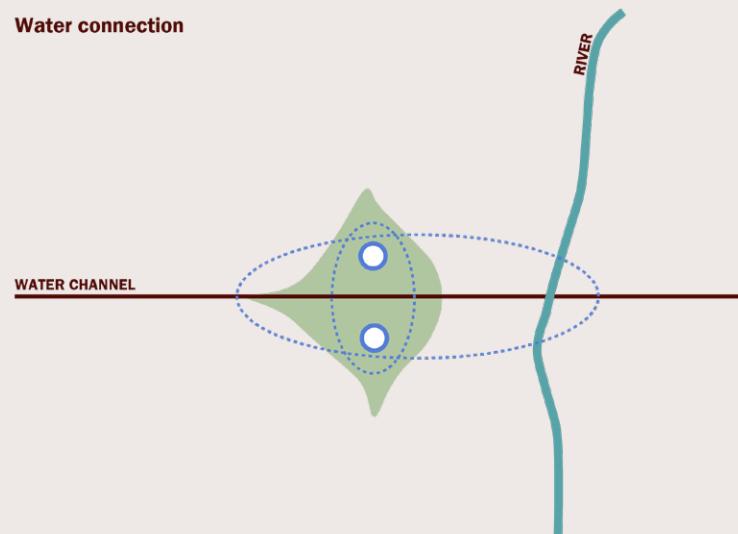
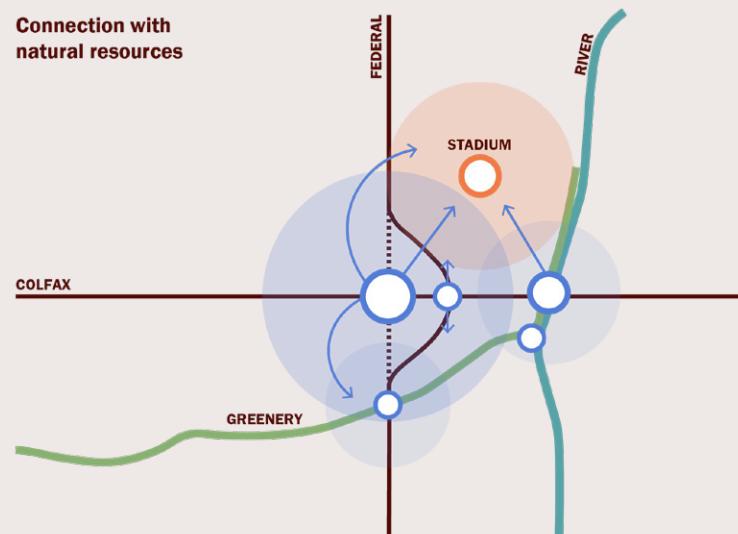




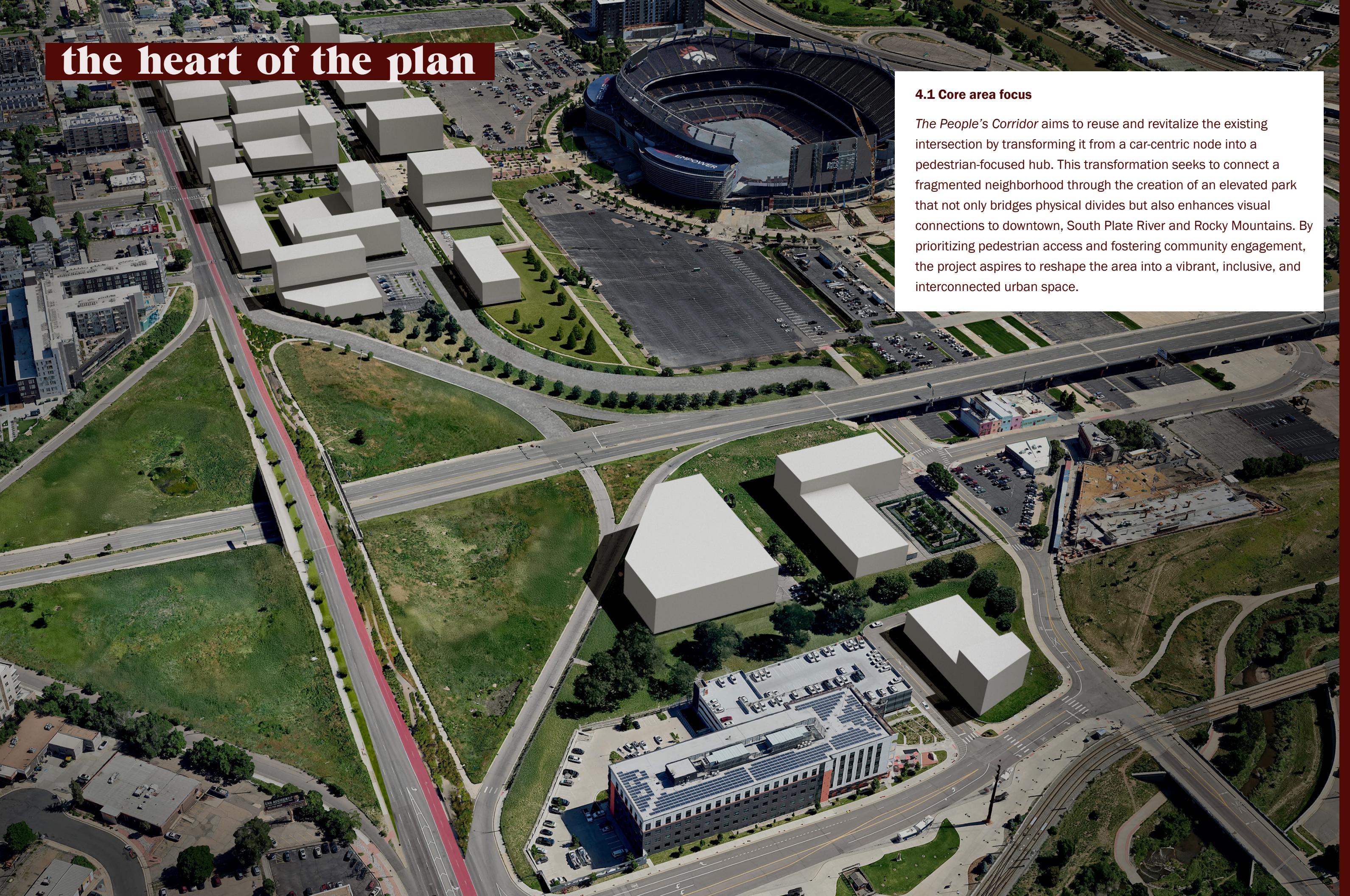
3.4 Framework area greenprint

The People's Corridor reimagines the intersection of Federal and Colfax as a vibrant, sustainable hub that integrates ecological, social and urban systems. It starts by re-connecting the natural areas along the river and streams. This greenery then envelopes the site as a central park, equipped with stormwater management infrastructure and public spaces for the local community hub. This park serves both as a buffer zone, mitigating the impacts of mobility infrastructure, and as a new green corridor. The new integrated bike lane network connects natural and urban areas, driving sustainable mobility and, in addition to the new BRT on Federal Boulevard, promoting alternatives for reducing carbon emissions.

The project prioritizes walkability and mass transportation by introducing a new connectivity node in the original intersection that encourages active and public mobility to new retail and community areas. New buildings are designed with minimal environmental impact, incorporating solar panels and green rooftops to optimize energy efficiency. These structures are also part of the water management infrastructure,



the heart of the plan



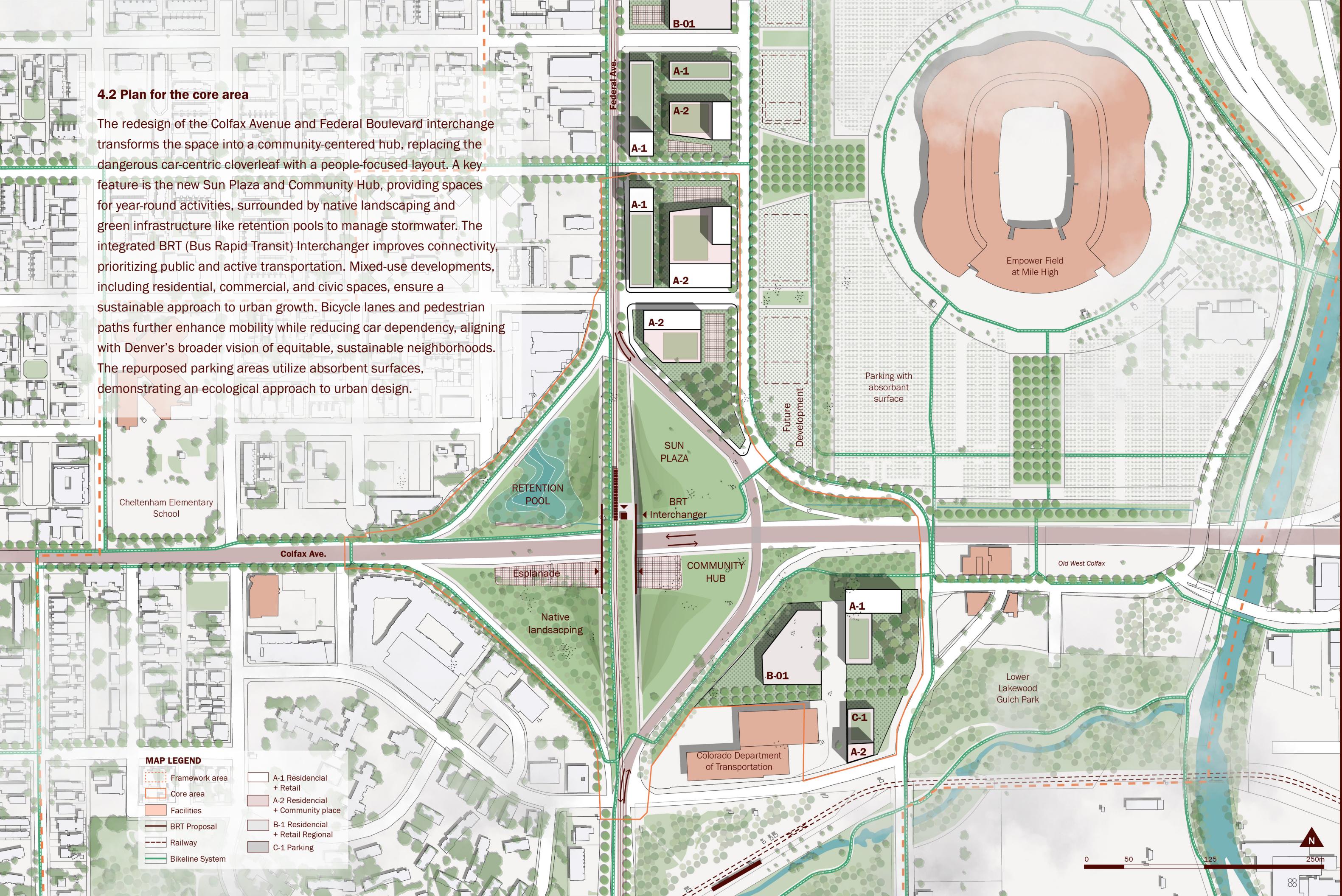
4.1 Core area focus

The People's Corridor aims to reuse and revitalize the existing intersection by transforming it from a car-centric node into a pedestrian-focused hub. This transformation seeks to connect a fragmented neighborhood through the creation of an elevated park that not only bridges physical divides but also enhances visual connections to downtown, South Platte River and Rocky Mountains. By prioritizing pedestrian access and fostering community engagement, the project aspires to reshape the area into a vibrant, inclusive, and interconnected urban space.

4.2 Plan for the core area

The redesign of the Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard interchange transforms the space into a community-centered hub, replacing the dangerous car-centric cloverleaf with a people-focused layout. A key feature is the new Sun Plaza and Community Hub, providing spaces for year-round activities, surrounded by native landscaping and green infrastructure like retention pools to manage stormwater. The integrated BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) Interchanger improves connectivity, prioritizing public and active transportation. Mixed-use developments, including residential, commercial, and civic spaces, ensure a sustainable approach to urban growth. Bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths further enhance mobility while reducing car dependency, aligning with Denver's broader vision of equitable, sustainable neighborhoods.

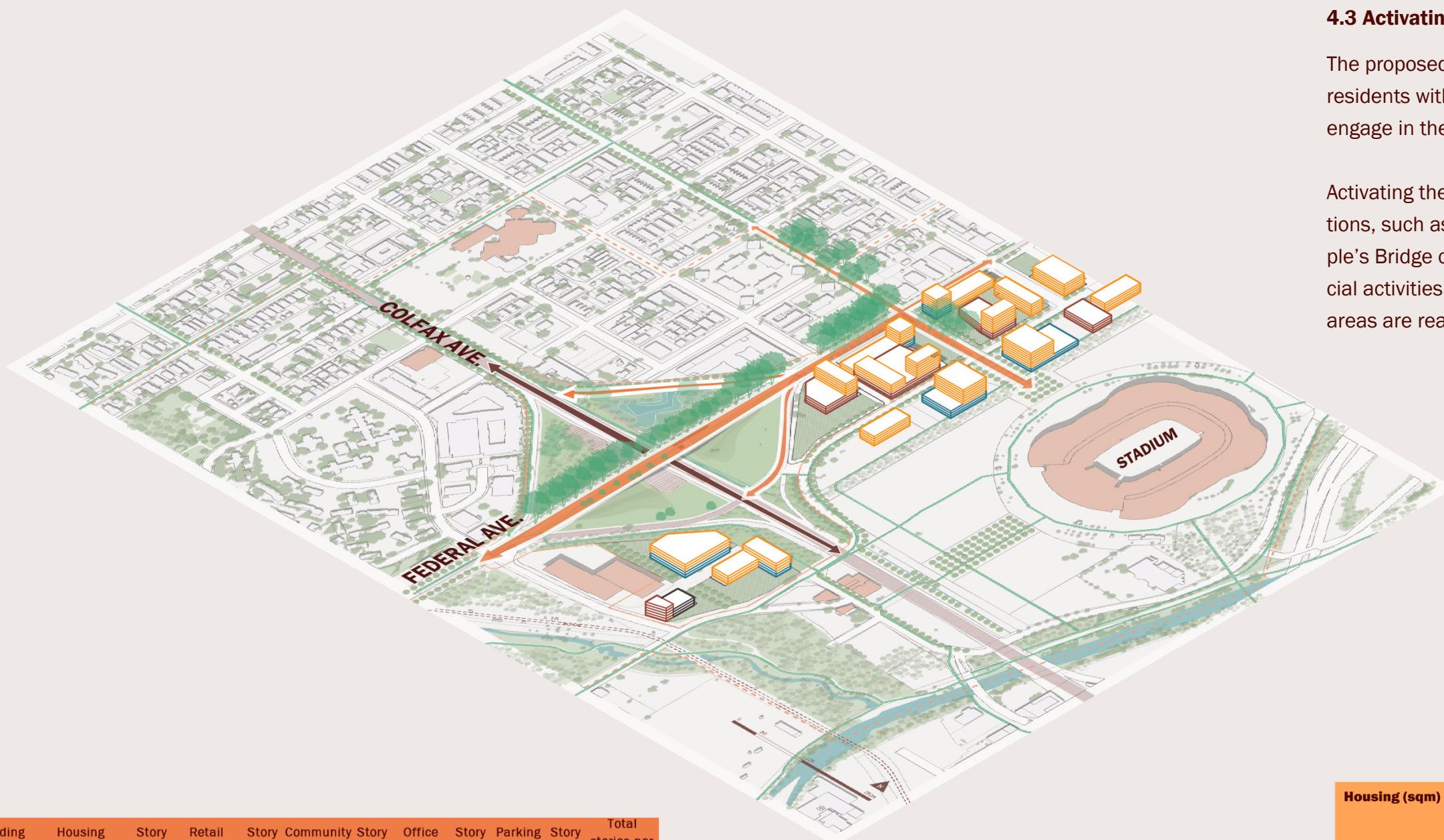
The repurposed parking areas utilize absorbent surfaces, demonstrating an ecological approach to urban design.



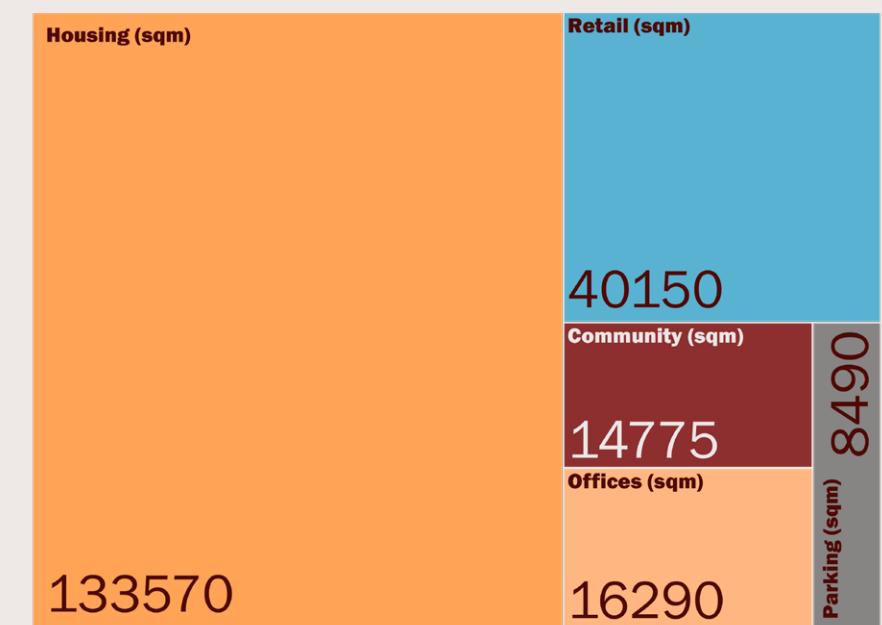
4.3 Activating the Federal Boulevard axis

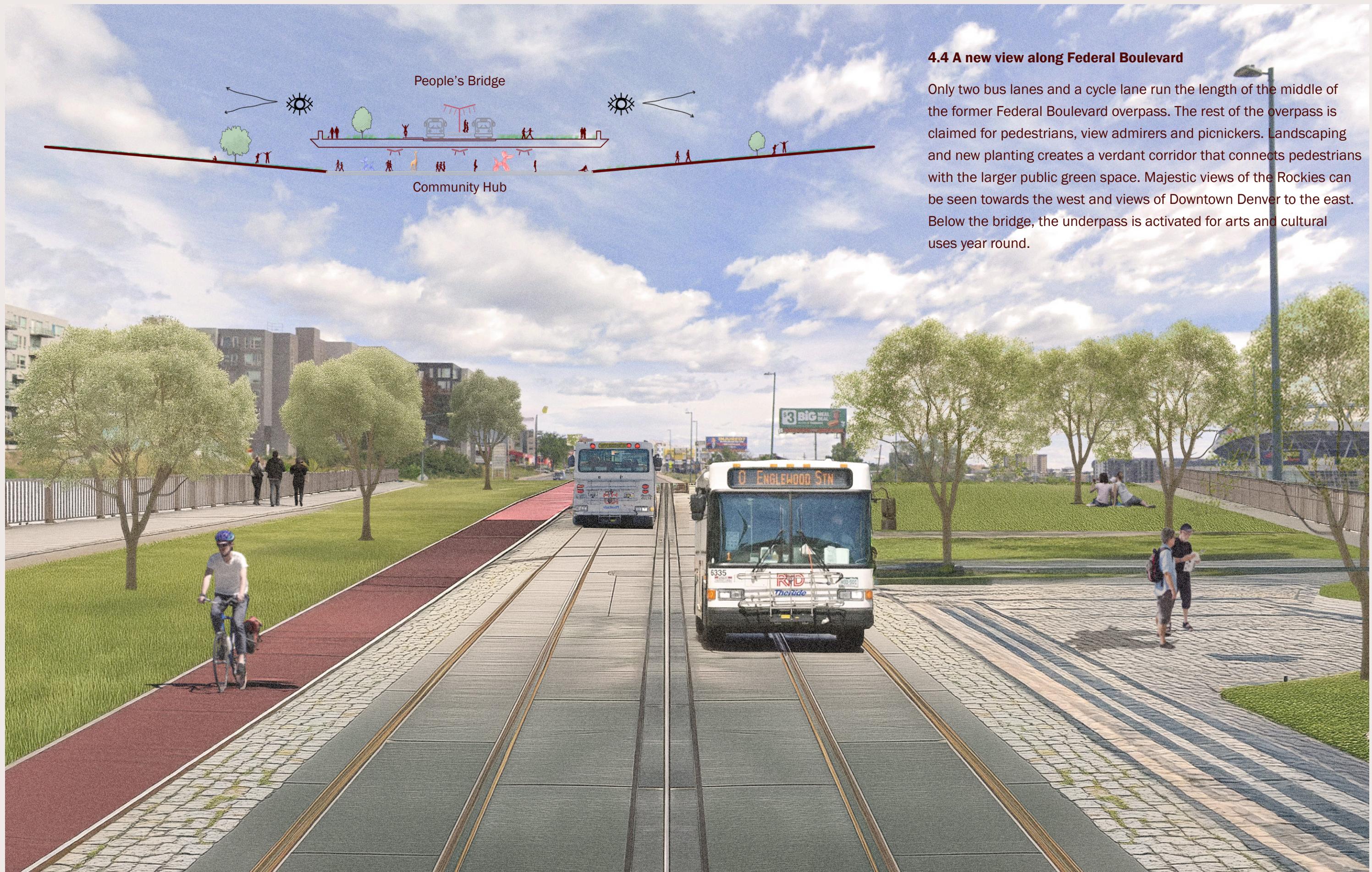
The proposed mixed-use buildings have been designed to provide residents with diverse views of natural resources and opportunities to engage in the various activities surrounding the stadium area.

Activating the Federal axis also revitalizes adjacent transversal connections, such as the corridor linking the lagoon to the stadium. The People's Bridge creates new public spaces, fostering cultural and commercial activities. Additionally, the formerly underutilized stadium parking areas are reactivated, enabling year-round use.



Building	Housing	Story	Retail	Story	Community	Story	Office	Story	Parking	Story	Total stories per
1	5055	6	2610	2							8
2	6240	4									4
3				4875	3						3
4	12000	6	8280	2							8
5	12000	6	9300	3							9
6	6240	4									4
7	12600	6	5300	2							8
8	6250	5									5
9	9575	5									5
10	8770	5	1905	3							8
11	6500	5									5
12	4770	6			9900	2					8
13	9125	5	1875	3							8
14	9675	6				16290	3				9
15	5500	5				8490	3				8
16	11940	3	7960	2							5
17	7330	3	2920	2							5
18					2225	5	3015	3			
	133,570	sqm	40,150	sqm	14,775	sqm	27,005	sqm	3,015	sqm	
	1,437,734	sqf	432,170	sqf	159,036	sqf	290,679	sqf	32,453	sqf	





4.4 A new view along Federal Boulevard

Only two bus lanes and a cycle lane run the length of the middle of the former Federal Boulevard overpass. The rest of the overpass is claimed for pedestrians, view admirers and picnickers. Landscaping and new planting creates a verdant corridor that connects pedestrians with the larger public green space. Majestic views of the Rockies can be seen towards the west and views of Downtown Denver to the east. Below the bridge, the underpass is activated for arts and cultural uses year round.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Farmer's Market <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>
2 Sports for All! <i>@ Empower Field</i> 	3 Urban Farming Workshop <i>@ Community Hub</i>	4 Afterschool Block Party <i>@ Community Hub</i>	5 Open Mic Night <i>@ the Esplanade</i>	6 Immigrant Resource Fair <i>@ A-2 ground floor community space</i> 	7 Pop-up Thrift Market <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>	8 Farmer's Market <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>
9 Group Bike Ride <i>Meet @ the Esplanade</i> 	10 Painting Workshop <i>@ Community Hub</i>	11 Afterschool Block Party <i>@ Sun Plaza</i>	12 Open Mic Night <i>@ the Esplanade</i>	13 Youth Climate Corps Meeting <i>@ A-2 ground floor community space</i>	14 Outdoor Movie Night <i>@ Community Hub</i>	15 Farmer's Market <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>
16 Community Night Market <i>@ Empower Field</i>	17 Pop-up Thrift Market <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>	18 Afterschool Block Party <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>	19 Open Mic Night <i>@ the Esplanade</i>	20 Community Job Fair <i>@ A-2 ground floor community space</i>	21 Community Tree Planting <i>@ A-2 ground floor community space</i>	22 Spring Equinox Celebration <i>@ Empower Field</i> 
23 Community Wellness Fair <i>@ A-2 ground floor community space</i> 	24 Repair Fair <i>@ Community Hub</i>	25 Afterschool Block Party <i>@ the Esplanade</i>	26 Open Mic Night <i>@ the Esplanade</i>	27 Youth Climate Corps Meeting <i>@ A-2 ground floor community space</i>	28 Roller Disco Night <i>@ Empower Field</i>	29 Farmer's Market <i>@ Empower Field parking lot</i>
30 Community Picnic <i>@ Sun Plaza</i>	31 Stargazing <i>@ Sun Plaza</i> 					

4.5 A living, breathing space for community

Right now, the space around the Colfax-Federal interchange is sitting empty for most of the year. The massive parking lot is unused outside of game days, and Empower Field hosted just 19 events in 2024, with some months passing without any public use at all. This underutilization of prime urban space reflects a larger issue: the infrastructure here was built for cars, not for people.

The People's Corridor reclaims this space for the community by introducing a regularly activated calendar of events that ensures year-round engagement in all different parts of both the core and framework areas. This proposal transforms parking lots into vibrant marketplaces, a pedestrian bridge into a gathering space with breathtaking views, and the stadium into a true civic anchor, not just a football venue. By programming farmers markets, night festivals, cultural performances, educational workshops, and active recreation, this space will be able to serve the people around it every day—not just when there's a football game.

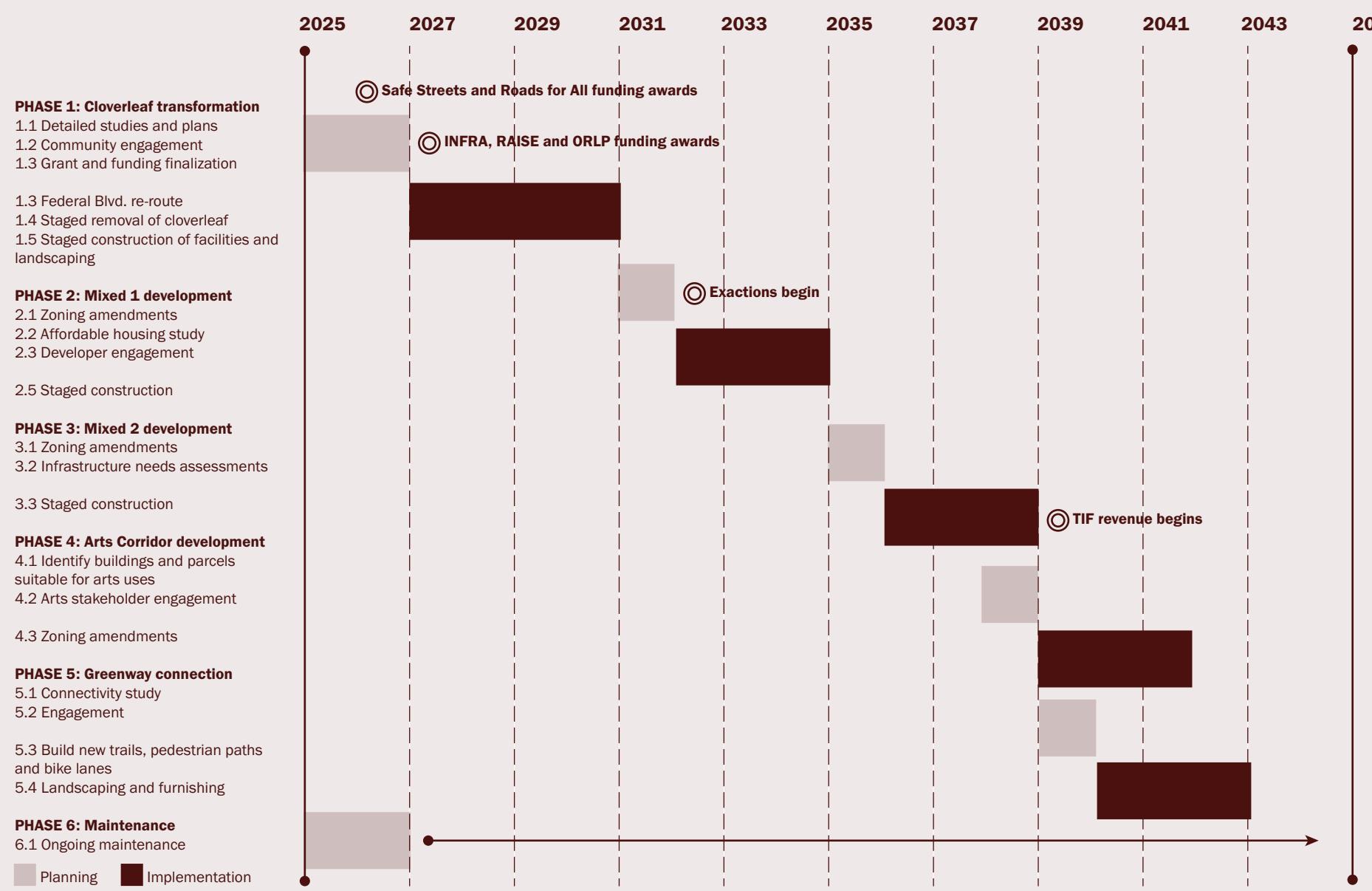
The sample events calendar to the left is not just a schedule; it's a commitment to making public space truly public. The planned events will be powered by local community organizations, ensuring that activation is driven by those who know the neighborhood best. By partnering with Denver Food Rescue to bring fresh, affordable produce to the community's farmer's markets and Groundwork Denver to support a neighborhood-based Youth Climate Corps, to teach youth about tree equity and sustainability, this transformation will not just be about filling space—it will be about empowering the people who already call this neighborhood home.

making it happen

5.1 Implementation timeline

To balance the need for comprehensive evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, sustainable funding mechanisms and the urgency of transforming the cloverleaf, this proposal outlines a phased implementation plan spanning 2025–2045. The project will leverage \$2 million in seed funding earmarked by the Biden Administration to support the initial planning and evidence gathering, laying the foundation for application for subsequent federal investment. Phase 1 will focus on public investment to transform the cloverleaf into a

public green space, creating a catalyst for value generation in the subsequent development phases. The value unlocked through these development stages will be strategically captured to reinvest in further infrastructure enhancements and ensure long-term maintenance of the public park. A critical milestone will be the final phase, which will establish seamless connectivity between the new park and the Denver Greenway, complemented by ongoing maintenance and stewardship of the expanded green spaces.



5.2 Financing

This proposal leverages a combination of funding sources to secure immediate project financing and long-term resources for maintenance.

Federal grants

Public-sector financing will play a critical role in funding the infrastructure improvements needed to transform the cloverleaf intersection into a public green space. While federal funding streams are currently unpredictable, this proposal recommends application to:

- RAISE Grants (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity): Support innovative transportation projects that improve safety, equity, and environmental sustainability, aligning with the project's goals to address traffic fatalities and create pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.
- INFRA Grants (Infrastructure for Rebuilding America): Provides funding for highway and freight projects. It will be instrumental in financing the rerouting of traffic and constructing the new road infrastructure.
- Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grants: A program aimed at addressing the project's aim of reducing traffic-related deaths and injuries.

Developer Exactions

New zoning codes will implement exactions to ensure that private sector stakeholders contribute to the costs of infrastructure and public amenities. Developers benefiting from the rezoning for higher-density, mixed-use developments will be required to fund specific improvements, such as roads, pedestrian pathways, and portions of the new park.

TIF Revenue (Tax Increment Financing)

A portion of the increased property tax from new development will provide a long-term funding source. By capturing the increase in property tax revenue generated by the higher-density developments, TIF revenue can be reinvested into subsequent project phases, especially the ongoing maintenance of the new public space. Denver Parks and Recreation will also contribute to maintenance costs.

Equitable, affordable and inclusive

Develop without displacing residents, and ensure that all the benefits of growth and change are felt equitably by the community themselves. Improve mobility and access to educational and professional opportunities and resources, so that community members have equitable access to everything they need to thrive, in alignment with *Denver Moves* and *Blueprint Denver*.

Partners: Mile High United Way, Mile High Youth Corps

Reduce the amount of cost-burdened households

Strong and authentic neighborhoods

Increase the number of neighborhoods with convenient access to transit, jobs, and retail
Provide more safe and vibrant points of connection between the surrounding West Colfax, Villa Park, and Sun Valley neighborhoods. Engage communities through an events calendar that reactivates both the existing and newly-created public spaces, and relies on diverse community partnerships to nurture the community's sense of identity.

Partners: Villa Park Neighborhood Association, Sun Valley Community Coalition, West Colfax Community Association

5.3 Aligning with city goals

To ensure *The People's Corridor* aligns with Denver's broader vision for growth and development, we carefully evaluated it against the principles outlined in the city's *Comprehensive Plan 2040*. This plan sets forth a vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Denver, and it emphasizes key pillars such as connectivity, equity, environmental stewardship, and vibrant neighborhoods. By pairing the vision element with city-identified metrics of success and identifying both community and city partners, we were able to assess how well this redesign would contribute to the city's long-term goals. We also considered the city's other planning documents, such as *Vision Zero Action Plan* and *Game Plan for a Healthy City*, to ensure this proposal complemented and reinforced these broader objectives. Working in alignment with these established city plans allowed us to create a proposal that not only addresses local community needs but also contributes to the city's overarching goals for equity, sustainability, and community well-being.

Connected, safe and accessible places

In alignment with the city's *Vision Zero Action Plan*, eliminate car violence at this interchange by removing the dangerous cloverleaf interchange and replacing it with safer, at-grade intersections with stoplights, pedestrian crossings, and a center bus lane. Improve multi-modal connections and prioritize pedestrian right-of-way to safely serve all users and encourage less reliance on cars.

Partners: Denver Department of Transportation & Infrastructure, Denver Streets Partnership, RTD Denver

Reduce dependence on driving alone

Economically diverse and vibrant

Leverage the view corridor that the site offers to establish it as an attractive site for community development, while avoiding privatization and extraction. Rely on locally-owned neighborhood businesses and restaurants as event partners, through food truck fairs, art and farmers markets, and more, to avoid displacement of cultural businesses and community members.

Partners: West Denver Renaissance Collaborative, Colfax Ave Business Improvement District, West Colfax Business Improvement District

Increase share of jobs supporting a diverse and innovative economy

Environmentally resilient

Establish a stronger connection between Paco Sanchez Park to the south, Gates Crescent Park to the northeast, and Sloan's Lake Park to the northwest, to strengthen the city's green infrastructure for generations, in alignment with *Game Plan for a Healthy City*. Hold climate education workshops and create a youth climate corps to educate the community about their role in advocating for tree equity.

Partners: Denver Climate Action, Sustainability and Resiliency; Groundwork Denver; Denver Public Schools Students for Climate Action

Reduce Denver's impact on climate change

Healthy and active

Improve local and regional transit connections to ensure that community members have reliable access to services that support the many forms of mental and physical health, including healthy food, parks, places of worship, and pharmacies. Increase access to green spaces for residents of color, low-income residents, and both elderly and youth residents, as outlined in *Game Plan for a Healthy City*.

Partners: Denver Parks & Recreation, Denver Food Rescue, Denver Urban Gardens

Reduce health inequities between Denver neighborhoods

Transforming The People's Corridor into a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable urban hub that connects communities, fosters equity, supports local businesses, and prioritizes resilience, health, and accessibility for all...

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Software statement

Maps were created using ArcGIS. Visualizing was done in Rhino, AutoCAD, and Photoshop. Editing and layout design was done in Adobe Illustrator. Report was laid out in Adobe Indesign.

Data sources

The City and County of Denver Open Data

RTD Denver GIS Open Data

US Census TIGER files

Ryan Keeney's Denver Streetcar map

OpenStreetMap

Map data was sourced from OpenStreetMap and its contributors, available under the Open Database License.

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