

Regional Governance: Local Planning and Development Implications in Denver, Colorado



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June, 2015

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Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to my immediate and extended family for their continued support and encouragement over the past twenty eight years. It is through their guiding care that I developed a keen interest in urban America and stumbled into the world of city planning.

Rich Margerum for his role as my advisor and Bob Parker for his timely suggestions along the way. Finally I would like to thank Rebecca Lewis for helping me to develop the framework for this report and for her steadfast reassurance along the way.

Abstract

In the absence of broad planning authority the Denver region is taking a collaborative approach to regional governance. Metro Vision's designation of 'urban centers' -areas slated to develop as dense nodes of mixed-use development- is explored to determine regional planning influences on local programs and policies. Based on a review of regional plans, content analysis of eight local plans and interviews with six local planners, I examine how the centers policy is being implemented at the local level across five cities. I found that a combination of financial incentives, transit investment, and opportunities to promote commercial and residential redevelopment support regional buy-in for implementation of centers policy.

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Chapter 1: Framework

This report discusses how and to what extent regional planning influences local programs and policies regarding urban centers. This project seeks to shed light on the extent to which efforts emphasizing urban centers in the Denver Metropolitan Area are the result of regional planning efforts, local planning initiatives, or other outside forces.

This Chapter introduces the issues examined in this report and discusses why it is important to evaluate efforts to plan on a regional scale. The following sections provide details on the goals and supporting objectives of this report, the methods being used to collect data, and why the results are important.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many researchers have developed best practices for making urban centers successful on a case-by-case basis, but few have considered these centers in their broader regional context. The literature which does exist on this topic often focuses on specific examples such as Portland, Oregon or Seattle, Washington where state mandates for regional planning provide regional organizations with formidable tools for shaping development, e.g. the requirement that local jurisdictions adopt a comprehensive plan which goes through a review process.

While there is considerable literature on regional governance there is very little on local implementation of regional plans. This gap leaves a large share of practicing regional planners without clear instructions on best practices for implementing policies and programs to incentivize urban centers.

Regional planning in Denver is built on inter-jurisdictional buy-in, targeted incentives and transportation planning. With a strong commitment to fostering urban centers throughout the region, Denver offers a robust case study for evaluating the role regional planning plays in influencing local programs and policies related to urban centers.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to improve understanding of the role that regional planning plays in influencing planning and development on the local level. In an effort to accomplish this goal, this project focuses on the efforts around regional planning for urban centers taking place in the Denver region.

During the 1990's the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) initiated Metro Vision, a regional visioning process which derives legitimacy from cities and counties entering into a voluntary agreement to plan cooperatively for the region's future. One objective of this effort is to encourage dense development around mixed-use urban centers throughout the region. This focus on urban centers has coincided with a significant expansion of the region's light rail system. This has meant that many of the principles set forth by Metro Vision regarding urban centers have already begun to take shape across the region.

The Denver region’s emphasis on development around urban centers has generally been the result of its coordinated regional planning efforts, however, no one has sought to systematically measure how regional policies and programs to promote centers have influenced local planning over time. Similarly, no one has examined the extent to which local planning initiatives, market forces and other factors have supported and constrained the development of urban centers over time.

To address these gaps in our understanding of how urban centers develop and what role regional planning plays in this context, this research will analyze:

- The extent to which local governments incorporate DRCOG’s urban centers concept into their comprehensive planning documents
- The relative influence of a range of factors on the development of urban centers including:
 - Transportation incentives
 - Market forces
 - Community support or opposition
 - Local government desire to create amenity centers for economic development
 - Political support or opposition

The results of this analysis should begin to shed light on the role regional planning plays in supporting urban centers. Using Denver as a case study, this research will also offer a set of “lessons learned” that might inform other regions seeking to harness voluntary planning initiatives to achieve a greater emphasis on transit oriented development.

A research team at the University of Utah is currently conducting a parallel study that focuses on the Salt Lake City Metropolitan Region which is served by the Wasatch Front Regional Council.

WHY DENVER?

While regional planning agencies can be found across the country, there are very few multi-purpose, multicounty government agencies with broad planning powers –e.g. Portland Metro, which derives authority from a voter approved ballot measure passed in 1978¹. Without these strong state mandates for regional planning, most metropolitan areas are forced to take a bottom-up approach to regional governance.

This is reflected in the case study of Denver, Colorado where local leaders have signed a formal agreement –the Mile High Compact- to coordinate regional planning and growth management across jurisdictional boundaries. As a part of this effort, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) developed a series of Metro Vision Plans, which outline growth management strategies for the region. This research explores the designation of ‘urban centers’ –areas slated to develop as dense nodes of mixed-use development- within the Metro Vision Plans. By analyzing the inclusion of urban center policies in local-level plans, this research helps

to explain how and to what extent regional planning influences local programs and policies regarding urban centers.¹

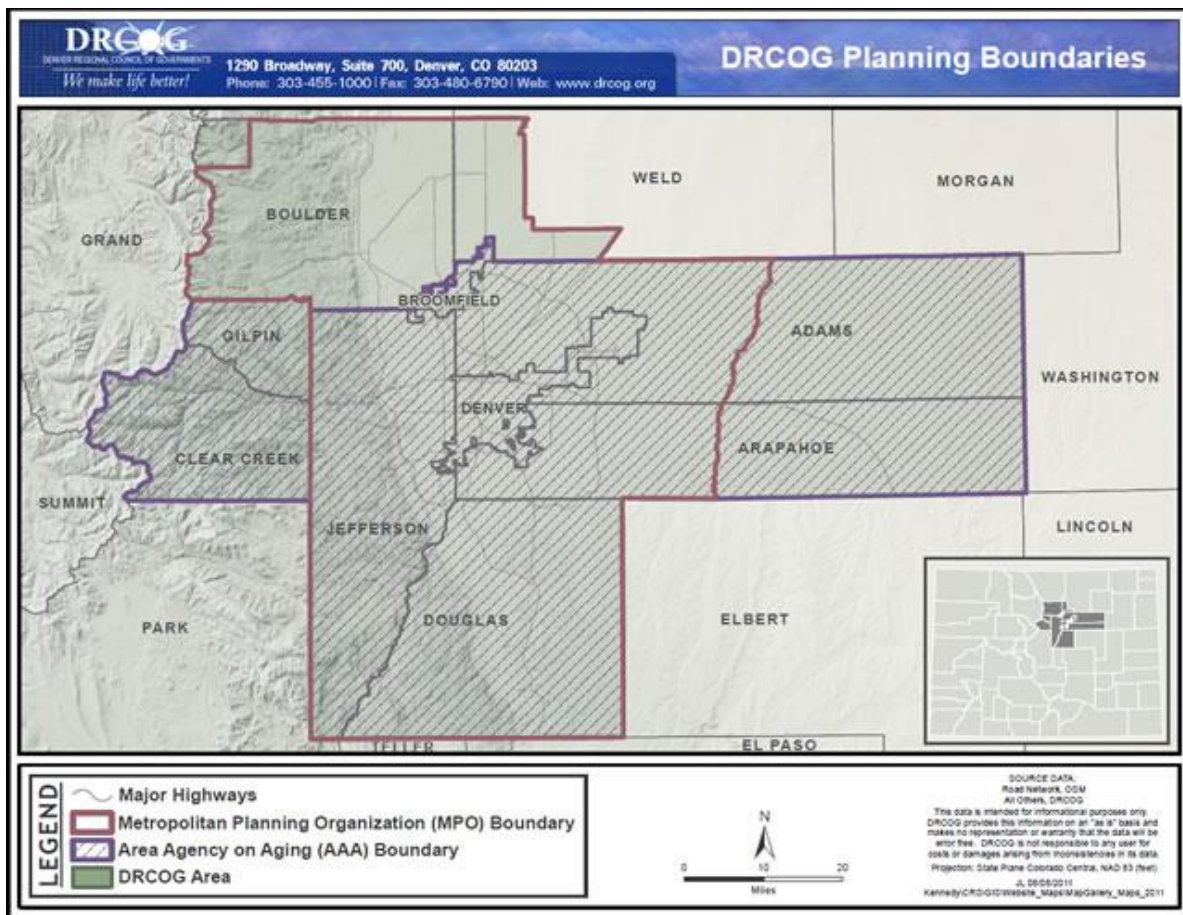
METHODOLOGY

The research for this study relies on content analysis and semi-structured stakeholder interviews to improve understanding of the role that regional planning plays in influencing planning and development on the local level.

Study Area

This study focuses on the Denver Metropolitan Area located in the north-central region of Colorado. For the purposes of this study the boundaries of the Denver Metropolitan Area are defined by the Denver Regional Council of Governments' (DRCOG) nine county service area. This includes Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Clear Creek, Douglas, Jefferson, and Gilpin counties.

Figure 1: DRCOG Planning Boundaries



Source: Denver Regional Council of Governments

Case Selection

Case study communities which provide an accurate depiction of the Denver Metropolitan Area were selected to be a part of this study. A total of five communities including Denver, Aurora, Thornton, Lone Tree and Greenwood Village were examined -Figures 3 and 4 in chapter 3: Background and Context provide additional details on each community.

These communities were selected using the following set of criteria:

- Cities in varying geographic positions (central city, inner ring, outer ring, etc).
- Cities that have designated urban centers other than just a traditional downtown
- Cities with varying status of light rail service (established, in development, future)
- Cities that have prepared plans prior to and after the initiation of Metro Vision plans

Study Element 1: Plan Analysis

The first element of this project examines the comprehensive planning documents of each case study community using a content analysis approach. Both current comprehensive plans and those published before the adoption of Metro Vision were included in order to gain insight into the evolution of plan concepts. Content analysis helps uncover the manner and extent to which local jurisdictions are incorporating DRCOG's urban centers concepts –as defined in the Metro Vision Plans- into their comprehensive planning documents and other strategic efforts.

Plan analysis is broken into three stages:

Step 1: Identify key terms from the regional Metro Vision plans

- Urban center related terms: “urban center”, “transit oriented development”, etc.
- Plan and program terms: “Metro Vision”, “FasTracks”
- Agency terms: “DRCOG”, “RTD”

Step 2: Collect and analyze local government plans

- Obtain electronic copies of plans
- Scan plans using optical recognition software
- Review table of contents and executive summary to gain insight into plan structure
- Utilize pdf search tool to identify instances where key terms are used
- Document frequency and use of key terms in each plan

Step 3: Evaluate Findings

- Assign scores to urban center related terms and plan and program terms based on the extent to which the plan calls for its implementation –no implementation (0), weak implementation (1), medium implementation (2), strong implementation (3).
- Assign scores to agency terms (DRCOG and RTD) based on the extent to which the plan calls for cooperation and partnership on centers related concepts –no cooperation/ partnership (0), low cooperation/ partnership (1), medium cooperation/ partnership (2), strong cooperation/ partnership (3)
- Analyze implementation scores across time and across cities in the Denver region

An implementation score is assigned to each search term based on how it is used in a given document. Implementation scoring is determined using the following guidelines²:

No Implementation (Score of 0): Term not mentioned, term mentioned but not in reference to urban centers concept, or term mentioned but without any implementation.

Weak Implementation (Score of 1): Implementation of term mentioned infrequently, only using general language, and in places with low visibility.

Medium Implementation (Score of 2): Implementation of term mentioned but either in general language or in places with low visibility.

Strong Implementation (Score of 3): Implementation of term mentioned frequently and in specific terms which are highly visible within the plan.

Three primary benchmarks are used to determine the implementation score each term receives –specificity of language, visibility, and frequency. A combination of these three factors is used to assign each term with one overall implementation score. Each of the three figures below provides additional details on how scoring takes place.

Figure 2: Specificity of Implementation Language

Rating	Example Language
General Language	New regional centers should be designed as transit destinations and to encourage pedestrian use --1998 Aurora Comprehensive Plan (Search term "Regional Center")
Intermediate Language	Reserve Land for Future Regional Employment Centers --2012 Thornton Comprehensive Plan (Search term "Employment Center")
Specific Language	Produce or maintain plans for each major center and corridor addressing land use, design, and recommended actions. Recommendations should be based on an evaluation of the full range of possible tools, including re-zonings, financial incentives, a full range of transportation options, public open space and plazas, and structured parking --2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan (Search Term "Urban Center")

² For full list of terms and documentation of plan language, see Appendix A

Figure 3: Implementation Visibility

Rating	Examples of Visibility
Low Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text does not stand out from the rest of the document• May be found in long paragraphs or deep within a section of the plan• There is a high likelihood that a casual reader would miss the passage of text
Intermediate Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text is secondary in the document hierarchy• Text fits the context document without lost or standing out prominently
High Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text which draws the eye and is prominent within the document• It is unlikely that a casual reader would miss the passage of text• Highlighted or bolded text which stands out from the rest of the document• Text which is a part of a defined list of goals, objectives, strategies, etc.

Figure 4: Implementation Frequency

Rating	Frequency
Low Frequency	Implementation of term mentioned sporadically at best.
Medium Frequency	Implementation of term mentioned periodically
High Frequency	Implementation of term mentioned repeatedly

Study Element 2: Interviews

Study Element 2 focuses on qualitative data gathered through interviews designed to supplement findings from the content analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with planning staff from case study communities and regional planning agencies –DRCOG and the Regional Transportation District (RTD).

Interview questions were designed to answer the following questions:

- What factors are supporting the adoption of urban centers in local jurisdictions?
- What factors are constraining the adoption of urban centers in local jurisdictions?

To help identify these supports and constraints, interviewees responded to 13 questions about the adoption and implementation of urban centers³. The interviews began with questions on the impact regional activities play in local adoption of centers policies. From there, the interviews shifted to development around designated centers in each community. Finally, interviews concluded with questions about political and community response to centers policies.

³ For full list of interview questions, see Appendix B

Interview response help determine the relative influence of the following factors on the adoption and implementation of urban centers:

- Regional plans and policies
- Transportation incentives (TIP funding criteria)
- Light rail and transit construction
- Market forces
- Community support or opposition
- Local government desire to create amenity centers for economic development
- Political support or opposition

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the findings presented as a part of this study. While each study element drew on a specific set of methods, there is a degree of subjectivity which remains. Interview findings represent the perceptions of planning professionals that participated in this study and should not be generalized to represent the views of the entire Denver region. Plan analysis was conducted using only one reviewer. This may limit accuracy due to human error of misinterpretation of text. Despite these limitations the findings presented in this report provide a reasonably accurate and reliable overview of the planning documents examined.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

To guide this exploration, the study will address three questions:

1. How have local government plans responded to regional urban centers policies and programs?
2. What factors have supported and constrained the development of these centers?
3. What can other communities learn from the efforts taking place in the Denver Metropolitan Region as they seek to use regional planning to incentivize clustered development around mixed-use urban centers?

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

Chapter 2: Theoretical Context discusses the way in which regional planning typically takes place and differing theories on regional governance.

Chapter 3: Background and Context provides background on the Denver metropolitan region including history, development patterns, and approach to regional planning.

Chapter 4: Summary of Findings summarizes the key findings of this report and provides a series of lessons learned which compare plan analysis findings and interview themes.

Appendix A: Plan Analysis provides detailed information on how the plan analysis was conducted.

Appendix B: Interview Questions provides an overview of questions used to illicit responses from planning professionals in the case study communities and regional agencies.

¹ Oregon Blue Book: Initiative, Referendum and Recall: 1972-1978. (n.d.). Retrieved May 21, 2015.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Context

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL PLANNING

Residents of major metropolitan areas across the country live in regions which transcend many of the jurisdictional boundaries which once defined them. This creates a spatial mismatch between existing institutions for governance and the territories we live in. It is precisely for this reason that regional planning is such a vital part of the practicing planner's lexicon. Issues of environmental quality, transportation, housing choice and affordability, and growth management are a few examples of those best addressed through regional planning.

Despite the fact that many of the complex issues facing metropolitan areas are best addressed at the regional level, existing jurisdictional boundaries have very real staying power. These boundaries have implications on property taxes, land use regulations, and cultural identity which make it unlikely that they will be reorganized to better match the patterns of daily life. As such, regional planning is a problem solving activity which is collaborative in nature and heavily reliant on coalition building.

Regional Planning Actors

Regional planning agencies are typically responsible for projecting regional population and economic development trends, providing a forum for intergovernmental partnership, and managing various federal and state programs –e.g. transportation improvement program (TIP) funds.

Most regional planning is coordinated by one of three different types of government institutions –Councils of Governments (COGs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and Special-Purpose Districts. Intergovernmental agreements play an important role for cross jurisdictional partnership.

Councils of Governments

The National Association of Regional Councils describes COGs as “multi-service agencies which deliver federal, state and local programs while functioning as a planning organization, technical assistance provider and “visionary” to its member local governments¹.” COGs also provide a regional forum which is voluntary, flexible, and non-binding. COGs are governed by a board elected by member local governments.

Despite their many benefits, COGS are hampered by issues including accountability, fiscal security, and regulatory authority². COGs are voluntary associations of local government whose power derives from that which is ceded to them by member organizations³. For this reason COGs tend to avoid controversial issues which might garner reproach from member governments³. In many instances this means that COGs are unable or unwilling to actively promote new approaches to tackling the complex regional issues they have been tasked with monitoring. This stems from the fact that COGs do not have the power to enact new legislation.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

In the wake of an accelerated period of highway expansion, which began during the Second World War and continued through the early 1960s, local resistance to interstate expansion began to spring up in cities across the country⁴. Following this, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 called for the creation of regional agencies responsible for transportation planning in urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000³. These are called Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Strengthened by the Highway Acts of 1973 and 1975, MPOs played an important role in localizing urban highway planning⁴.

In the years following MPOs saw their role reduced significantly during the 1980s before having their funding revived during the early 1990s. Today MPOs control the distribution of state and federal transportation funding including Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) dollars³. The five main functions of MPOs are to set the stage for decision making; evaluate transportation alternatives during the decision making process; maintain a long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan; develop a TIP program and distribute associated funds; and involve the public in every stage of the process. Currently nearly one half of MPOs fall within a COG³.

Despite their direct role in the allocation of TIP dollars and regional transportation planning, the prevailing limitation for MPOs has been their tendency to operate in more of an advisory or expert capacity than an actively engaged regulator. MPOs across the country have also been criticized for channeling too much funding towards highway and road widening projects at the expense of multi-modal transportation projects. This has had the result of promoting suburban growth along with the hollowing out of the central city.

Special Districts

Special-Purpose Districts are autonomous government agencies that traditionally provide a single or specialized set of services. Special-Purpose Districts often focus on issues of economic development, the development of affordable housing, public transportation or any number of utility services. Because of their specialized nature, Special-Purpose Districts often don't get heavily involved in regional planning efforts outside their core mission³.

MODELS FOR REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

With major advancements in transportation efficiency, suburbanization in the United States began taking place during the early twentieth century. As the suburbs grew, the geographic footprint and number of local governments found in many major metropolitan areas followed suit. With new actors at the table the discussion over how to effectively organize regional authority emerged along two distinct philosophies, the consolidation model and the fragmentation model⁵. More recently, the concept of new regionalism -which promotes a voluntary approach to establishing local government cooperation in order to address regional issues- has emerged.

Metropolitan Consolidation

Supporters of metropolitan consolidation contend that the most efficient and effective form of regional government is a single political unit that governs the entire metropolitan area. This is

because fragmented regions pit jurisdiction against jurisdiction, foster narrow perspectives and hamper efforts to create economies of scale⁵. In his 1942 book “Metropolitan Government,” Victor Jones argued that the mismatch between the scale of urban problems and the scale of local government was one of the biggest challenges to metropolitan regions⁵. Jones went on to identify a set of key issues including transportation, water, sewer, and housing which, without regional oversight, were doomed to create inefficiency and wasteful spending.

There is a long history in the United States of attempts to formally consolidate city and county governments through local referendum. Under this arrangement, a city and county agree to merge and effectively become one government. Notable examples include Indianapolis and Marion County in Indiana and Louisville and Jefferson County in Kentucky. In a look back at city-county consolidation efforts which went to a referendum since 1921, only 17.6% were successful⁵. The low success rate of these efforts is explained by an assessment of city-county consolidation efforts done by Vincent Marando & Carl Whitley which points to a variety of factors⁶.

Chief among these reasons are low voter turnout and the geographic distribution of voters who do cast a vote. In the consolidation efforts examined by Marando and Whitley, voter turnout was generally low with county residents (outside the center city) providing the highest rates of voter turnout. In the cases studied by Marando and Whitley, an average of 16% more county residents cast a vote than city residents³. These voters were 22% more likely to oppose consolidation than residents of the center city³.

Metropolitan Fragmentation

The second model for organizing regional governance contends that metropolitan fragmentation is efficient and allows residents to choose the community they want to live in based on the mix of taxes and services desirable to them. Supporters of the fragmented model insist that it provides communities with greater flexibility while leaving the door open to using intergovernmental agreements when regional solutions are necessary. On top of this, some theorize that competition created by fragmentation motivates local governments to provide residents with the best services at the lowest cost⁵.

Difficulty in gaining public support for metropolitan consolidation efforts has led to the use of special districts and intergovernmental agreements as more politically acceptable ways to attain regional solutions. Both options seek to reduce costs while combining elements of the fragmentation and consolidation models. Still, the results have been mixed as neither option prioritizes regional conversations which take a holistic view of regional governance. For that we look to new regionalism.

New Regionalism: Regional Planning Through Governance

During the 1960s and 1970s it became clear that, for a variety of reasons, metropolitan consolidation was not a politically viable option for many major metropolitan regions. At the same time the federal government was shifting the control of urban transportation dollars to MPOs which were required to develop regional transportation plan for regions with a population greater than 50,000. These factors led to the development of an alternate model for

building government cooperation which gained prominence during the 1990s³. Dubbed new regionalism, this alternate model promotes a voluntary approach to establishing local government cooperation in order to address complex regional issues. In the first chapter of *Regional Planning in America*, Ethan Seltzer and Armando Carbonel define new regionalism as “promoting regional action through governance, defined as the use of inter-organizational collaboration rather than hierarchical regional government to resolve area-wide public problems⁷.”

The concept of governance is central to the ideals of new regionalism. The term governance refers to the idea that existing government institutions can accomplish regional solutions through cooperative measures carried out on a voluntary basis⁸. This is reflected in the Denver region -the case study of this report- where local leaders voluntarily signed the Mile High Compact which formally states that they will coordinate regional planning and growth management across jurisdictional boundaries.

Kathryn Foster identifies six fundamental values at the heart of regional governance:

- **Efficiency:** Commitment to minimize waste and maximize output value
- **Fairness:** Commitment to regional governance decisions and outcomes which are impartial and just for an entire regional community
- **Accountability:** Commitment to transparent regional governance systems and processes
- **Participation:** Commitment to engage meaningfully those affected by regional governance choices and outcomes
- **Economic Development:** Commitment to provide opportunities to thrive and thereby realize potential
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Commitment to steward environments responsibly to ensure their health and vitality for future generations

With its emergence some 20 years ago, new regionalism is now being applied in metropolitan regions across the country. New regionalist principles are being used to tackle issues of environmental quality, transportation, housing affordability and more. The following section looks at how new regionalism is being applied to growth management practices which focus on the development of urban centers.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT THROUGH REGIONAL PLANNING

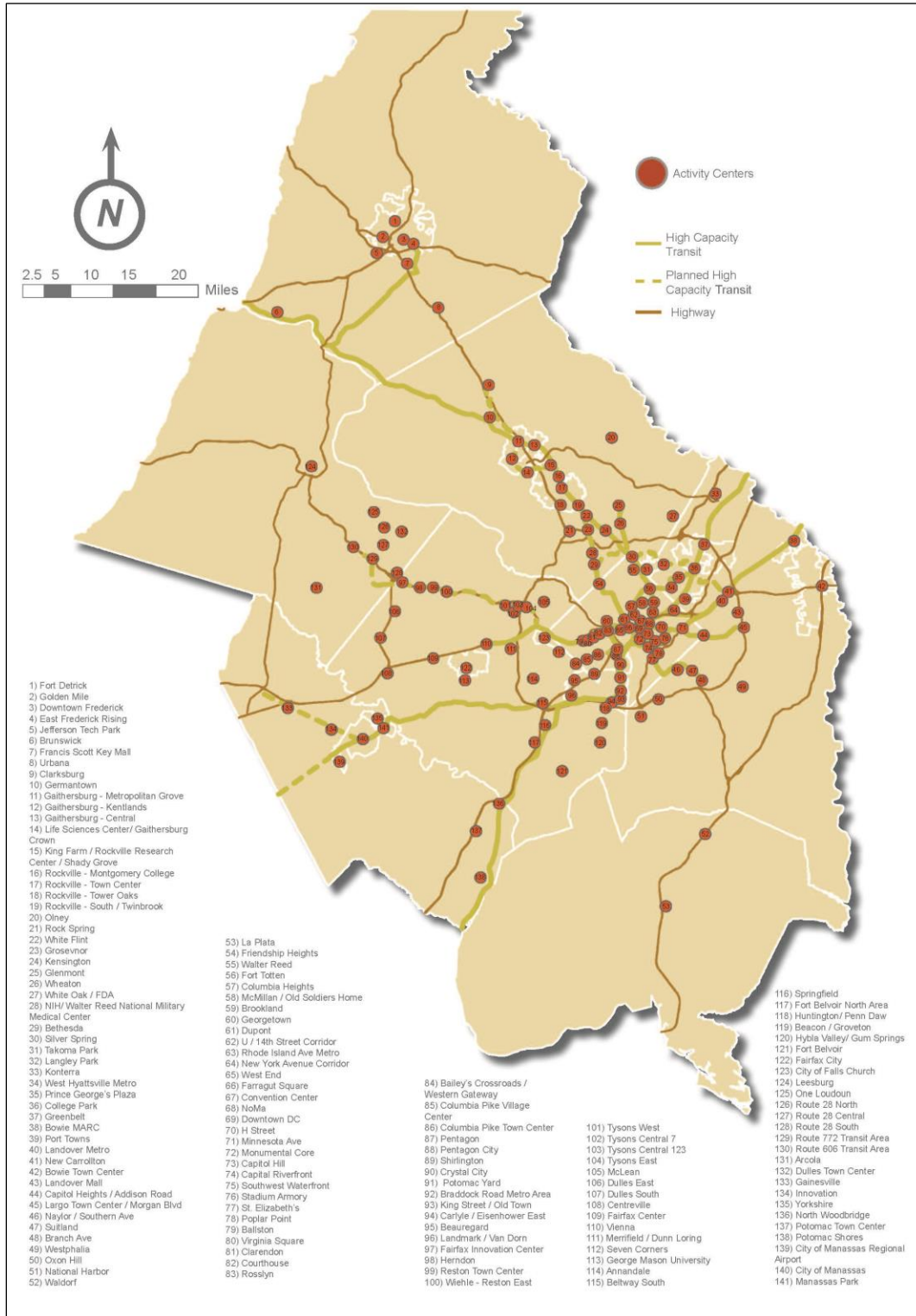
In the absence of state mandates for regional planning, there has been a rise in voluntary bottom-up efforts to manage regional growth which incorporate the principles of new regionalism. This is reflected in Denver -the case study of this report- where Metro Vision 2035 serves as the unifying document for regional planning and growth management. The purpose of this section is to discuss how case study regions are using urban centers as a growth management tool and discuss their similarities and differences to efforts taking place in Denver.

Washington D.C.

The Washington DC metropolitan region includes the seat of the federal government, two states, 23 counties and a multitude of municipalities. For years, this complex set of actors has hampered regional planning efforts but Washington DC is now taking a regional approach to growth management. In 2010, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) board approved its comprehensive guide for regional planning, Region Forward⁹. Region Forward focuses on dense nodes of mixed-use development referred to as activity centers.

The vision outlined in Region Forward is to “create a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous, and livable metropolitan Washington.”⁹ Region Forward places no requirements on local governments, instead engaging local jurisdictions to actively participate in the designation of activity centers. The Region Forward vision is for the majority of future growth to take place in nearly 140 identified activity centers. These activity centers were selected to reflect local plans and many are co-located with commuter, light rail, and Metro transit stations.

Figure 5: Region Forward -Regional Activity Centers



Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments -Region Forward

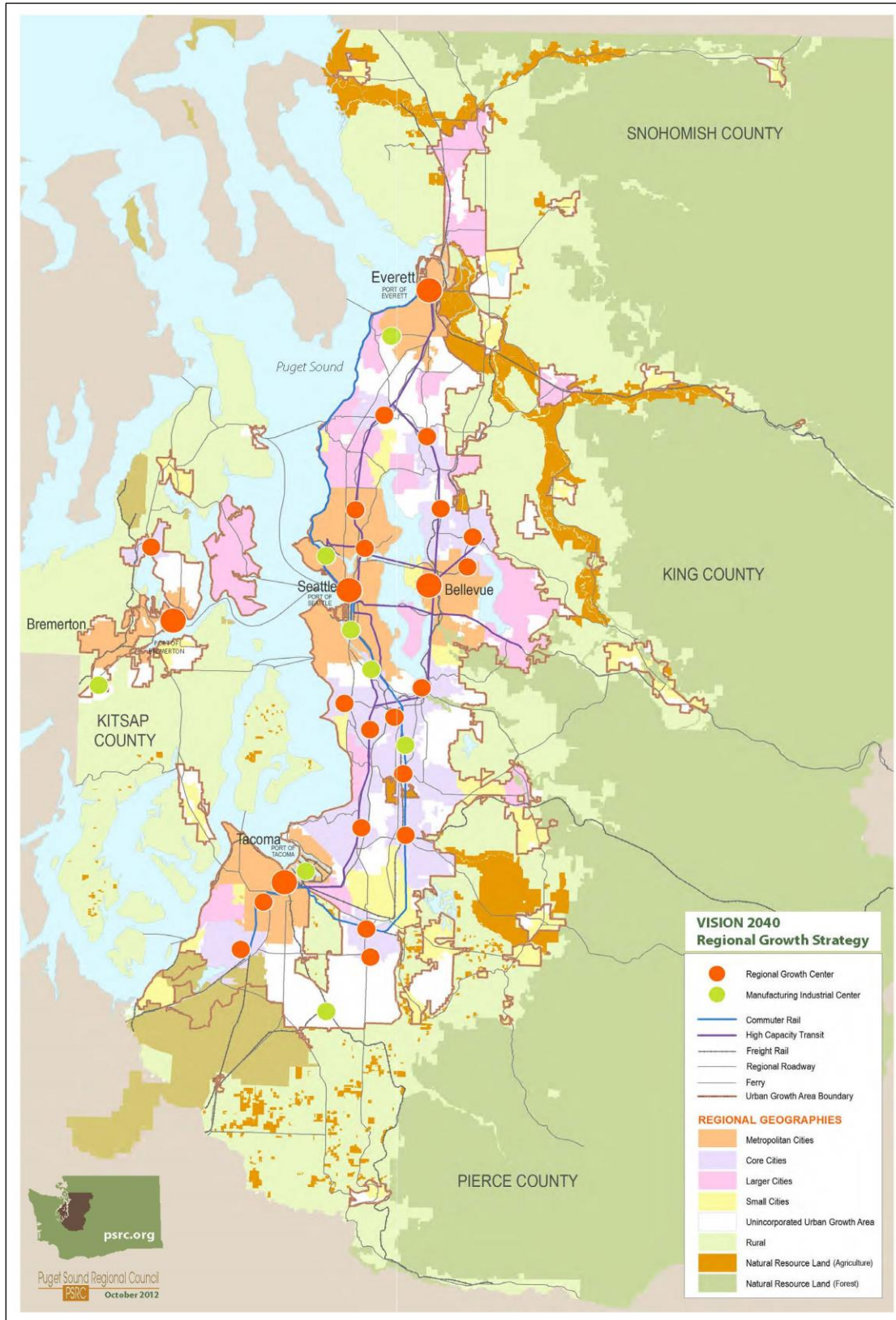
Seattle

Nearly 6,300 square miles in area, the central Puget Sound region captures the four counties and 82 cities and towns which are a part of the City of Seattle's direct influence area¹⁰. This vast region is governed by a variety of cities, towns, counties, and state agencies which come together to make decisions on regional issues through the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). PSRC works with member organizations to build a regional vision on issues of growth management, transportation investment, and economic development. As Seattle's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, PSRC prepares the region's long-range transportation plan, Transportation 2040, as well as the regional growth strategy, Vision 2040¹⁰.

The regional growth strategy, Vision 2040, provides a framework for achieving the goals of the 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act which mandates comprehensive planning in heavily populated areas of the state. With the expectation of continued growth in the central Puget Sound region, Vision 2040 plays an important role in providing a shared strategy for how and where growth will occur. Vision 2040 builds on previous iterations of the plan by focusing on the integration of land use and transportation planning through urban centers.

Urban centers are described in Vision 2040 as strategic places where a significant proportion of future population and employment growth will take place. Urban centers are characterized as compact, pedestrian-oriented nodes of development which correspond with the region's transportation network. Concentrating growth in urban centers is designed to allow the region to maximize existing infrastructure while minimizing the environmental impact of urban growth.

Figure 6: Vision 2040 Regional Growth Strategy



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council

San Francisco

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional planning agency and Council of Governments for the San Francisco Bay Area. Formed in 1961, ABAG's mission is to promote responsible planning through regional collaboration. Serving nine counties and 101 cities and towns, ABAG has projected that the region will grow by more than two million residents by 2040¹¹.

In an effort to help steer population and employment growth towards areas with existing infrastructure, ABAG and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) launched a regional growth initiative entitled FOCUS. Building on the collaborative nature of FOCUS, ABAG and MTC adopted Plan Bay Area, the region's integrated transportation land use plan, in 2013. Plan Bay Area turns to Priority Development Areas (akin to urban centers) as its primary tool for growth management.

Plan Bay Area enlists the goal of meeting 80% of the region's growth in designated Priority Development Areas¹¹. These are neighborhoods within walking distance of frequent transit service, offering a wide variety of housing options, and featuring amenities such as grocery stores, community centers, and restaurants. Plan Bay Area does not require the adoption of Priority Development Areas, however, the One Bay Area Grant Program (OBAG) is designed to reward jurisdictions that do. Local governments use OBAG grants for road improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, or other ongoing planning activities in Priority Development Areas.

Figure 7: Plan Bay Area –Transportation and Land Use

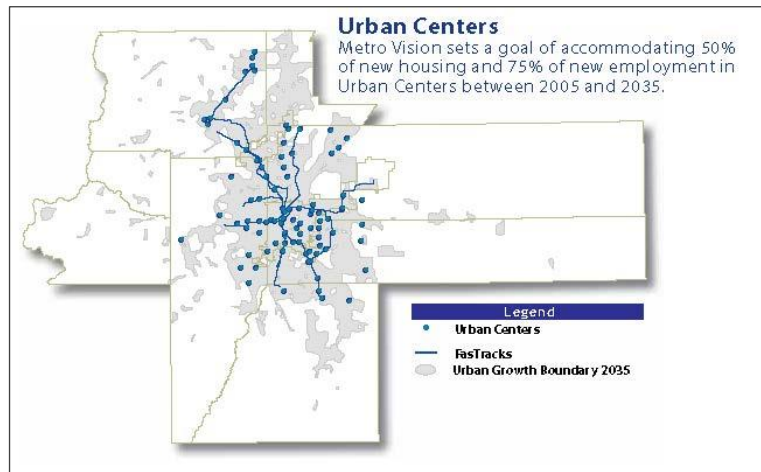


Source: Association of Bay Area Governments

Denver

In Denver, Colorado, the case study of this report, regional planning is organized according to Metro Vision 2035¹². Metro Vision 2035 is the latest in a series of long-range plans to manage growth and development throughout the Denver region. The plan outlines a set of strategies and corresponding actions designed to preserve the region's quality of life and position it to benefit from growth. As of 2011, 46 communities representing more than 90 percent of the region's population had signed the Mile High Compact – a voluntary agreement to adopt the principles of Metro Vision.

Figure 8: Metro Vision 2035 -Designated Urban Centers



Metro Vision's approach to growth management focuses on creating an integrated region of dense urban centers connected by a robust and varied transportation network. The vision of the urban centers concept is to create active, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-friendly places that have a higher density than surrounding areas. Urban centers which coincide with existing or proposed transit stations are given priority during the designation process.

In an effort to limit traffic congestion, improve regional air quality, and support the Regional Transportation District's (RTD) expanding light rail system DRCOG has set the goal of capturing 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new employment in designated urban centers through 2035. In order to help make this ambitious goal a reality, DRCOG provides resources and directs investment toward projects that contribute to the development of successful centers. As the federally designated MPO, DRCOG allocates funds from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) using a set of criteria which favors projects in urban centers. TIP funds are commonly used for infrastructure improvements or to assist in the development of small area plans for urban centers. Because the Metro Vision approach to urban centers is strictly voluntary, TIP funds play a large role in incentivizing local governments to adopt and actively plan for their growth.

For a more detailed account on DRCOG's efforts through Metro Vision see Chapter 3, Background and Context.

Significance of Case Study Regions

The approach Washington D.C., Seattle, and San Francisco take to regional growth management share similarities with the Denver region. Washington D.C. was selected because MWCOG's emphasis on activity centers in Region Forward is very similar to Denver's Metro Vision plan. Substituting activity centers for urban centers, Region Forward identifies locations where the majority of future growth will occur in the next 30 years. Similar to Denver,

Washington D.C. also has an existing transit network which plays a big role in the implementation of its activity centers. Seattle was selected as a case study region because it has similar population and growth rate to the Denver region. Seattle's transit system is also being expanded, although not as significantly as Denver's. Although the housing and commercial real estate market in the San Francisco Bay area far exceeds that of Denver, the Bay area is a useful case study region because of its built out transportation system and focus on local buy-in.

Like the three case study regions, new regionalism has not always been the obvious choice for the Denver region. The creation of the Inter-County Regional Planning Association (which later became the Denver Regional Council of Governments) in 1955 and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in 1969 were met with broad resistance from distrustful suburban communities unwilling to cede power to a regional authority¹³. This trend continued until intense competition for jobs, tax revenue, and infrastructure investment during the 1980s and 1990s led community leaders to push for a more cooperative approach to regional planning.

In 1993, the Denver Chamber of Commerce established the Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) as a voluntary, consensus-based forum for promoting collaborative planning¹³. This proved to be a major breakthrough as the MMC began working closely with DRCOG, RTD, and other state organizations. MMC served as a spring board for the planning process which led to the development of DRCOG's Metro Vision 2020 and the urban centers concept¹³. At the same time, RTD was steadily working towards the expansion of its light rail system through the Transportation Expansion Project (T-Rex) and FasTracks Program.

Case study regions reveal that Denver is not alone its efforts to plan for regional growth management using new regionalist principles. All three of the case study regions have regional plans which focus on urban centers and rely on inter-jurisdictional collaboration. Like Denver, these regions have moved towards collaborative regional planning incrementally over time.

Theories of Collaborative Metropolitan Regionalism

Literature on collaborative metropolitan regionalism in Denver suggests that the new regionalist approach of the 1990s and 2000s has made progress where past efforts failed. In "Suburban Sprawl or Urban Centres: Tensions and Contradictions of Smart Growth Approaches in Denver, Colorado" Andrew Goetz points to effective coalition building as a major driver behind this shift in fortune¹⁴. Goetz goes on to suggest that while early efforts to manage regional growth were often confrontational and contentious, the new regionalist approach has prioritized consensus building, regional identity, and the limitation of jurisdictional infighting.

Regional efforts to change Denver's low density, auto-oriented character prior to the 1990s had mixed results in part because they did not achieve the broad support needed to garner success. Since adopting a new regionalist approach, coalition building has been at the center of regional planning efforts. The Metro Vision process has brought local governments, the public, and the development community together in ways that have proven fruitful. Metro Vision's focus on fostering partnership with major players in the regional landscape, namely developers, has led to a wider embrace of its growth management principles¹⁴. In part this is due to the fact that

there is growing demand for mixed-use transit oriented development, however, it is also related to Denver's highly-collaborative regional process.

¹ National Association of Regional Councils: Accessed November 12, 2014 from <http://narc.org/>

² Lewis, Rebecca. "Traditional Regional Planning Organization Types in the United States." PPPM 541 Growth Management. Eugene, OR. 20 May 2015. Lecture.

³ Knaap, G., & Lewis, R. (2011). Regional Planning For Sustainability and Hegemony of Metropolitan Regionalism (Chapter 7). In E. Seltzer (Ed.), *Regional planning in America practice and prospect*. Cambridge, Mass.: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

⁴ Cliff Ellis (2001) Interstate Highways, Regional Planning and the Reshaping of Metropolitan America, *Planning Practice & Research*, 16:3-4, 247-269.

⁵ Weir, M. (2004). A Century of Debate about Regionalism and Metropolitan Government. *MacArthur Foundation*.

⁶ Marando, V., & Whitly, C. (1972) City-County Consolidation: An Overview of Voter Response. *Urban Affairs Review*, December 1972 8:181-203.

⁷ Seltzer, E., & Carbonell, A. (2011). Planning Regions (Chapter 1). In E. Seltzer (Ed.), *Regional planning in America practice and prospect*. Cambridge, Mass.: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Citing McKinney, M., & Johnson, S. *Working Across Boundaries*

⁸ Frisken, F., & Norris, D. (2001). Regionalism Reconsidered. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 23(5), 467-478.

⁹ MWCOG. (2010). Region Forward: A Comprehensive Guide for Regional Planning and Measuring Progress in the 21st Century. *Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments*.

¹⁰ PSRC. (2009). Vision 2040. *Puget Sound Regional Council*. [Seattle, WA] <http://www.psrc.org/growth/vision2040>

¹¹ ABAG. (2013). Plan Bay Area. *Association of Bay Area Governments*. [Oakland, CA] <http://www.planbayarea.org/plan-bay-area/final-plan-bay-area.html>

¹² Denver Regional Council of Governments. Metro Vision 2035 Plan. [Denver, CO] 2011. Print.

¹³ Jonas, A., Goetz, A., & Bhattacharjee, S. (2013). City-regionalism as a Politics of Collective Provision: Regional Transport Infrastructure in Denver, USA. *Urban Studies* 51 (11), 2444-65. doi:10.1177/0042098013493480.

¹⁴ Goetz, A. (2013). Suburban Sprawl or Urban Centres: Tensions and Contradictions of Smart Growth Approaches in Denver, Colorado. *Urban Studies* 50 (11), 2178–95. doi:10.1177/0042098013478238

Chapter 3: Background and Context

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background on regional planning in the Denver region. The following sections seek to establish a base of knowledge about the history, land use patterns, and approach to regional planning in the Denver region in order to set the stage for project findings and conclusions. Detailed information on each case study community is included in this section as well.

HISTORY OF THE REGION

Known as the “Mile High City,” Denver sits at an elevation of 5,280 feet at the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains. Located in north central Colorado, the City of Denver was founded in 1858 at the juncture of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek by a group of gold prospectors from Lawrence, Kansas. This group, led by General William H. Larimer, chose the name for the City in an effort to gain favor with then Governor of the Kansas Territory, James W. Denver¹.

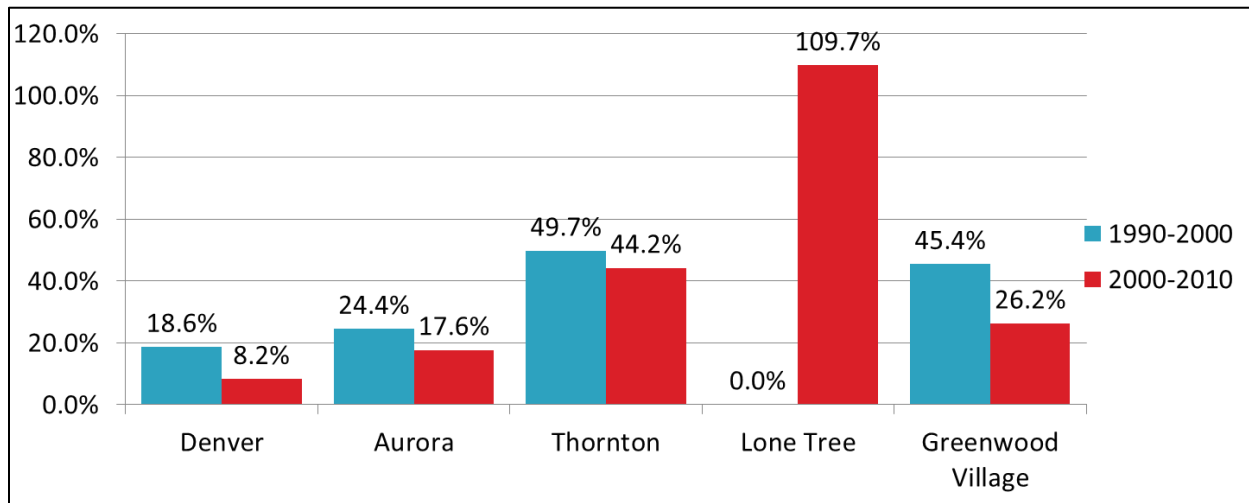
Denver’s early growth was fueled by the discovery of gold. When the railroad arrived in 1870 it jumpstarted a period of rapid growth which helped transform the city into a hub of regional activity. Home to just 4,759 residents in 1870, Denver’s population grew to over 100,000 by 1890². As the city grew so too did its importance within the region. During this time, Denver emerged as Colorado’s hub for culture, entertainment, finance, and transportation. When Colorado became a state in 1876, Denver was named the capital.

Following the crash of the silver market in 1893, Denver was forced to diversify its economy in order to stay relevant. During the early part of the 20th century wheat, sugar beets and ranching became agricultural mainstays while brick making, canning, flour milling and rubber manufacturing developed into industrial staples. Subsequently, this transformation made it possible for Denver to maintain its status as an important center for transportation and commerce.

Today, Denver’s economy is grounded in electronic, computers, aviation, and telecommunication. Denver is also home to large number of federal employees who work for the United States Geological Survey, the United States Air Force, the Bureau of Land Management, and other federal agencies¹.

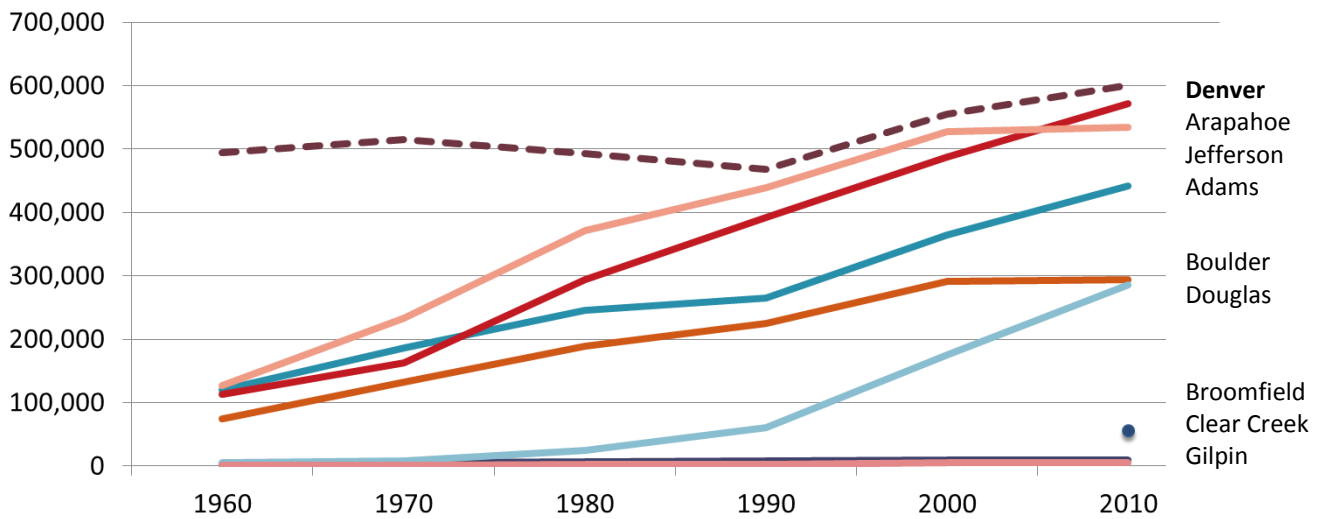
Population growth in the Denver region has been taking place at a remarkable pace over the past several decades. In 1990, the population of the City of Denver was 467,610 and the metro region was home to 1,980,140 residents³. By 2010, these numbers had grown to 600,158 living in the City of Denver and 2,543,482 in the metro region⁴. While growth and development has touched the entire region the majority of new development has taken place in suburban communities outside the central city. In 1970, Denver’s share of the region’s population was about 42 percent². By 2010, only about 24 percent of the region’s population lived in Denver. Figure one provides a look at how the nine counties in the DRCOG service area have grown by decade since 1960.

Figure 9: Growth Rate in Case Study Communities



Source: US Census Bureau via Social Explorer⁴

Figure 10: County Population by Decade



Source: US Census Bureau via Social Explorer⁴

*Note- Broomfield County was incorporated in 2001

Sustained growth on the periphery has pushed leaders in the Denver region to think strategically about the extent and location of future development. This focus is reflected in the region’s primary set of strategic planning documents, Denver Regional Council of Governments’ (DRCOG) Metro Vision plans.

FASTRACKS: RTD LIGHT RAIL EXPANSION

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) is the regional transportation provider for the Denver area. Servicing an eight county region, RTD provides light rail, commuter rail, park and ride, and rapid bus transit to greater Denver. RTD operations are primarily funded by sales tax revenues and passenger fares. Sales tax revenues account for close to 70% of revenues while passenger fares account for an additional 30%⁵.

Light rail first came to Denver in 1994 when RTD opened the 5.3 mile Central Corridor stretching from the 30th & Downing Station to the I-25 & Broadway Station. The Central Corridor connected the Five Points Business District, downtown Denver, and the University of Denver Auraria campus. As high-levels of traffic congestion continued to plague the region, the completion of the Central Corridor was followed by the construction of the 8.7 mile Southwest Line in 2000 and the 19.1 mile Southeast Line in 2006.

With five stations and nearly 2,600 commuter parking spaces, the Southwest Line extended RTD's system as far south as Littleton. Running along the I-25 right-of-way the Southeast Line extended the light rail system to the University of Denver, the Denver Tech Center, and beyond. The initial build out of the Southeast Line extended as far south as Lincoln Station in Lone Tree and included an additional connector along I-225.

In addition to providing a valuable transit link, the Southeast Line is notable because of the way it was financed. The \$1.67 billion project -dubbed the Transportation Expansion Project (T-Rex)- was funded in 1999 by voter approved bond issues. This showed popular support for light rail expansion in the Denver region just two years after a similar initiative, Guide the Ride failed at the ballot box⁶. When T-Rex was completed ahead of schedule and under budget it set the stage for the FasTracks program.

Following the success of the T-Rex Project, and RTD placed a bold initiative for light rail expansion on the ballot in 2004 which gained 58 percent voter approval⁷. Known as the FasTracks program, the project will add 122 miles of new light rail along with 18 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT) and 57 transit stations to the RTD system⁸. The 12-year \$4.7 billion dollar price tag is funded by a 0.4 percent sales tax increase⁹. The FasTracks program includes construction along nine existing and new transit lines.

Southwest Light Rail Extension

The FasTracks program will extend the Southwest Rail Line an additional 2.5 miles south to a newly constructed station at C-470 & Lucent Boulevard. The C-470 & Lucent Boulevard Station will include a 1,000 space Park-n-Ride facility. In the future, another station may be built along the extended Southwest Line, however, this will require additional planning as well as funding beyond the scope of the FasTracks Program.

Southeast Light Rail Extension

An additional 2.3 miles along the Southeast Line is planned as part of the FasTracks program. This extension, set to open in 2019, will include three new stations –Sky Ridge, Lone Tree City

Center, and RidgeGate- all located in the City of Lone Tree. During peak hours the extended corridor will have a service frequency of 6 minutes¹⁰.

I-225 Rail Line (R Line)

Construction is currently underway on the 10.5 mile I-225 Rail Line which primarily serves the City of Aurora. Set to open in 2015, the I-225 Line will provide a direct connection between the Southeast Line's Nine Mile Station and the East Line's Peoria Station. Eight new stations are a part of the project including Iliff, Florida, Aurora Metro Center, 2nd & Abilene, 13th Avenue, Colfax, Fitzsimons, and Peoria. This connector route will open up Aurora and provide improved access to major job centers including the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Fitzsimons Science District and Denver airport.

East Rail Line (A Line)

Construction on RTD's East Rail Line began in 2010 and is set for completion in 2016. The 22.8 mile transit line will connect Denver Union Station to Denver International Airport and will include 6 new transit stations -38th & Blake, 40th & Colorado, Central Park, Peoria, Gateway Park, and Denver International Airport¹¹. Also known as the A Line, the East Line services Denver and Aurora on its route to the Airport.

North Metro Rail Line (N Line)

The North Metro Line is an 18.5 mile light rail corridor which roughly parallels I-25 and extends from downtown Denver into the northern suburbs of Commerce City, Northglenn, and Thornton. The first phase of this project will include six stations and extend 13 miles north to the Eastlake Station in Thornton¹². Pending future funding, two additional stations will be added to the route at a later date.

Northwest Rail Line

Initially conceived as a 41-mile commuter rail from downtown Denver to Boulder and eventually Longmont, the Northwest Rail Line has been scaled back due to cost overruns. While the plans for the full segment remain in place, construction under the FasTracks program will extend the commuter rail line as far as Westminster. The FasTracks program now includes a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line along US 36, dubbed the Flatiron Flyer which will provide serve as the commuter link between downtown Denver and Boulder.

Gold Line (G Line)

Full construction on the Gold line began in 2011 and is scheduled for completion in 2016. Serving the western side of the metro region, the Gold Line will bring eight new transit stations to Denver, North Washington, Berkley, Arvada, and Wheat Ridge. Dubbed the G Line, the 11.2 mile light rail line will connect into the RTD's wider system via Union Station¹³.

West Rail Line (W Line)

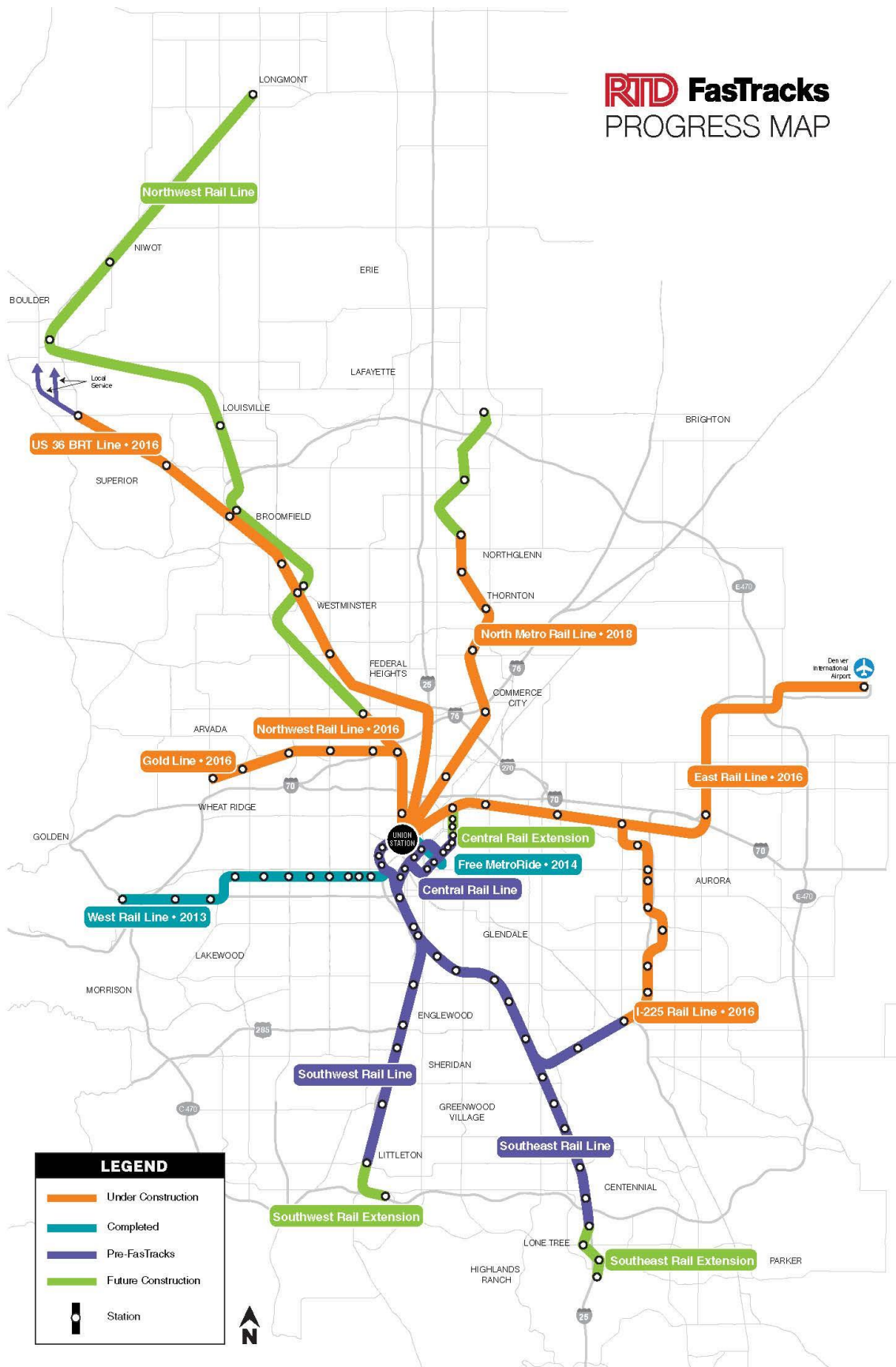
In April 2013, the West Rail Line (or W Line) was the first light rail line to open as part of the FasTracks program. The 12.1 mile transit corridor stretches westward from Denver Union Station to Jefferson County Government Center in Golden. Along the way there are 11 new

transit stations and nearly 5,000 commuter parking spaces¹⁴. The West Rail Line is bringing light rail service to Denver's western suburbs for the first time. Commuters in Lakewood and Golden can now utilize RTD's light rail system to travel to downtown Denver and across the existing system.

Central Rail Extension

The Central Rail Extension will improve Denver's first light rail corridor by adding additional mileage and providing a direct link from downtown Denver to the East Rail Line's 38th & Blake Station. The extension will provide for faster transfers and better access throughout the RTD transit system. Two new stations will be built as part of the project -33rd & Downing and 35th & Downing. The 38th & Blake Station, which is also part of the East Line, will be a new station as well.

Figure 11: RTD FasTracks Map



Source: Regional Transportation District

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (DRCOG)

Formed in 1955 (initially named the Inter-County Regional Planning Association), the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments which serves the Denver metropolitan region¹⁵. Designated by the State of Colorado as the regional planning commission, DRCOG works across jurisdictional boundaries to set the guidelines for future growth and development across the region. DRCOG's service area incorporates nine member counties and 47 cities and towns. The list of counties served includes Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties¹⁶.

DRCOG also serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the Denver region and the Water Quality Management Planning Agency. MPOs are regional agencies which are responsible for transportation planning and the allocation of federal transportation funding in metropolitan areas with populations greater than 50,000 people¹⁷.

DRCOG is responsible for preparing and maintaining the regional plan, Metro Vision, which serves as the framework for the physical development of the Denver region.

METRO VISION

With Metro Vision 2040 in development, Metro Vision 2035 is the latest in a series of long-range plans to manage growth and development throughout the Denver region. The plan outlines a set of strategies and corresponding actions designed to preserve the region's quality of life and position it to benefit from projected growth.

Metro Vision 2035 builds off Metro Vision 2020 (released in 1997) and Metro Vision 2030 (Released in 2005) as well as older regional planning efforts such as the Metro Growth Plan (1961), the Regional Growth and Development Plan (1978), and the Regional Development Framework (1985)¹⁸.

Starting with Metro Vision 2020, each iteration of the plan has focused on a set of "core elements" which define the overall vision. Extent of development, transportation, and environmental quality have been consistent themes along with specific focal areas such as free-standing communities and urban centers. As part of Metro Vision 2035, these elements provide a roadmap that integrates regional growth and development; transportation; and environmental management into one comprehensive document which guides policy decisions made by the DRCOG Board of Directors.

Metro Vision 2020 was prompted by a desire to bring local governments together to plan for the region's collective future. It is an evolving conversation which is collaborative in nature and voluntary in its implementation.

The six core principles of Metro Vision are¹⁸:

- To protect and enhance the region's quality of life;

- To be aspirational and long-range in focus;
- Offer direction for local implementation;
- Respect local plans;
- Encourage communities to work together; and
- That the plan is dynamic and flexible

One way local governments show their commitment to Metro Vision is by signing the Mile High Compact. By signing this voluntary intergovernmental agreement, local governments pledge to take the following actions:

- Adopt a comprehensive land use plan that includes a common set of elements;
- Use growth management tools such as zoning regulations, urban growth boundaries and development codes;
- Link their comprehensive plans to Metro Vision, which outlines regional growth management; and
- Work collaboratively to guide growth and ensure planning consistency.

As of 2011, 46 communities representing more than 90 percent of the region’s population had signed the Mile High Compact¹⁹. All five of the case study communities in this report have signed the Mile High Compact.

URBAN CENTERS CONCEPT

Metro Vision 2035 takes a variety of approaches to guiding growth. One approach, the designation of ‘urban centers,’ is designed to encourage the proliferation of dense nodes of mixed-use development throughout the Denver region. The vision of the urban centers concept is to create active, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-friendly places that have a higher density than surrounding areas. Metro Vision prioritizes urban centers which coincide with existing or proposed RTD transit stations.

DRCOG has set the goal to capture 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new employment in designated urban centers between 2005 and 2035¹⁹. In order to help make this ambitious goal a reality, DRCOG provides resources and directs investment towards projects that contribute to the development of successful centers. One example is the use of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funds for infrastructure improvements or the development of small area plans for urban centers.

DRCOG’s strong focus on urban centers prompts the question, “how are local governments responding?” To answer this question, we look to the case study communities which are analyzed as a part of this study.

CASE STUDY COMMUNITIES

The following section provides a brief overview of the five case study communities investigated as a part of this study: Denver, Aurora, Thornton, Lone Tree, and Greenwood Village. These community profiles include a short discussion on the history, population trends, urban form,

current planning, and future aspirations of each city. Demographic data from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey provide additional context.

Denver

Denver is the largest city in and capital of Colorado. The City was founded in 1858 as a mining town known as Denver City. The City and County of Denver occupy the same geographic space, covering 155 square miles. As of 2012 the population was estimated to be 604,356.

Denver is built on a grid pattern with narrow blocks. As Denver grew from west to east, it expanded along its extensive streetcar system which reached its height in 1893. Over the past sixty years, development moved from the urban areas of the Central Business District, to the inner ring suburbs south along I-25 and east along Colfax Avenue. Denver uses a number of different types of plans depending on the geography specified. These plans range from citywide plans and initiatives, to small area plans, and general development plans. The City is currently guided by the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and an integrated land use and transportation plan entitled, Blueprint Denver.

The City of Denver is currently experiencing an increased rate of infill development following years of low density, auto-oriented development. Much of the infill and redevelopment in Denver is occurring on the northeast side of the city in areas such as Lowry, Stapleton, and the Denver International Airport. Surrounded by incorporated suburbs on all sides, Denver is entirely landlocked. This has led the City to place a strong focus on infill development. The majority of infill development is taking place around newly developed commuter rail stations and along the I-70 corridor.

Aurora

The City of Aurora incorporated in 1891 as the town of Fletcher. Originally just four square miles, Aurora is now the third largest city in Colorado. Today, Aurora is approximately 154 square miles and home to 326,249 residents (2012 estimate)⁴.

Older sections of Aurora feature traditional town planning – narrow lots with streets based on a grid pattern. As the city grew to the south and east, the development pattern became increasingly suburban. Post-war subdivisions have curvilinear residential streets, cul-de-sacs and strip commercial development along arterial roads. Due to rapid growth during this period, the majority of Aurora’s housing stock was built during the 1970s and 1980s.

Aurora’s first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1973. More recent plans include the 1998, 2003, and 2009 comprehensive plans. The 1998 Aurora Comprehensive Plan established “a framework for neighborhood design” calling for localized activity centers²⁰. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan expanded on the concept calling for urban centers across the city, especially where transit access is available. Light rail reached Aurora when the Southeast Rail Line opened two stations in 2006 –the Dayton Street Station and Nine Mile Station. Since 2007, the city has been preparing a series of station area plans for Aurora’s existing and planned light rail passenger stations.

A considerable amount of redevelopment and infill is occurring in Aurora with the majority of the growth is taking place along the E-470 corridor – often in the form of master planned communities. Development is also expected to take place around the ten light rail stations scheduled to be built along the I-225 Rail line opening in 2016. Station areas are envisioned as dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented centers which support a diverse mix of people and activities. Community leaders hope to see the development of a mixture of housing types in station areas. This stems from a desire to infuse more housing for higher income residents into the community.

Thornton

Thornton is located due north of Denver and borders the communities of Northglenn, Westminster, Broomfield, and Commerce City to name a few. Interstate-25 runs through parts of Thornton and forms a portion of its western border. Incorporated in 1956, Thornton has historically been a bedroom community with large numbers of residents commuting to downtown Denver for work.

The City of Thornton experienced rapid growth from the mid-1970s to the economic downturn during the mid-2000s. The pace of growth is characterized by the fact that in 1990 the City's population was estimated to be 55,031⁴. By 2010, Thornton had grown to a city of 118,772 residents⁴.

Thornton is suburban in nature and dominated by low density residential development. The community's urban form consists of curvilinear neighborhood streets framed by built arterial roads built on a grid. The incorporated areas of the city are expansive with a boundary which is fragmented and jumpy. Large sections of either unincorporated areas or neighboring communities intermingle with much of the Thornton community. The City is well served by freeway access including I-25 and the toll road E-470.

Thornton's first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1974. This plan was updated in 1985 and then again in 1997. Since the turn of the new millennium, Thornton adopted a 2007 comprehensive plan and more recently its 2012 comprehensive plan.

In 2018, a 12.5 mile segment of the North Metro Rail Line will begin service to Thornton. The initial build out is scheduled to have six stations, three of which will be located in the City of Thornton. These include the 88th Avenue Station, 104th Avenue Station and 124th Avenue/ Eastlake Station. The 112th Avenue Station is immediately adjacent to the City of Thornton and requires attention from local planning officials as well²¹. The North Metro Rail Line is located east of the I-25 corridor and runs roughly parallel to the interstate route.

While no timeline has been identified, RTD plans to extend the North Metro Rail Line an additional six miles in the future. When this expansion takes place two additional stations will be built in Thornton – the 144th Avenue Station and the 162nd Street Station²¹.

Lone Tree

Lone Tree is located on the southeast edge of the Denver Metropolitan Region. Incorporated in 1995, Lone Tree is a young city which formed in response to growing concerns about development along the C-470 corridor. Lone Tree is a small community which was home to 10,941 residents in 2012⁴. Up from 4,873 residents in 2000⁴.

Lone Tree is defined by curvilinear streets built in a suburban style. The city annexed the 3,500 acre master planned community of RidgeGate in 2000 and the Park Meadows Mall in 2006. The Sky Ridge Medical Center was built in Lone Tree in 2003.

In 2006 the Southeast Rail Line arrived in Lone Tree with the dedication of two transit stations - Lincoln Station and County Line Station, the latter of which is located on the border of Englewood and provides access to the Park Meadows Mall. Three additional stations –Sky Ridge, Lone Tree City Center, and RidgeGate Parkway- are scheduled to be built in Lone Tree as a part of the Southeast Rail Extension set for completion in 2019¹⁰.

Lone Tree’s first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1996. This was followed by the 2008 comprehensive plan. In 2010, Lone Tree published a three page addendum to the 2008 plan.

The vision statement in Lone Tree’s 2008 Comprehensive Plan focuses on creating a vibrant city, with a “full spectrum of community amenities and services, based upon high quality design, environmental sensitivity, sustainability, and careful decision making”²².

Greenwood Village

Greenwood Village is located along the southern border of Denver and neighbors Centennial, Englewood, Littleton, and the Cherry Creek Reservoir. Originally settled by gold seekers during the 1860s, Greenwood Village maintained much of its rural character through the first half of the last century. By 1950, however, the push of development from Denver convinced all 138 residents to cast their vote in favor of incorporation, thus creating the Town of Greenwood Village. In 2012, 13,932 people called Greenwood Village home⁴.

The Denver Tech Center (DTC), an economic and business center established in 1970, is located along the I-25 corridor in both Greenwood Village and Denver. A major job center for the Denver region, the DTC defines much of eastern Greenwood Village. Western Greenwood Village can be characterized as suburban with large lots and a predominance of large single-family homes.

Greenwood Village’s current plan was adopted in 2004 and updated in 2012.

Completed in 2006, RTD’s Southeast Line serves Greenwood Village with three stations - Orchard Road Station, Arapahoe Road Station, and Dayton Street (located at I-225) Station. The Belleview Avenue Station is located just outside of Greenwood Village in the heart of the Denver Tech Center. Greenwood Village’s aspirational goals include promoting the Village Center as a focal point and public transportation and high density development.

Figure 12: Demographic Summary Table

City	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Below Poverty Line (Families)	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	Hispanic or Latino
Denver	\$32,597	\$246,300	14.3%	68.9%	10.2%	31.8%
Aurora	\$24,528	\$179,400	12.8%	61.1%	15.8%	28.7%
Thornton	\$26,566	\$207,600	7.6%	77.4%	1.8%	31.7%
Lone Tree	\$58,133	\$445,600	2.2%	87.2%	1.6%	6.2%
Greenwood Village	\$80,409	\$742,700	2.6%	87.7%	1.6%	4.5%

Source: US Census Bureau via Social Explorer⁴

Figure 13: Community Overview

City	Population (DATE)	Growth Rate by Decade	Location	Transit	General Plan Updates
Denver	604,356 (2012)	1990 467,610 2000 554,636 18.6% 2010 600,158 8.2% 2012 604,356 0.7%	Central Central City	- 3,120 bus stops - 94 bus routes - 14 Park & Rides - 37 current and future rail stations	2000, various small area plans available
Aurora	326,249 (2012)	1990 222,103 2000 276,393 24.4% 2010 325,078 17.6% 2012 326,249 0.4%	Southeast Inner ring suburb	- 1,037 bus stops - 34 bus routes - 4 Park & Rides - 10 current and future rail stations - 1 current light rail line - 1 future light rail line	1998 2003 2009
Thornton	118,747 (2012)	1990 55,031 2000 82,384 49.7% 2010 118,772 44.2% 2012 118,747 0.0%	North Outer ring suburb	- 17 bus routes - 218 bus stops - 1 Park & Ride - 5 future stations - 1 future line	1985 1997 2007 2012
Lone Tree	10,941 (2012)	1990 NA 2000 4,873 2010 10,218 109.7% 2012 10,941 7.1%	South Outer ring suburb	- 6 bus routes - 30 bus stops - 2 current and 3 future stations - 1 light rail line	1996 2008 2010 Plan Addendum
Greenwood Village	13,932 (2012)	1990 7,589 2000 11,035 45.4% 2010 13,925 26.2% 2012 13,932 0.1%	South Central Inner ring suburb	- 11 bus routes - 96 bus stops - 3 Park & Rides - 2 stations - 3 light rail lines	2004 (amended in 2012)

Source: US Census Bureau via Social Explorer⁴

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- ¹ Goldfield, D. (2007). *Encyclopedia of American urban history*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. <http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/urbanhistory/n122.xml>
- ² Denver (Colorado). Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000: A Vision for Denver and its People. [Denver, CO] The City [2000]. (Pg. 18, Pg. 49) http://www.denvergov.org/portals/747/documents/planning/master_plans/comp_plan/compplan2000.pdf
- ³ Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. <https://www.census.gov/popest/data/metro/totals/1990s/tables/MA-99-01.txt>
- ⁴ Social Explorer Tables(SE), Census 2010, Census Bureau; Social Explorer
- ⁵ Transit Economics. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2015, from <http://www.rtd-denver.com/transitEconomics.shtml>
- ⁶ Whaley, M. (n.d.). Denver is being transformed by FasTracks, 10 years after key vote. Retrieved May 16, 2015.
- ⁷ Grescoe, T. (n.d.). How Denver Is Becoming the Most Advanced Transit City in the West. Retrieved April 24, 2015, from <http://www.citylab.com/commute/2014/06/how-denver-is-becoming-the-most-advanced-transit-city-in-the-west/373222/>
- ⁸ "2015 Fact Sheet -General." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/main/FT_Gen_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_2015.pdf
- ⁹ Rail Conference, & American Public Transportation Association. (2006). *Proceedings: Rail Conference : June 11-14, 2006, Hilton New York, New York, NY*. Washington, DC: APTA.
- ¹⁰ "2015 Fact Sheet –Southeast Rail Extension." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/se/SERE_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_2015.pdf
- ¹¹ "2015 Fact Sheet –East Rail Line." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/ec/East_Rail_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_2015.pdf
- ¹² 2015 Fact Sheet –North Metro Rail Line." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/nm/NM_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_2015.pdf
- ¹³ "2015 Fact Sheet –Gold Line." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/gl/GL_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_2015.pdf
- ¹⁴ "2015 Fact Sheet –West Rail Line." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/wc/WRL_Fact_Sheet_2014_FasTracks_version.pdf
- ¹⁵ About DRCOG. (n.d.). Retrieved April 18, 2015, from <https://www.drcog.org/about-drcog/about-drcog>
- ¹⁶ Member Governments. (n.d.). Retrieved April 18, 2015, from <https://www.drcog.org/about-drcog/member-governments>
- ¹⁷ Knaap, G., & Lewis, R. (2011). Regional Planning For Sustainability and Hegemony of Metropolitan Regionalism (Chapter 7). In E. Seltzer (Ed.), *Regional planning in America practice and prospect*. Cambridge, Mass.: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- ¹⁸ DRCOG. (n.d.). Metro Vision. Retrieved April 19, 2015, from <https://www.drcog.org/planning-great-region/metro-vision>

¹⁹ Denver Regional Council of Governments. Metro Vision 2035 Plan. [Denver, CO] 2011. Print.

²⁰ Aurora (Colorado). 2009 City of Aurora Comprehensive Plan. [Aurora, CO] Chapter IV. A. -Managing the Geography of Growth (Pg. 5)

²¹ "2015 Fact Sheet –North Metro Rail Line." Regional Transportation District. http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/nm/NM_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_2015.pdf

²² Lone Tree (Colorado). City of Lone Tree Comprehensive Plan 2008. [Lone Tree, CO] The City [2008]. Print. (Pg. 1-2)

Chapter 4: Summary of Findings

Drawing on the discussion in the previous three chapters, the purpose of chapter 4 is to describe key findings which emerged during the course of this study. This chapter includes a set of lessons learned as well as a discussion on research implications.

PLAN THEMES

The purpose of this section is to discuss the plan analysis which was conducted as a part of this project. During the plan analysis stage, eight local plans and three iterations of DRCOG’s Metro Vision regional plan were evaluated. The results of this evaluation are outlined in this section using general terms.

Plan Analysis Search Term

Figure 14: Plan Analysis Search Terms

Category	Search Term
Urban Center Related Terms	Regional Center
	Community Center
	Neighborhood Center
	Urban Center
	Employment Center
	Regional Activity Center
	Community Activity Center
	Neighborhood Activity Center
	Urban Activity Center
	Multi-Purpose Center
	Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
Plans & Program Terms	FasTracks
	Metro Vision
Agency Terms	Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
	Regional Transportation District (RTD)

Implementation Scoring

As discussed in chapter 1 of this document, an implementation score is assigned to each search term based on how it is used in a given document. Implementation scoring is determined using the following guidelines⁴:

⁴ For full documentation of plan analysis, see Appendix A

No Implementation (Score of 0): Term not mentioned, term mentioned but not in reference to urban centers concept, or term mentioned but without any implementation.

Weak Implementation (Score of 1): Implementation of term mentioned infrequently, only using general language, and in places with low visibility.

Medium Implementation (Score of 2): Implementation of term mentioned but either in general language or in places with low visibility.

Strong Implementation (Score of 3): Implementation of term mentioned frequently and in specific terms which are highly visible within the plan.

Three primary benchmarks are used to determine the implementation score each term receives –specificity of language, visibility, and frequency. A combination of these three factors is used to assign each term with one overall implementation score. Each of the three figures below provides additional details on how scoring takes place.

Evolution of Plan Language in Metro Vision

Adopted in 1997, Metro Vision 2020 defines urban centers as “a range of activity centers in the region that serve as transit destinations; support range of retail, civic, cultural, employment and housing; contain higher densities than the regional average; and encourage pedestrian-oriented travel.” While this definition has evolved somewhat over time the concept remains the same. Metro Vision 2030 defines urban centers as “areas of concentrated development that are mixed-use, pedestrian friendly, and accessible to a wide variety of transportation modes.” Metro Vision goes on to note that urban centers “will be served by transit, either rapid transit or bus, and also will support transit by providing riders and pedestrian-oriented environments.”

Metro Vision 2020 makes a point that the “identification and implementation of various types of urban centers is a continuing effort.” By the time Metro Vision 2030 was adopted in January of 2005 DRCOG had begun classifying urban centers as mixed-use centers, activity centers, or regional centers. Metro Vision 2030 identified mixed-use centers as “high intensity, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use locations providing a range of retail, business, civic and residential opportunities.” Activity centers were characterized as being similar to mixed-use centers but with more focus on employment and less focus on the residential component. Finally, regional corridors were defined as linear centers which follow a major transportation corridor.

Another key evolution which emerged in through Metro Vision 2030 was the inclusion of a short list of urban center policies. The policies –which cover location, future regional growth, infrastructure investment, and design of urban centers- are broad in scope but their inclusion does mark a contrast with Metro Vision 2020. Metro Vision 2030 also includes specific urban center implementation actions. These include a call for DRCOG to work with local governments to identify future urban centers, monitor the performance of centers, and coordinate transportation planning and funding to support the development of urban centers.

When Metro Vision 2035 was adopted in 2011, the biggest evolution to emerge was the goal that “urban centers will accommodate 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new

employment between 2005 and 2035.” The specificity of this language is clear and measurable, something that was absent in both of the previous Metro Vision plans. In addition to this, Metro Vision 2035 also included a greater number of urban center policies which featured a greater level of specificity.

A key note which came out during our interview with DRCOG was that in the early years of the urban center concept, the designation criteria emphasized employment density. At the time, DRCOG relied heavily on expected employment density in center designation. Over time, DRCOG has recalibrated the criteria to incorporate a richer variety of uses.

Figure 15: Metro Vision Centers Concept

DRCOG Metro Vision	Urban Center Definition	Center Types	Implementation Measures
<p>MV 2020</p> <p>Adopted March, 1997</p>	<p>A range of activity centers in the region that serve as transit destinations; support retail, employment and housing; contain higher densities than the regional average; and encourage pedestrian-oriented travel.</p>	<p><u>Range of urban centers which include:</u> Denver central business district, regional centers, town centers, employment/mixed use centers, activity centers, community centers, neighborhood centers, and neighborhood nodes</p>	<p>“The identification and implementation of the various types of urban centers is a continuing effort.”</p> <p>“The Metro Vision Policy Committee has prepared a process for regional recognition of locally planned urban centers, which was accepted by the Board of Directors on August 20, 1998.”</p>
<p>MV 2030</p> <p>Adopted Jan. 2005</p>	<p>Concentrated areas of mixed use development which are active, pedestrian-friendly, with employment, housing and services in close proximity to each other. Served by transit. Intended to accommodate new pop. and employment growth within the urban area</p>	<p><u>Three types of urban centers:</u> <u>Mixed-Use Centers-</u> High-intensity, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use locations providing a range of retail, business, civic and residential opportunities for the surrounding trade area. <u>Activity Centers-</u> Similar to mixed-use centers, but focused mostly on employment. They may not contain the same mix of uses, particularly residential.</p>	<p>“Metro Vision supports the development of urban centers by focusing infrastructure investment in related roadway, transit & pedestrian facilities.”</p> <p>“ Innovative planning, zoning and urban design strategies are encouraged to promote mixed-use development and pedestrian activity within urban centers, increasing the likelihood that they will develop successfully & achieve other policy objectives.”</p> <p>“Monitor the performance of identified urban centers to determine if they’re achieving projected employment and population densities.”</p> <p>“Continue to identify additional locations where urban centers can be developed.”</p> <p>“Coordinate transportation planning</p>

		<p><i>Regional Corridors</i> have some residential component, but are distinguished by their larger size and linear characteristics.</p>	<p>activities and the funding of specific transportation improvements to support development of urban centers and TOD.”</p> <p>“Research and discuss the appropriateness of identifying additional types of urban centers, including neighborhood centers and commercial corridors.</p> <p>“Support private-sector actions that implement urban center goals.”</p>
<p>MV 2035</p> <p>Adopted Feb. 2011</p>	<p>Active, pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly places that are more dense and mixed in use than surrounding areas</p>	<p>Not mentioned</p>	<p>“DRCOG will take a proactive role in identifying opportunities, providing resources and directing investment toward programs and infrastructure improvements that help local governments and the private sector develop successful urban centers.”</p> <p>“The region will advocate for changes to tax structure to minimize detrimental competition among local governments for revenues and support collaborative progress toward the urban center vision.”</p> <p>“Metro Vision encourages the development of urban centers at infill and redevelopment sites within the UGB/A throughout the metro area, while recognizing the unique significance of the Denver central business district.”</p> <p>“Metro Vision prioritizes urban centers around existing or proposed transit stations or with high-frequency bus service.”</p> <p>“Modes such as walking, bicycling and transit will be equally competitive with driving within urban centers.”</p> <p>“Implement transportation system components that support Metro Vision’s urban growth boundary/area, urban centers, open space and associated concepts.”</p>

Implementation of Regional Centers Policy Varies

1. Commitment to DRCOG's urban centers concept varies:

Both interviews and plan analysis conducted as part of this study reveal that commitment to DRCOG's urban centers concept varies. Early adopters, such as Aurora and Lone Tree, embraced urban centers as the concept first began to emerge (see *Figure 16*). For Lone Tree, this was a part of a concerted effort to ensure that that DRCOG's urban centers concept complemented growth along urban corridors like Interstate-25.

Support for urban centers in Aurora advanced as community leaders saw that rail passenger service was on the horizon. Anticipating that urban centers would eventually be a part of DRCOG's criteria for receiving federal transportation dollars, leaders in Aurora sought to incorporate the principles of Metro Vision during the early stages of its development. Likewise, Aurora saw urban centers as an opportunity to spur development around growing employment centers like the Anschutz Medical center. Urban centers, and later transit stations, were seen as occasions to catalyze redevelopment within the community and attract the high-end residential housing that Aurora was missing.

As an early adopter of centers policy, there are a number of designated centers located in Denver. Still, the City's philosophy on growth and development follows a slightly different model than the DRCOG urban centers concept. Blueprint Denver, designed as a supplement to the 2000 Denver Comprehensive Plan and released in 2002, focuses on channeling the majority of new development to 'areas of change' while maintaining the character of established 'areas of stability.' While 'areas of change' exhibit characteristics common to many urban centers the general emphasis is on neighborhood rehabilitation rather than the creation of mixed-use transit areas. Many of Denver's designated centers are strategically located in 'areas of change' as a way to help leverage redevelopment in these important areas.

While Thornton has four designated urban centers, plan analysis scoring depicted in *Figure 16* illustrates that the City's commitment to centers policy is lukewarm. Through interviews I learned that community leaders in Thornton believe that DRCOG's definition of what constitutes an urban center does not fit the community's suburban context. As a result, two of Thornton's four designated urban centers (Thornton City Center and I-25/ Highway 7)) are located in areas with low potential of developing into true walkable urban centers in the near future. The city designated these centers mainly as a means to obtain TIP funding.

Interviews indicate that there is general political and community support for urban centers in Greenwood Village. The success of centers development in Greenwood Village can largely be attributed to the designation of centers which are located along the Southeast Rail Line in the Denver Tech Center—a pre-existing regional employment center. Despite this, the Greenwood Village was only lukewarm in its embrace for urban centers in the 2004 Greenwood Village Comprehensive Plan (as amended through 2012). The 2004 Greenwood Village Comprehensive Plan registered scores which were generally low.

Figure 16 illustrates that the 2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan received the highest scores for centers implementation. The strong implementation language used in this document is captured by Strategy 1 in Chapter IV Section K - under Urban Centers and Corridors which states that Aurora should:

“Produce or maintain plans for each major center and corridor addressing land use, design, and recommended actions. Recommendations should be based on an evaluation of the full range of possible tools, including re-zonings, financial incentives, a full range of transportation options, public open space and plazas, and structured parking.”

The 1998 Aurora Comprehensive Plan, along with the 2000 Denver Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Lone Tree Comprehensive Plan, had moderately strong scores. This is illustrated by the more general tone of language found under recommendations for regional retail centers on page 93 of the 1998 Aurora Comprehensive Plan:

“New regional centers should be designed as transit destinations and to encourage pedestrian use.”

Thornton’s comprehensive planning documents showed change over time but implementation of centers terminology was generally weaker than other communities.

Figure 16: Complete Implementation Scoring

Comprehensive Plan	Regional Center	Comm. Center	Neigh. Center	Urban Center	Employ. Center	TOD	FasTracks	Metro Vision
1998 Aurora Comp. Plan	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	3
2000 Denver Comp. Plan	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	3
1997 Thornton Comp. Plan (as amended through 2003)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
2007 Thornton Comp. Plan	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1
2008 Lone Tree Comp. Plan	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1
2009 Aurora Comp. Plan	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	3
2004 Greenwood Village Comp. Plan (as amended through 2012)	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	2
2012 Thornton Comp. Plan	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	2

2. Aurora began implementing centers policy early in the Metro Vision process with increased emphasis over time:

Following DRCOG's adoption of Metro Vision 2020 in 1997, the City of Aurora began incorporating the concept of urban centers in the 1998 Aurora Comprehensive Plan. *Figure 16* illustrates that by the time the City of Aurora adopted its 2009 comprehensive plan, the overall emphasis on implementing urban centers had increased significantly. This is best demonstrated by the search term "urban center" which was mentioned just once in the 1998 plan but called on frequently (33 times) and with specific implementation language in the 2009 plan.

The only mention of the term "urban center" in the 1998 Aurora Comprehensive Plan comes in Chapter 6 on page 124 which is a call to "Complete the designation of regional urban centers in Aurora" and "Prepare center development plans for designated centers."

This contrasts with the numerous mentions of program and policy implementation captured in the 2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan. A few examples of that language include:

"Create unique urban centers and public places in each of the distinct areas that reinforce the distinguishing characteristics of those areas" – Strategy 2 in Chapter IV Section A -under Development in the Established City.

"Development plans and site plans for areas identified in the plan as urban centers or TOD sites shall be reviewed for compliance with the goals, strategies, and intent in this plan." –Strategy 2 in Chapter IV Section K –under Urban Centers and Corridors.

"Coordinate with Colorado Community College to help ensure their campus redevelopment master plan is implemented and the area is designated as an urban center." –Strategy 4 in Chapter V Section F –under Redevelopment.

In addition to all this, the City of Aurora adopted a new set of urban street standards in 2007 which were developed to encourage dense, walkable mixed-use areas near transit stations.

3. Thornton has seen increased interest in urban centers policy:

During both interviews and plan analysis, Thornton showed a relatively low level of support for urban centers policy. Despite this, *Figure 16* illustrates that over the past decade Thornton has increasingly incorporated center concepts into its comprehensive planning documents.

The evolution of the term "transit oriented development" provides a useful example of how the implementation of the centers concept has evolved in Thornton. There are no mentions of transit oriented development in the 1997 Thornton Comprehensive Plan (as amended through 2003). In the 2007 Thornton Comprehensive Plan there are ten unique mentions of the term transit oriented development. This includes a short list of policies, strategies and catalyst actions geared towards enabling transit oriented development in Thornton.

There are 28 unique references to transit oriented development in the 2012 Thornton Comprehensive Plan. Not only are the references more frequent but the language used is also more specific. In the plan's extensive implementation section, the 2012 Thornton plan lays out detailed notes on evaluating the progress of transit oriented development implementation. It goes on to identify completing the Thornton Urban Center Plan and other TOD plans using TIP funds as ongoing actions.

IMPLEMENTATION THEMES

The purpose of this section is to discuss implementation themes which emerged during the course of this study. While these findings are supported by plan analysis they derive mainly from interviews. As discussed in chapter 1, semi-structured interviews were conducted to help identify factors which support and constrain the adoption of centers policy by local jurisdictions. The results of this evaluation are outlined in this section.

1. Public and political response to urban centers is generally supportive:

Interviews reveal that the public and political leaders in the case study communities are generally supportive of efforts to plan for urban centers.

There is widespread public and political support for urban centers in both Lone Tree and Aurora. In Lone Tree, the average citizen is not familiar with DRCOG's urban centers concept but they are supportive of the City's local growth plans which emphasize development around centers. In Aurora, political support is buoyed by a desire to infuse more high income housing and commercial development (which would boost sales tax revenues) into the community. In Greenwood Village there is general support with caveats –concerns over building height, parking, etc. For Denver, there is general political support for centers but no substantive conversation on the topic with the general public.

In Thornton, there is political interest in centers only as a means of receiving TIP funding. Beyond this both the public and political leaders are resistant towards the push for increased density within the community. This stems from concerns that increased density will change the suburban character of the community. There is even an anti-transit group which is rallying against the construction of the northern stations on the North Metro Rail Line. This group claims that the planned transit stations will bring increased crime to the neighborhood.

2. Case study communities work very closely with DRCOG and RTD in planning for urban centers:

Interview responses indicate that all five communities have been involved with the Metro Vision process and development of centers since early in the process. All five communities have signed the Mile High Compact which shows support for the Metro Vision principles. The City of Aurora has been a consistent contributor to the development of centers policy and was one of the first communities to adopt Metro Vision 2020 into its comprehensive plan.

Interviews also reveal that all five communities work closely with DRCOG and RTD in planning for urban centers. DRCOG's TIP program plays an important role in funding station area master planning efforts. Aurora, for example, has received numerous TIP grants which are being used to do land use planning around each of the planned light rail stations. Aurora now has station area plans adopted for all but one of its transit station.

Case study communities indicate that they work with RTD on station area planning and coordination of infrastructure investments at stations. Lone Tree has worked extensively with RTD in its continued effort to extend the Southeast Rail Line and ensure that it aligns with city plans.

3. Planning for and construction of new light rail stations is a major driver of development around centers:

Interviews reveal that the introduction of light rail has played a significant role in the development of centers. When asked "what has been the chief driver in terms of activities around centers, four out of the five respondents mentioned RTD's light rail expansion. This is illustrated by the fact that new development is taking place around transit stations throughout the area. For example, Aurora City Council recently issued a request for proposals for the redevelopment of the 22 acre Regatta Plaza located across the street from the Nine Mile Station. The vision is to create a mixed-use walkable urban village which will serve the Nine Mile Station and contribute to the redevelopment of Aurora.

When asked to indicate how important "investment in light rail lines and stations' has been to supporting centers policy (using a one to five scale where five is very important and one is not at all important) four out of five communities responded with either a four or a five. The fifth community, Thornton, indicated that 'investment in light rail lines and stations' is of low importance to supporting centers policy. For Thornton, this is due in large part to the spatial mismatch between the location of designated urban centers and planned light rail stations along the North Metro Line. The interview respondent from the City of Thornton pointed to DRCOG's urban center designation criteria as the main reason for this mismatch. They explained that because the designation criteria is heavily focused on population and employment density, light rail stations located in the interior of existing suburban neighborhoods are unable to gain center designation.

Interview findings provide clear evidence that urban centers which are co-located with RTD light rail stations see stronger development interest than those without transit infrastructure. Another factor driving development around designated urban centers is Denver's rebounding real estate market. Interview respondents from Denver, Greenwood Village, and Aurora all mentioned the expectation that as transit lines are completed, the market will play an increased role in development around centers.

4. Regional transportation funding incentives and interest in increasing sales tax revenue are leading factors in supporting centers policy:

Regional transportation funding incentives play an important role in supporting centers policy. DRCOG's TIP grants are commonly used for station area planning and infrastructure

investment in urban centers. Aurora cited TIP grants as the primary incentive for city leaders to getting behind DRCOG’s urban centers concept.

Similarly, the City of Denver typically nominates urban centers located in “areas of change.” The primary incentive for designating these centers is to access funding for infrastructure projects.

Figure 17 illustrates that when asked to indicate how important “regional transportation funding incentives –e.g. grants or other funding from DRCOG or RTD” have been to supporting centers policy (using a one to five scale where five is very important and one is not at all important) interview respondents indicated that it was of high importance.

Figure 17: The Role of Regional Transportation Funding Incentives

	Thornton	Lone Tree	Greenwood Village	Aurora	Denver
Regional transportation funding incentives –e.g. grants or other funding from DRCOG or RTD?	5	3	4	5	5

Because of the state’s tax structure, local governments in Colorado rely heavily on retail sales taxes to fund essential operations. This means that communities with robust commercial development have large tax bases while communities that lack this type of development often lack financial stability. As a result, attracting commercial development and building the tax base is nearly always on the mind of local government officials in the Denver metro area and plays an important role in supporting centers policy.

Figure 18 captures how interviewees responded when asked to use a one to five scale to indicate how important “interest in bringing more sales tax revenue to the city” has been to supporting centers policy. Aurora, Greenwood Village, and Lone Tree all indicated that this was a very important factor in supporting centers policy.

Figure 18: The Role of Sales Tax Revenue

	Thornton	Lone Tree	Greenwood Village	Aurora	Denver
Interest in bringing more sales tax revenue to the City of XX?	1	4	5	5	1

5. Cities are investing in centers in a variety of ways:

TIP funding and the establishment of urban renewal districts are the most common tools that cities are using to invest in centers investing in centers. Case study communities are responding to the fact that DRCOG’s criteria for receiving TIP funding increasingly favors transportation projects around urban centers. In addition to using TIP funds for infrastructure investments –e.g. road connections, plazas, streetscapes, pedestrian bridges, storm water, etc- DRCOG has set a portion of the funds to assist communities developing

station area master plans. Cities are also creating urban renewal districts in urban centers so developers can utilize TIF funding for infrastructure improvements.

Aurora has gone a step further by establishing Transit oriented development (TOD) zoning to incentivize vertical mixed-use development in urban centers. Areas with TOD zoning see a loosening of density and height limits as well as reductions in minimum parking requirements. Aurora is also investing last mile connections around RTD stations using an \$8 million budget for betterments including pedestrian bridges, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure. Lone Tree is making strides towards helping fund the extension of the Southeast Rail Line by investing in a cash match for federal grant funding.

LESSONS LEARNED

The purpose of this section is to discuss key takeaways from the findings outlined above. This section focuses on the lessons learned about Denver's adoption of new regionalist principles for implementing urban centers policy.

1. Regional buy-in supports implementation of centers policy

Literature on collaborative metropolitan regionalism in Denver suggests that the new regionalist approach of the 1990s and 2000s has made progress where past efforts failed. In "Suburban Sprawl or Urban Centers: Tensions and Contradictions of Smart Growth Approaches in Denver, Colorado" Andrew Goetz points to effective coalition building as a major driver behind recent success on regional planning¹.

Fostering community buy-in is key to making urban centers policy work. For this reason, it is useful to identify factors which contribute to creating buy-in. It is also useful to look at communities which exhibit high levels of buy-in and examine how their role in catalyzing regional support as leaders on centers implementation.

During interviews I learned that communities with high levels of buy-in exhibit one or both of the following characteristics:

- A strong desire to spark economic development through redevelopment
- Desire to boost sales tax revenues

The general theme here is that interest in creating change and improving overall well-being were the biggest contributors to community support for centers policy. Communities which exhibit these characteristics have a high likelihood of engaging in centers policy and implementing the Metro Vision principles.

2. Barriers to centers development

It is also useful to examine resistance to centers policy as means of learning how to overcome barriers which are likely to exist in metro regions across the country.

Sources of community & political resistance to centers policy identified during interviews include:

- Community concerns over parking, density & building heights –identified during interviews with Greenwood Village & Thornton
- Community concerns about increased crime when new transit stations arrived - identified during interview with Thornton
- A sense that DRCOGs definition of urban centers does not fit a suburban context -identified during interview with Thornton

3. The role of financial incentives

Nearly all of the interview respondents mentioned financial incentives as an important factor in the adoption of centers policy. Chief among these is federal TIP funding which is overseen and allocated by DRCOG. DRCOG uses a defined set of criteria to evaluate funding requests and select projects for award allocation. DRCOG TIP funds are typically used for infrastructure investment and station area master planning.

Financial incentives help nudge communities towards designating urban centers but if the incentives become the goal rather than the tool for creating centers, the likelihood of long-term success may be compromised. For example, the interview respondent from the City of Thornton discussed the fact that two of the City’s four designated urban centers are unlikely to develop into true areas of mixed-use, pedestrian development. They characterized Thornton City Center as strip-commercial and the Interstate-25/ Highway 7 urban center as big box development located next to a highway interchange. In both of these instances, the City of Thornton was motivated by the financial incentive and not the goals of Metro Vision.

Figure 19: Scoring of Factors Supporting Centers Policy

	Thornton	Lone Tree	Greenwood Village	Aurora	Denver
The regional Metro Vision Plan?	2	2	3	5	2
Regional transportation funding incentives –e.g. grants or other funding from DRCOG or RTD?	5	3	4	5	5
Investment in light rail lines and stations?	1-2	4	5	5	5
Interest in bringing more sales tax revenue to the City of XX?	1	4	5	5	1
Interest in attracting more multi-family housing to the City of XX?	2	2	1	5	2

4. The role of transit investment

During interviews I consistently heard that light rail has catalyzed development in urban centers. This is largely due to the fact that many of these communities are seeing redevelopment take place around transit stations. When asked “what has been the chief driver in terms of activities around centers, four out of the five respondents mentioned RTD’s light rail expansion. *Figure 19* illustrates that when asked to indicate how important

“investment in light rail lines and stations’ has been to supporting centers policy (using a one to five scale where five is very important and one is not at all important) four out of five communities responded with either a four or a five. All of this points to the fact that regional transit supports the implementation of urban centers policy.

5. Centers policy as a place making and economic development tool

Several interview respondents cited economic development as a contributing factor to why their community adopted centers policy. These respondents indicated that centers have the potential to bring new commercial development to their communities and boost tax revenues. *Figure 19* illustrates that “Interest in bringing more sales tax revenue” was an important factor in adopting centers policy for three out of the five communities surveyed.

When discussing why their communities adopted centers policy, respondents from Lone Tree and Greenwood Village pointed to a need for a defined community center or main street. Located along Interstate-25, both of these communities have grown along the highway corridor and lack a central hub of activity.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Future Research Inquiries

The purpose of this section is to discuss future research questions for investigating Denver’s voluntary driven, collaborative approach to implementing urban centers policy.

1. Central city vs. suburban communities

Going forward, the first suggested line of future inquiry is to investigate how the central city of the region, Denver, interacts with regional centers policy as compared to suburban communities. An in-depth study on this topic would provide insight into how well Denver’s “areas of change” and “areas of stability” connect with DRCOG’s Metro Vision. This would help shed light on Denver’s role as a regional leader and key player in shaping future development across the region. Another aspect of this inquiry would examine how response to urban centers policy relates to high density urban neighborhoods in Denver as compared to lower densities in suburban communities.

The Denver region is home to a mixture of suburban communities which range in size, character, and age. To gain meaningful results, this study would need to look at suburban communities which reflect the region’s character. In addition to looking at how suburban communities interact with DRCOG’s urban centers it would be useful to test their interest in Denver’s “areas of change” and “areas of stability.” While some communities may prefer the current urban centers concept, adding “areas of change” and “areas of stability” might allow them to be more up front about which areas they are willing to change and which areas they want to maintain.

2. Emerging light rail vs. expanding light rail

The next suggested line of future inquiry is to investigate how communities with emerging light rail (arriving for the first time) interact with regional centers policy as compared to communities with expanding light rail (currently have light rail service but will see further

expansion). Denver, Lone Tree, Greenwood Village, and Aurora are all communities with expanding light rail while Thornton (the least supportive of regional centers policy) is the only community in this study which is characterized as having emerging light rail. This begs the question of whether communities with pre-existing light rail are more likely to support regional centers policy than communities seeing light rail arrive for the first time. If this proves to be the case one possible explanation might be that familiarity with transit supports increased demand for residential and commercial development as well as other amenities in the region.

3. The role of locating urban centers effectively

The third suggested line of future inquiry focuses on the importance of siting urban centers in locations where they are likely to be successful. Taking a local government perspective, this investigation would compare existing urban centers and look at factors contributing to their success and difficulties. This research would explore how locating urban centers in strip commercial, industrial, or undeveloped areas impacts their success. It would also explore the impact of collocating urban centers with RTD stations and established main street districts. In exploring the question of collocation, this study would seek to build a greater understanding of how competition between activity centers contributes to or limits the success of urban centers.

While the majority of this research focuses on the local government perspective, examine the constraint facing RTD when planning light rail corridors and stations will be important to address. Because of the high-cost and difficulty associated with acquiring land to build a transit system of this magnitude, RTD has limited flexibility when locating stations. Moreover, the goal of building an efficient and transit system which serves the entire Denver region may, at times, be at odds with the short-term preferences of individual communities. The concluding sections of this report would detail the intercalated nature of local and regional planning and highlight the importance of collaboration during the planning process.

4. Expansion of light rail and competition between centers

The focus of this research inquiry is on how the rapid expansion of RTD's light rail system is impacting development in urban centers and station areas. Under the FasTracks Program, 122 miles of new light rail and 57 transit stations are being added to the RTD system over the course of 12 years. Transit expansion has created opportunities for new urban centers but also leads to direct competition between centers. The purpose of this inquiry would be to evaluate the extent to which this has created competition for development between designated urban centers.

This research would begin by looking at a number of designated urban centers across the Denver region, carefully documenting when they were designated and when light rail arrived. From there, it would highlight the centers which are seeing substantial redevelopment take place and those with potential for redevelopment. Finally, it would look at urban centers which have prospects for redevelopment and compare these with those which are successfully redeveloping.

Transferable Lessons

While some of the lessons outlined in this report are specific to the context of the Denver region, many of the findings translate to other metropolitan regions. The purpose of this section is to explore how well the lessons of this study translate to other metropolitan regions.

The first three themes outlined under “Lessons Learned” –regional buy-in supports implementation, barriers to centers development, and the role of transit investment- are all highly transferable to other metropolitan regions. Regional buy-in was imperative to the success of Denver’s centers policy and communities with interest in creating change and improving overall well-being achieved the highest levels of buy-in. For other metropolitan regions seeking to implement centers policy this means identifying communities with a high likelihood of supporting centers is a good starting point for creating regional buy-in. In turn, those communities can act as champions of regional centers policy. Communities with a strong desire to spark economic development or catalyze redevelopment are ideal candidates to lead the charge for centers policy. Inner ring suburbs seeking to attract new development and outer ring suburbs seeking to establish a unique sense of place are two examples.

Barriers to centers development among residents in suburban communities are likely to be consistent across metropolitan regions as well. Concerns over crime, increased traffic, loss of parking, and population density are common themes in suburban communities across the country. This stems from the fact that many suburban residents chose their location because they sought the suburban lifestyle -the house, the yard, and the automobile lifestyle. As such, steering development towards urban centers may be met with resistance and looked at with skepticism. Practitioners seeking to implement centers policy should seek to alleviate these concerns when possible.

In Denver, financial incentives helped nudge communities towards designating urban centers but some communities treated the incentives as the goal rather than a tool for fostering true mixed-use centers. As such, metropolitan regions using financial incentives to encourage development in urban centers should closely monitor their influence by evaluating their impact.

Findings on the positive impact of transit investment on development in urban centers may not directly translate to other metropolitan regions because it is largely contingent on RTD’s light rail investment through the FasTracks program. Metropolitan regions simultaneously implementing centers policy and expanding their transit system are likely to see positive impacts from co-locating centers with transit stations. Metropolitan regions with existing transportation networks may see similar results. For metropolitan regions where integrating regional transit is not feasible, centers policy can be implemented by creating destination centers using many of the same principles. These centers should be walkable and amenity rich with a range of commercial, civic, employment and residential uses located in close proximity to one another. Even in the absence of an integrated transit system, mixed-use urban centers can help reduce auto-dependence and serve a community focal points of activity.

¹ Goetz, A. (2013). Suburban Sprawl or Urban Centres: Tensions and Contradictions of Smart Growth Approaches in Denver, Colorado. *Urban Studies* 50 (11), 2178–95. doi:10.1177/0042098013478238

Appendix A: Plan Analysis

PLAN ANALYSIS SEARCH TERMS

Category	Search Term
Urban Center Related Terms	Regional Center
	Community Center
	Neighborhood Center
	Urban Center
	Employment Center
	Regional Activity Center
	Community Activity Center
	Neighborhood Activity Center
	Urban Activity Center
	Multi-Purpose Center
	Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
Plans & Program Terms	FasTracks
	Metro Vision
Agency Terms	Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
	Regional Transportation District (RTD)

PLAN ANALYSIS SPREADSHEETS

(See next page)

City of Denver Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term		2000 Comprehensive Plan		
		Rating	Definition	References
Regional Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three types of urban centers in Denver (Pg. 80) • Concentrations of mixed-use development which focus on one major use, such as a regional retail center (e.g., Cherry Creek Shopping Center) or an office park (e.g., the Denver Tech Center) (Pg. 80) • Offer enough variety of uses to create an internal synergy as well as attract patrons from throughout the region (Pg. 80) 	
	# of times referenced:		7	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	No implementation	
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		None	
	Policies:		None	
	Strategies:		None	
	Actions		None	
Misc. imp.		None		
Community Center	Definition		References to "Community Centers" have to do with libraries and other public space -not patterns of urban development	
	# of times referenced:			
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	References to "Community Centers" have to do with libraries and other public space -not patterns of urban development	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three types of urban centers in Denver (Pg. 80) • Higher-density residential and service uses within neighborhoods which tend to be locate around supermarket-based shopping centers or historical streetcar districts, such as Old South Gaylord or 32nd and Lowell. (Pg. 80) • Pedestrian access is particularly important. (Pg. 80) 	
	# of times referenced:		1 which is referring to neighborhood centers in the context of high-density development (8 others which reference using schools as neighborhood centers)	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	No implementation	
	Goals:		None	
Objectives:		None		

	Policies:		None	
	Strategies:		None	
	Actions		None	
	Misc. imp.		None	
	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban centers concentrate development within a relatively small area (Pg 80) • Typically encompass a wide range of land uses, including higher-density residential, office, retail, services, entertainment and community facilities (Pg 80) • Their density and variety enable a range of transportation alternatives; above all they should be walkable (Pg 80) • Vision of Success: The metropolitan area will have a fully developed regional transportation system that enables individuals and commercial users to conveniently and efficiently access all major urban centers in the metropolitan area (Pg. 99) 	Pg. 80, Pg. 99,
	# of times referenced:		26	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In urban centers and in new development areas, plan, design and invest in transportation infrastructure and systems that support the principle uses within the area, provide well-integrated connections to urban centers and other destinations, and address the mobility needs of frequent users. Objective 3 Accommodating New Development under Mobility section (Pg 101) • Develop a comprehensive citywide approach to parking that addresses parking needs within major urban centers, at transit stations and in neighborhoods Objective 9 Parking Management under Mobility (Pg. 106) 	Pg. 101, Pg. 106
	Policies:		None	

Urban Center	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage mixed-use, transit-oriented development that makes effective use of existing transportation infrastructure, supports transit stations, increases transit patronage, reduces impact on the environment, and encourages vibrant urban centers and neighborhoods -- Strategy 4-A under Land Use section (Pg 84) • Strengthen multimodal connections and transportation improvements within and between existing and potential urban centers, including Downtown/Central Platte Valley, DIA/Gateway, Stapleton, Cherry Creek/Colorado Boulevard, Denver Tech Center, and the South Wadsworth Corridor --Strategy 3-A under Mobility section (Objective 3 listed above) (Pg 101) • Promote transit-oriented development (TOD) as an urban design framework for urban centers and development areas. Development at transit stations should provide both higher ridership to the transit system and viability and walkability in the area --Strategy 3-B under Mobility section (Objective 3 listed above) (Pg 102) • Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle facilities within urban centers and new development areas --Strategy 3-C under Mobility section (Objective 3 listed above) (Pg 102) • Use transportation management associations (TMA), where appropriate, to increase the transportation system's efficiency in urban center and development areas. --Strategy 3-D under Mobility section (Objective 3 listed above) (Pg 102) • Promote parking management programs to maximize use of available parking spaces within the city's major urban centers. --Strategy 9-B under Mobility section (Objective 9 listed above) (Pg 106) • Explore opportunities for shared parking and evaluate the need for new shared parking structures within major urban centers such as Downtown, Cherry Creek and the Central Platte Valley. Where appropriate, reduce parking spaces required in the Denver Zoning Ordinance. --Strategy 9-C under Mobility section (Objective 9 listed above) (Pg 106) • Ensure high-quality urban design in neighborhoods by enhancing their distinctive natural, historic and cultural characteristics; strengthen neighborhood connections to urban centers; and reinforce Denver's unifying design features such as street trees in the tree lawns, parkways and the grid system of streets. --Strategy 1-D under Neighborhoods section (Pg. 178) 	Pg 84, Pg. 101, Pg. 102, Pg. 106, Pg. 178
	Actions	None	
	Misc. imp.	None	
	Definition		• Generally references areas with high-employment density. They are promoting more residential use in these area but still direct mention of TOD
Employment Center	# of times referenced:	7	
	Source of Term:		
	COMPOSITE RATING	1	
	Goals:	None	
	Objectives:	None	
	Policies:	None	
	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a variety of housing opportunities for Denver's current and future workforce. Housing opportunities throughout Denver should be expanded — especially in the Downtown core and near employment centers — to accommodate people and families of all incomes --Strategy 1-H under Economic Activity Section (Pg 158) • Continue to enhance the Denver Technological Center, Denver's second largest employment center and home to many of the area's high-tech businesses--Strategy 4-B under Economic Activity section (Pg. 162) 	Pg. 158, Pg. 162
	Action:	None	
Misc. imp.	None		
	Definition	Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:	None	

Regional Activity Center	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Urban Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Actions		NA		

	Misc. imp.		NA	
Multi-Purpose Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	Definition		• Concentrates an attractive mix of housing, retail, entertainment and commercial development near transit stops. This enables residents to live, shop and socialize in their immediate neighborhoods while having nearby transit access to distant urban centers (Pg. 98)	Pg. 98
	# of times referenced:		8	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		None	
	Policies:		None	
	Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage mixed-use, transit-oriented development that makes effective use of existing transportation infrastructure, supports transit stations, increases transit patronage, reduces impact on the environment, and encourages vibrant urban centers and neighborhoods -- Strategy 4-A under Land Use (Pg. 84) • Promote TOD as an urban design framework for urban centers and development areas. Development at transit stations should provide both higher ridership to the transit system and viability and walkability in the area --Strategy 3-B under Mobility (Pg. 102) • Determine the potential for transit-oriented development at public transit stations, and encourage such opportunities whenever possible --Strategy 5-D under Mobility (Pg. 104) 	Pg. 84, Pg. 102, Pg. 104
Actions:		None		
Misc. imp.		None		

City of Denver Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		2000 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition		Term not mentioned'	
	# of times referenced:		NA	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned'	
	Implementation		NA	
Metro Vision	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This metropolitan plan integrates previously separate plans for growth, development, transportation, open space and water-quality management into a single comprehensive document (Pg. 242) • Guides transportation, urban development, open space, environmental quality, urban centers and free-standing communities (Pg. 244) 	Pg. 242, Pg. 244
	# of times referenced:			
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRCOG's MetroVision 2020 Plan identified as an opportunity upon which collaborations can be built (Pg. 244) • In August 1999 Denver City Council incorporated Metro Vision 2020 by ordinance into Denver's Comprehensive Plan, a major step forward toward stronger regional partnership (Pg. 8) ○ Adoption of Metro Vision into Denver Comp Plan mentioned again on page 12 (Pg. 12) • Support and use DRCOG's MetroVision 2020 Plan, which has been incorporated into the Denver Comprehensive Plan -Strategy 5-A under Environmental Sustainability section (Pg. 65) • Seek cooperation in building a regional agenda for planning and implementing the MetroVision 2020 Plan. Key issues for this agenda should include growth management, reduction of sprawl, regional transportation, open space, environmental quality, and metropolitan distribution of community facilities and affordable housing -Strategy 5-A under Land Use section (Pg. 85) • Support cost-effective transportation investments to provide regional connections consistent with DRCOG's MetroVision 2020 Plan -- Objective 2: Regional Transportation System under mobility section (Pg. 101) • Support the development of major transportation corridors into, around and through Denver as outlined in DRCOG's MetroVision 2020 Plan. Specifically, the City should recognize the East, Southeast and West Corridors as priorities for regional investment -Strategy 2-C under mobility section (Under objective 2 above)(Pg. 101) • Lead in supporting the adoption and implementation of DRCOG's MetroVision 2020 Plan for regional growth and report annually on compliance with Plan 2000 --Strategy 1-A under Metropolitan Cooperation (Pg. 246) 	Pg. 8, Pg. 12, Pg. 65, Pg. 85, Pg. 101, Pg. 246, Pg. 244

City of Aurora Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term	1998 Comprehensive Plan			
	Rating	Definition	References	
Regional Center	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions as a retail, cultural entertainment, office, gov. and residential area with 10,000-20,000 jobs (Pg. 99) • Includes regional mall or concentration of big boxes, civic/cultural facilities, office employment, hotels, medium to high density residential (Pg. 99) • Serves 20-30 min. driving distance/ 7-10 mile radius (Pg. 99) 	Pg. 99	
	# of times referenced:	14		
	Source of Term:	• Metrovison 2020 urban centers concept	Pg. 99	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1	Mentioned infrequently but with relatviely high visibility	
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit additional retailers who should be in regional centers in Aurora -Strategy 1 under III Economic Vitatlity- A Retail Trade (Pg. 121) • Complete the designation of regional urban centers in Aurora. Prepare center development plans for designated centers -Strategy 2 under VI City Leadership -A MetroVision 2020 (Pg. 131) <i>*Repeat under urban center</i> 	Pg. 121, Pg. 131	
Actions				
Misc. imp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New regional centers should be designed as transit destinations and to encourage pedestrian use (Pg. 100) • In conjunction with potential light rail along the I-225 corridor, a land use and implementation plan should be developed for City Center as a regional center under Metro Vision 2020 -Recommnedation under Ch V Land Use Framework(Pg. 101) 	Pg. 100, Pg. 101		
Neighborhood Center	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of community retail, entertainment and culture. (Pg. 99) • Includes supermarkets, drug stores, discount stores, entertainment, restaurants, retail & services (Pg. 99) • Serves 10,000-15,000 people (Pg. 99) • 5-10 minute driving distance/ 1 to 3 mile radius (Pg. 99) • A primary concept of this Neighborhood Framework is to create community centers that are centralized for efficient access (Pg. 110) 	Pg. 99, Pg. 101,	
	# of times referenced:	9		
	Source of Term:	• Metrovison 2020 urban centers concept	Pg. 99	
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			

Community Center	Policies:			
	Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus community retail centers at prime locations and avoid strip commercial development -Development Review Strategy 7 CH 6(Pg. 132) 	Pg. 132,
	Actions			
	Misc. imp.		<p>(Recommendations -Pg. 100)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community centers should be planned to meet the criteria of this Plan (Pg. 100) Key locations at the intersections of major continuous arterials should be preserved for community centers to serve multiple adjacent neighborhoods (Pg. 100) Community retail uses should be focused in centers and not dispersed along arterial highways (Pg. 100) Community centers should be of adequate size to accommodate larger anchor stores (Pg. 100) <u>Locate community Retail Centers</u>. Land use plans should identify community center locations so that adjacent residential development can be appropriately planned, with transitions and buffers provided -#3 under "New neighborhoods should be established following a careful planning process containing the following elements" (Beneath the Recommendations section (Pg. 110) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After these sites are planned, rezonings to accommodate strip commercial development along arterials should be prohibited (Pg. 110) 	Pg. 100, Pg. 110,
Neighborhood Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of retail, recreation or entertainment activities in a neighborhood (Pg. 99) Each neighborhood should contain a center or core area providing recreation, appropriate small-scale retail, services, and civic uses (Pg. 99) 10 min. walking distance/ .5 mile radius (Pg. 99) The neighborhood center should be conveniently located in relation to the whole neighborhood. Easy and direct pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile access to the center is essential to its success(Pg. 111) Overabundance of retail zoning identified as issue detrimental to the success of neighborhood centers (Pg. 98) 	Pg. 98, Pg. 99, Pg. 111,
	# of times referenced:		13	
	Source of Term:		• Metrovison 2020 urban centers concept	Pg. 99
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an appropriate zoning district for neighborhood centers -Strategy 3 under Economic Vitality- Retail Trade (Ch 6- Pg. 121) Appropriately locate neighborhood centers according to the criteria in this plan -Development Review Strategy 8 (Ch 6 -Pg. 132) 	Pg. 121, Pg. 132	

Actions			
Misc. imp.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new approach to new development is recommended Within any mile square section, several neighborhoods should be developed that integrate open space, amenities, services, neighborhood centers, housing of various types and densities, and, if appropriate, job opportunities -Recommendation under New Neighborhoods (Pg. 109) ○ Again on Pg. 110: <u>Locate Neighborhood Centers -#4</u> under "New neighborhoods should be established following a careful planning process containing the following elements" (Beneath the Recommendations section (Pg. 110). • Opportunities and incentives should be provided for new approaches to neighborhood design, including those described as new urbanist or neotraditional. -Recommendation under New Neighborhoods (Pg. 109) 	Pg. 109, Pg. 110,
Definition		The only use of this term is one reference to DRCOG's Metrovision 2020 urban centers concept	
# of times referenced:		1	
Source of Term:		Metrovision 2020 urban centers concept	
COMPOSITE RATING	1		
Goals:			
Objectives:			
Policies:			

Urban Center	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the designation of regional urban centers in Aurora. Prepare center development plans for designated centers -Strategy 2 under VI City Leadership -A MetroVision 2020 (Pg. 131) 	Pg. 131
	Actions		
	Misc. imp.		
	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of office/ service employment activities (pg. 99) o Includes restaurants, retail, personal services, hotels, hospitals, etc. • Employment in Aurora is growing faster than population. This tells us that Aurora's role as a regional employment center is increasing. (Pg. 21) 	Pg. 99, Pg. 21
	# of times referenced:	8	
	Source of Term:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrovison 2020 urban centers concept 	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1	

Employment Center	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the CIP to insure that appropriate infrastructure is provided for employment centers -Strategy 4 under III Economic Vitality -B Employment (Pg. 121) • Work to provide appropriate access to employment centers -Strategy 6 under III Economic Vitality -B Employment (Pg. 121) ○ Locate them in close proximity to freeways, rail, and mass transit corridors (Pg. 121) • Locate new employment centers in the E-470 corridor at interchanges -Strategy 7 under III Economic Vitality -B Employment (Pg. 122) 	Pg. 121, Pg. 122
	Action:			
	Misc. imp.			
Regional Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Actions		NA		

	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	

Urban Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Multi-Purpose Center	Definition		• Used as overarching framework for organizing regional, community and neighborhood centers	Pg. 99
	# of times referenced:		Referenced 1 times in document	
	Source of Term:		• Metro Vision 2020 urban centers concept	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Term used, no implementation mentioned	
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:			
Actions:				
Misc. imp.				
	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	

		NA	
Goals:		NA	
Objectives:		NA	
Policies:		NA	
Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategies:		NA	

Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA	

City of Aurora Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		1998 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Implementation		NA	
	Definition		Elements that will benefit Aurora in Metro Vision 2020 include: designation of regional centers, designation of future transit corridors along 1-225 and 1-70, and regional open space designations (CPg. 71)	Pg. 71
	# of times referenced:		27	
	Source of Term:			

	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
Metro Vision	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora has taken a leadership role in the Metro Vision 2020 planning process (Pg 70) ○ Aurora should continue to play an active leadership role in the implementation of the Metro Vision 2020 Plan to ensure that it reflects Aurora's goals (Pg. 70) • Map 5 at the back of the Plan describes Aurora's proposed urban growth area through year 2020 which has been included in DRCOG's Metro Vision 2020 Plan (Pg 79) • DRCOG Metro Vision 2020 Urban Centers Concept included (Pg 99) • In conjunction with potential light rail along the I-225 corridor, a land use and implementation plan should be developed for City Center as a regional center under Metro Vision 2020 --Economic Framework recommendation for City Center in Ch 5 (Pg 101) • Work to designate the Fitzsimmons campus as a future site for a center in the DRCOG Metro Vision 2020 Plan (Pg. 122) • Work to designate City Center as a center, incorporating it into the Metro Vision 2020 plan (Pg. 122) <p>Metro Vision 2020 Strategies (Pg. 131)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in the continuing review and implementation of the Metro Vision 2020 Plan. 2. Complete the designation of regional urban centers in Aurora. Prepare center development plans for designated centers. 3. Monitor the implementation of the Metro Vision Plan. 4. Remain involved in the development and revision of criteria for the Transportation Improvement Program. Ensure that criteria changes are beneficial to Aurora. 5. Work to include 1-225 on the fiscally constrained transportation plan. 	Pg. 70, Pg. 79, Pg. 99, Pg. 101, Pg. 122, Pg. 131

City of Aurora Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term	2009 Comprehensive Plan		
	Rating	Definition	References
Regional Center	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of concept not provided o Used to describe City Center 	
	# of times referenced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referenced 8 times in document 	
	Source of Term:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MetroVision 2020 via 1998 Aurora Comp. Plan 	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1	
	Goals:		
	Objectives:		
	Policies:		
	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Work to incorporate new full-service hotels in developing regional centers as appropriate" - Strategy 11 under Attracting and Promoting Visitors and Businesses (Ch IV B Quality of Life)(Pg. 68) o Also mentioned as a DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STRATEGY (Pg. 270) • "Locate high-density housing in close proximity to regional centers" - #8 under Framework for New Neighborhoods (Pg. 154) o Also mentioned as strategy 2 under New Neighborhoods section (Ch IV I Living in Neighrohoods) (Pg.161) o Also mentioned as development review strategy #12 under Neighborhood Strategies (Pg. 271) • "Maintain prime locations for commercial and employment uses at urban or regional center locations by reserving sites of sufficient size with good access to major highways or planned transit facilities for such uses." DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STRATEGY #5 under <i>economic strategies</i> (Pg. 270) 	Pg. 68, Pg. 154, Pg. 161, Pg. 270, Pg. 271
Actions			
Misc. imp.			
Definition	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used as part of TOD typology (Pg. 178) • Major community station (Pg. 178) • Areas that attract dense development, but to a lesser extent than the Urban Activity Centers (Pg. 177) • Can have a park-n-Ride facility and higher residential densities. (Pg. 177) 	Pg. 177, Pg. 178,
	# of times referenced:	Referenced 9 times in document	
	Source of Term:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro Vision 2020 via 1998 Aurora Comp. Plan 	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1	
	Goals:		
	Objectives:		

Community Center	Policies:			
	Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Locate high-density housing in close proximity to community centers” - #8 under Framework for New Neighborhoods (Pg. 154) ○ Also mentioned as strategy 2 under New Neighborhoods section (Ch IV Living in Neighroods) (Pg.161) ○ Also mentioned as development review strategy #12 under <i>Neighborhood Strategies</i> (Pg. 271) • " Focus community centers at the intersections of major arterial streets" -Strategy #5 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Pg. 184) ○ Also mentioned as development review stretegy #7 under <i>economic strategies</i> (Pg. 270) 	Pg. 154, Pg. 161, Pg. 184, Pg. 270, Pg. 271
	Actions			
	Misc. imp.			
Neighborhood Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used as part of TOD typology (Pg. 178) • TOD that can have higher density development interspersed within an existing neighborhood (Pg. 177) • Not likely to have commuter parking areas at station (Pg. 178) • Emphasize pedestrian & bicycle access to the station and compatible form & uses for new development (Pg. 177) 	Pg. 177, Pg. 178,
	# of times referenced:		• Referenced 8 times in document	
	Source of Term:		• Metro Vision via 1998 Aurora Comp. Plan	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Locate high-density housing in close proximity to neighborhood centers” - #8 under Framework for New Neighborhoods (Pg. 154) ○ Also mentioned as strategy 2 under New Neighborhoods section (Ch IV Living in Neighroods) (Pg.161) ○ Also mentioned as development review strategy #12 under <i>Neighborhood Strategies</i> (Pg. 271) • "Plan neighborhood centers with recreation, small-scale retail, services, and civic uses conveniently located with easy and direct pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile access" #4 under Framework for New Neighborhoods (Pg. 154) 	Pg. 154, Pg. 161, Pg. 271	

Actions			
Misc. imp.			
Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and transit-oriented locations of intense activity which provide a range of retail, business, civic, cultural, & residential opportunities for the surrounding trade areas (Pg. 172) • Aurora has 13 urban centers which are reflected in Metro Vision (Pg. 174) • Initial list of 6 activity centers were submitted to DRCOG in 2002 (Pg. 174) 	Pg. 172, Pg. 53, Pg. 174
# of times referenced:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referenced 33 times in document 	
Source of Term:			
COMPOSITE RATING	3		
Goals:		<p>WHEN GOALS OF THE CITY ARE MET...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each separate area of the city has destination places comprised of parks and open space, urban centers, public facilities and other public spaces which help to define the identity of each area and the city as a whole - #4 under Ch IV Section A(PG. 49) • High quality housing is located in urban centers, mixed-use inner city redevelopment and transit-oriented sites that are walkable, intensely developed, offer multimodal transportation options and are well integrated into the city. - #7 under Ch IV Section I (Pg. 153) • Aurora has numerous urban centers. These pedestrian and transit-oriented locations of intense activity provide a range of retail, business, civic, cultural, and residential opportunities for their surrounding trade areas. - #1 under Ch IV Section K (PG. 172) • Urban centers contain housing of various types across a wide range of price points - #3 under Ch IV Section K (PG. 172) • The Fitzsimons campus and adjacent development will embody the characteristics of a successful urban center. -#2 under Ch V A Fitzsimons (Pg. 215) • Urban centers at Fitzsimons, City Center, Parker Road, and Hampden Town Center have intensively developed with complementary land uses and are linked by FasTracks light rail transit, allowing ready access to each other. -#3 under Ch V E I-225 Corridor and City Center (Pg. 242) 	Pg. 49, Pg. 153, Pg. 172, Pg. 215, Pg. 242,
Objectives:			
Policies:			

Urban Center	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create unique urban centers and public places in each of the distinct areas that reinforce the distinguishing characteristics of those areas -Strategy 2 under <i>Development in the Established City</i> (Ch IV A Managing the Geography of Growth (Pg. 56) • Pursue locations for new office development in designated urban centers and in rail transit station areas -strategy 1 under <i>Jobs/Population</i> (Ch IV. C Jobs/Population) (Pg. 76) <p>From Section K. Urban Centers and Corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce or maintain plans for each major center and corridor addressing land use, design, and recommended actions. Recommendations should be based on an evaluation of the full range of possible tools, including re-zonings, financial incentives, a full range of transportation options, public open space and plazas, and structured parking -strategy 1 under <i>Urban Centers and Corridors</i> (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • Development plans and site plans for areas identified in the plan as urban centers or TOD sites shall be reviewed for compliance with the goals, strategies, and intent in this plan. -strategy 2 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • The city should actively evaluate the extension of center requirements developed for the E-470 corridor to elsewhere in the city. -strategy 3 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • The city should evaluate zoning along arterial roadways to ensure that community retail centers are focused at prime locations to create the synergy necessary for creation of an activity center and to avoid perpetuating the strip commercial development pattern. -strategy 4 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • Focus community centers at the intersections of major arterial streets. Limit their extent along arterial streets, generally not extending farther than 1,320 linear feet from the intersection. -strategy 5 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • Work with DRCOG to simplify the urban centers designation process and to advocate financial incentives that make it worthwhile to seek such designation. -strategy 6 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • The city supports the principle that varied housing types and price points are appropriate in urban centers -strategy 7 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) <p>----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Coordinate with Colorado Community College to help ensure their campus redevelopment master plan is implemented and the area is designated as an urban center" -Strategy 4 under <i>Redevelopment</i> (Ch V. F. Havana District/ Lowry/ Buckingham)(Pg. 252) • New development shall extend the street network, and provide street and pedestrian improvements as described by adopted transportation plans and city street standards, including urban street standards in designated urban centers. -Development Review Strategy 1 under <i>Transportation Strategies</i> (Ch VI)(Pg. 269) 	Pg. 56, Pg. 76, Pg. 174, Pg. 183, Pg. 184, Pg. 252, Pg. 269
	Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora adopted a new set of urban street standards for urban centers in 2007 under plans & programs (Pg. 140) ○ These standards were developed to encourage dense, walkable mixed-use areas near transit stations. (Pg. 140) • Station area plans & TOD zoning implementation -#1 under Neighborhoods/Urban Centers/Corridors (Ch VI Table VI-1. ACTION PLAN) (Pg. 266) • Station area profiles -#9 under Neighborhoods/Urban Centers/Corridors (Ch VI Table VI-1. ACTION PLAN) (Pg. 267) 	Pg. 140, Pg. 266, Pg.267
	Misc. imp.		
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of concept not provided in this document ○ Can be inferred to be same as defined in earlier planes -i.e. clusters of jobs • Part of vision is for improved access and transit service which will facilitate growing employment centers along key transportation corridors. (Pg. 69) 	Pg. 69	
# of times referenced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referenced 11 times in document 		
Source of Term:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro Vision via 1998 Aurora Comp. Plan 		
COMPOSITE RATING	1		

Employment Center	Goals:	<p>WHEN GOALS OF THE CITY ARE MET...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination employment centers will exist, or be in development, at Fitzsimons, City Center, the I-70/E-470 interchange, and other key E-470 interchanges. #3 under Ch IV C Balancing Jobs to Population (Pg. 69) • Improved access and transit service will facilitate the growing employment centers along key transportation corridors. #7 under Ch IV C Balancing Jobs to Population (Pg. 69) • Aurora becomes an even more prominent regional player by virtue of its strategically located employment centers #2 under Ch IV N Maintaining Regional Leadership (Pg. 207) 	Pg. 69, Pg. 207
	Objectives:		
	Policies:		
	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Use the capital improvements program (CIP) to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided for employment centers" Strategy 7 under jobs/population (Ch IV C Jobs/ Population) (Pg. 76) • "Locate employment centers in close proximity to freeways, rails, and mass transit corridors" -Development Review Strategy 1 under <i>economic strategies</i> (Pg. 269) 	Pg. 76, Pg. 269,
	Action:		
	Misc. imp.		
Regional Activity Center	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used in reference to zoning in E-470 corridor • Large-scale, intensely developed mixeduse areas focused on highway interchanges (PG. 174) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o located at E-470 interchanges (Pg. 174) • Feature walkable "main streets" and "focal points" (prominent buildings with distinctive architecture) (Pg. 260) • Vision of new "town centers" at one or more of the zoned regional activity centers along E-470 as well as at the new transit-oriented development centers (Pg. 112) 	Pg. 174, Pg. 112, Pg. 260)
	# of times referenced:	Referenced 14 times in document	
	Source of Term:	• ???	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1	
	Goals:	<p>WHEN GOALS OF THE CITY ARE MET...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New "town centers" will exist at one or more of the zoned regional activity centers along E- 470 as well as at the new transit-oriented development centers. These centers will have developed in a synergistic manner, affording work/shop/live/play opportunities for area residents, as well as acting as regional draws for both employment and shopping. #4 under Ch IV F Carrying Out an Enhanced Retail Strategy (Pg. 112) 	Pg. 112
	Objectives:		
	Policies:		
Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Reserve prime locations for commercial and employment uses at urban or regional activity center locations. These sites should be of sufficient size with good access to major highways or planned transit facilities for such uses." -Strategy 9 under Jobs/Population section (Ch IV C Jobs/Population) (Pg. 76) • "Work to increase intensity of dev. & broaden mix of land uses at Regional Activity Centers" -Strategy 8 under E-470 Corridor section (Ch V H E-460 Corridor) (Pg. 261) • Ensure that higher densities and integrated development patterns are promoted E-470 Regional Activity Centers - Development Review Strategy #8 under <i>Economic Strategies</i> (Pg. 270) 	Pg. 76, Pg. 261, Pg. 270	
Actions			

	Misc. imp.			
Community Activity Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used in reference to zoning in E-470 corridor • Commercial areas serving multiple neighborhoods –located at arterial street intersections (Pg 174) • Places retail, office, and other complementary uses in defined areas in order to align with market demand and avoid new strip commercial developments (Pg. 174) 	Pg. 174,
	# of times referenced:		Referenced 4 times in document	
	Source of Term:		• ???	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate community retail centers with easy access to neighborhoods in defined areas at arterial intersections. Limit the extent of strip development along the arterial street – Strategy 5 under Ch 6 neighborhood strategies. -Strategy 3 under Framework for New Neighborhoods (Ch IV Living In Neighborhoods) (Pg. 154) o Also mentioned as a development review strategy #5 under <i>Neighborhood Strategies</i> (Pg. 270) 	Pg. 154, Pg. 270
Actions				
Misc. imp.				
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used in reference to zoning in E-470 corridor • Small-scale, mixed-use areas interior to a neighborhood (Pg. 174) • Must include a public plaza or outdoor meeting area (PG. 174) • Organizing elements of Aurora's approach to development in the eastern part of the city include the establishment of neighborhood activity centers as described by the E-470 and Northeast Plains zoning district (Pg. 153) o Outlines neighborhoods as a part of large, master planned developments (Pg. 153) 	Pg. 174, Pg. 153
	# of times referenced:		Referenced 5 times in document	
	Source of Term:		???	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan neighborhood activity centers with recreation, small-scale retail, services, and civic uses conveniently located with easy and direct pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile access – Development Review Strategy 6 under <i>neighborhood strategies</i> (Ch VI)(Pg. 270) 	Pg. 270
Actions				
Misc. imp.				

Urban Activity Center	Definition		Ch IV Section K. =Building Urban Activity Centers and Corridors (Pg. 172) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used as part of TOD typology (Pg. 178) • Major regional destinations (Pg. 178) • Provide employees readily accessible services, such as shopping, public transportation and other amenities. (Pg. 27) • Concentration of employment, retail, and the long-term potential for development (Pg. 178) • Metro Vision encourage urban activity centers such as Fitzsimons and City Center, and the development of a more balanced, multi-modal transportation system(Pg. 207) 	Pg. 172, Pg. 178, Pg. 207,
	# of times referenced:		Referenced 9 times in document	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Term used, no implmenetation	
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:			
	Actions			
Misc. imp.				
Multi-Purpose Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Definition	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A district with a mix of higher density land uses within walking distance of a transit station (approximately one-half mile). (Pg. 174) • TOD presents the opportunity to create vibrant places where people can live, work, and enjoy public outdoor spaces. (Pg. 174) • TOD provides the opportunity to create special areas where transit (rail, bus) is integrated into neighborhoods and commercial centers (Pg. 176) • Designed to take full advantage of rail transit (Pg. 176) • There are three TOD types in Aurora: (1) Urban Actiity Center, (2) Community Center, & (3) Neighborhood Center • TODs: 1. Dayton; 2. Nine Mile; 3. Iliff, 4. Florida; 5. Centerpoint at the Aurora City Center; 6. Abilene at 2nd Avenue; 7. 13th Avenue; 8. Fitzsimons Colfax; 9. Montview; 10. Peoria-Smith; 11. Gateway Park East; 12. High Point 	Pg. 174, Pg. 176,
	# of times referenced:		88 unique references. 97 total references (includes "transit oriented development (TOD)")	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	3		

Goals:		
Objectives:		
Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a set of Planning Principles for TOD (Used to guide the formulation of all TOD policies and documents) (Pg. 177) ○ TOD works as a “district.” ○ TODs must be walkable ○ Central spaces give identity to TODs ○ TODs connect to the surrounding neighborhoods ○ Density is important ○ Design matters ○ Promoting sustainability 	
Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that higher densities and integrated development patterns are promoted in all strategic commercial zones and transit-oriented developments -Strategy 1 under <i>Retail Strategy</i> (Ch IV. F. Retail Strategy) (Pg. 117) • Strengthen City Center identity by increasing civic, recreation, and entertainment activities. Retail should be designed to support City Center civic and TOD activities -Strategy 7 under Retail Strategy (Ch IV. F. Retail Strategy) (Pg. 117) • Encourage compact, higher-density TOD at RTD rail stations in accordance with the station area plans to foster increased transit ridership and reduce automobile trips. Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections for the areas near the transit stations to better promote public transit usage. Coordinate with RTD and other stakeholders on the financing and implementation of commuter parking at the stations. - Strategy 1 under <i>Land Use and Transportation Connections</i> (Ch 4 IV H Transportation)(Pg. 148) • Allow higher densities and viable TOD at appropriate locations to foster increased transit ridership and reduce automobile trips. Provide appropriate land use and pedestrian routes for the areas near future rapid transit stations to better promote public transit usage and reduce the need for single occupancy vehicle travel. -Development Review Strategy #3 under transportation strategies(Ch VI)(Pg. 269) • Development plans and site plans for areas identified in the plan as urban centers or TOD sites shall be reviewed for compliance with the goals, strategies, and intent in this plan. (Pg. 184) -strategy 2 under Urban Centers and Corridors (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • Continue to seek implementation of TOD station area plans in the corridor. -Strategy 3 unde Strategic Area A: I-225 Corridor and City Center (Pg. 242) • The height overlay district allows unlimited building heights in portions of the Parker Road interchange area. Review the boundaries of the overlay district to use it to support intensive, TOD-type development -Strategy 6 under Strategic Area G. Parker Road Corridor (Pg. 258) <p>From Section K. Transit Orented Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the strategy for TOD as described in this section for each of the station areas identified. Develop more specific concepts and standards for TOD within station area plans -strategy 1 under Transit Oriented Development (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • Promote implementation of the TOD zoning district -strategy 2 under Transit Oriented Development (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 184) • Develop station area profiles and station area plans for the seven stations identified. <i>Specific recommendation on what the the station area plans should contain are made</i> -strategy 3 under Transit Oriented Development (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 185) • Investigate and develop with the Aurora Housing Authority and other housing providers programs to provide opportunities for the full range of Aurora residents to live in close proximity to rail transit. Station area plans should also promote the location of housing which accomodates older residents and people who are physically challenged -strategy 4 under Transit Oriented Development (Ch IV. K. Urban Centers and Corridors)(Pg. 185) 	Pg. 117, Pg. 148, Pg. 184, Pg. 185, Pg. 269, Pg. 242, Pg. 258,

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Actions:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora adopted a new set of urban street standards for urban centers in 2007 (Pg. 140) ○ These standards were developed to encourage dense, walkable mixed-use areas near transit stations. (Pg. 140) • Transit-oriented development program/station area plans (Listed as a current Aurora Sustainability Project/ Programs) (Pg. 14) • To achieve the city’s vision for quality, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use developments around transit stations, the city will create detailed, community-based “station area plans” for at least seven stations (Pg. 177) • TOD Zoning District has been adopted by City Council and sets standards to encourage compact, high quality mixed-use developments that emphasize the pedestrian and public environment at and around transit stations. (Pg. 182) <p>ACTIONS INITIALLY NOTED IN 2003 PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle and trail plan to increase connectivity to TOD -#2 under Transportation (Ch VI Table VI-1. ACTION PLAN) (Pg. 266) • Station area plans & TOD zoning implementation - -#1 under Neighborhoods/Urban Centers/Corridos (Ch VI Table VI-1. ACTION PLAN) (Pg. 266) • TOD Best Practices Handbook #8 under Neighborhoods/Urban Centers/Corridos (Ch VI Table VI-1. ACTION PLAN) (Pg. 267 & 182) ○ Handbook will summarize some of the best-proven practices for designing and implementing TODs and will serve as an information resource for developers, design professionals, and the public (Pg. 182) 	Pg. 140, Pg. 14, Pg. 266, Pg. 267, Pg. 177, Pg. 182
Misc. imp.		<p>Components of the TOD Program (Pg. 181)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The I-225 corridor as a distinct, vibrant and attractive corridor recognizable as being of Aurora. Made up of TODs. ○ Station Area Profiles ○ Station Area Plans ○ TOD Zoning District ○ Best Practices Handbook 	Pg. 181

City of Aurora Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		2009 Comprehensive Plan		
		Rating	Definition	References
FasTracks	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FasTracks is a program undertaken by RTD to provide improved transportation choices and options to the region served by RTD (Pg. 143) Approved by the voters in 2004 and is primarily funded through sales tax revenue and federal and local government funding (Pg. 143) 	Pg. 143,
	# of times referenced:			37
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2007, the city has been preparing a series of station area plans for Aurora's 10 existing & planned rail passenger stations (Pg 53) Dev. of these urban centers should receive a big boost from implementation of FasTracks, the regional mass transit system (Pg 53) Aurora has played a major role in the Metro Mayors' Caucus, particularly in establishing local governments' response to the financial challenges facing RTD as it attempts to implement FasTracks (Pg. 53)(Pg. 208) Aurora's Travel Framework Map portrays a multi-modal transportation system which reflects FasTracks project (Pg. 141) As the FasTracks program moves forward, the city will play an increasingly active role in parking management (Pg. 142) Station area plans have been developed for six FasTracks rail stations and a seventh plan is to be initiated in November 2009 (Pg. 147) These plans establish a vision and framework plan for the station area and identify zoning and implementation strategies. (Pg. 147) Financial resources are needed to ensure bicycle and pedestrian enhancements identified by the adopted FasTracks station area plans are in place when the I-225 LRT line and the East Corridor Commuter Rail line open.(Pg. 148) Coordinate with CDOT, RTD, DRCOG and the E-470 Public Highway Authority to explore funding opportunities for the implementation of the various improvements which are identified in the FasTracks East Corridor and I-225 Corridor rail projects, I-225 Widening and Interchange Improvement Project, the Fitzsimons Area-Wide Multi-Modal Transportation Study, and the Strategic Parking Plan and Program Study. --Funding Strategy 1 under Ch IV. H. Transportation (Pg. 148) Continue to evaluate and support the RTD FasTracks program implementation for the original year 2017 build-out schedule. --Funding Strategy 2 under Ch IV. H. Transportation (Pg. 148) Continue to work to fund and implement planned transportation improvements including the I-225 interchange and FasTracks. Coordinate efforts with the CDOT and RTD. Explore a broad range of possible funding sources. --Fitzsimons Campus Strategy 4 under Ch V. A. Fitzsimons (Pg. 220) WHEN GOALS OF THE CITY ARE MET... Urban centers at Fitzsimons, City Center, Parker Road, and Hampden Town Center have intensively developed with complementary land uses and are linked by FasTracks light rail transit, allowing ready access to each other. -#3 under Ch V E I-225 Corridor and City Center (Pg. 242) 	Pg. 53, Pg. 141, Pg. 142, Pg. 147, Pg. 148, Pg 208, Pg. 220
Definition				
# of times referenced:		11		
Source of Term:				

	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
Metro Vision	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora is collaborating with other local governments on a DRCOG project to define and formally recognize activity centers of regional significance (Pg. 174) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An initial list of six such centers in Aurora was submitted to the regional agency in 2002 (Pg. 174) o That initial list has been expanded to include 13 urban centers which are reflected in Metro Vision, the regional land use plan (Pg. 175) • Metro Vision: Aurora has been a leader in the development of this regional plan, which began implementation in 1998. (Pg. 207) • Mile-High Compact: Again, Aurora took a leadership role in advocating through the Metro Mayors' Caucus a binding agreement among local governments in support of Metro Vision (Pg. 207) • Continue to develop ongoing population and employment-based forecasts, to support capital planning and funding programs and to utilize these forecasts to assert the city's appropriate share of regional growth under Metro --Urban Growth Area Strategy 1 Ch IV. N. Regional Leadership (pg. 211) 	Pg. 174, Pg. 175, Pg. 207, Pg. 211

City of Thornton Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term		1997 Comprehensive Plan (Amended through 2003)		
		Rating	Definition	References
Regional Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Community Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioned as a place where recreation/ cultural activities take place • No relevance to urban center concept 	
	# of times referenced:		3	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used in reference to urban center concept	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentions creating commercial neighborhood centers with "small town character in one place (Pg. 62) o This is done in an inset box, not in body of plan 	Pg. 62
	# of times referenced:		1	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Term used once	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	

	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Urban Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant community focal point (Pg. 101) 	Pg. 101
	# of times referenced:		4	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			Pg. 134
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			Pg. 134
	Strategies:			
	Actions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a vibrant urban center in and around the existing Civic Center by securing available funding, providing incentives when needed and ensuring quality mixed use development - recommendation #5 for achieving the urban design goals outlined in the plan. (Pg. 63) ○ Also mentioned as recommendation #2 under goal 7-C: Preserve and enhance community identity throughout the city (pg. 135) ○ Responsible entity and timeline for accomplishing this included 	Pg. 63, Pg. 135, Pg. 101,
Misc. imp.				
	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-use designation combines employment opportunities, retail shopping, some light industrial, and office uses which are intended to create employment centers (Pg. 113) 	Pg. 113
	# of times referenced:		4	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			Pg. 129
	Objectives:			

Employment Center	Policies:			Pg. 129
	Strategies:			
	Action:			
	Misc. imp.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should work with RTD to make sure transit services move residents from neighborhoods to employment centers. Recommendation #4 under Social and Human services(Pg. 37) o Also Recommendation #9 under Goal 4-C - Increase public service efficiency through cordinatd service provision strategies (Pg. 130) - Responsible entity & timeline for accomplishing this included here 	Pg. 37, Pg. 130
Regional Activity Center	Definition		None provided	
	# of times referenced:		2	
	Source of Term:		None provided	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0		
	Goals:		Enhance linkages between Thornton and other regional activity centers, such as downtown Denver and Denver International Airport - Goal 8-D under Transportation (Pg. 84 & 137)	Pg. 84, Pg. 137
	Objectives:			

	Policies:			Pg. 137
	Strategies:			
	Actions			Pg. 137
	Misc. imp.			
Community Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Urban Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	

Multi-Purpose Center	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	

Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA	

City of Thornton Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		1997 Comprehensive Plan (Amended though 2003)		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Implementation		NA	
	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRCOG has adopted Metro Vision 2020 Plan to guide growth in the Denver Metropolitan region for the next 20 years (Pg. 98) ○ This plan endeavors to coordinate the location of urban development with the transportation network and with water and wastewater treatment facilities (Pg. 98) 	Pg. 98,
	# of times referenced:		4	
	Source of Term:			

Metro Vision	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Term used, no implementation	
	Implementation		None	

City of Thornton Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term		2007 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
Regional Center	Definition		• No definition provided, does not appear to have strong meaning associated with concept of urban centers	
	# of times referenced:		Referenced 2 times in document	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	NA	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Community Center	Definition		• Used to describe a type of institutional use not associated with concept of urban centers (Pg. 69)	Pg. 69
	# of times referenced:		3	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Used but not in reference to urban centers	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	

	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Urban Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas intended to serve as a primary location for non-retail employment, providing flexibility for the location of such diverse uses as offices, manufacturing, educational facilities, post-secondary (college) educational facilities and medical centers/hospitals. (Pg. 64) o Includes Office Parks, Corporate Campuses and Industrial Parks (Pg. 69) o Corporate campus intended to have restaurants and other office support retail uses (Pg. 69) o Office parks are similar but at lower level intensity (Pg. 69) • Areas with the highest regional access and attraction –around interchanges and transit stops- reserved for employment growth (Pg. 16) 	Pg. 64, Pg. 69, Pg. 16,
	# of times referenced:		27	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Objectives:			

Employment Center	Policies:		<p>Policy 6.1.1 (under major strategy 1): Proactively annex and zone land for non-residential development (Pg. 99)</p> <p>Policy 6.1.3 (under major strategy 1): Use infrastructure to encourage desired uses or discourage premature development (Pg. 99)</p> <p>Policy 6.4.3: (under major strategy 4): Provide efficient transportation connections between FasTracks stations and employment centers. (Pg. 101)</p>	Pg. 99, Pg. 101,
	Strategies:		<p>Major Strategy 1 (under goal of plentiful jobs): Reserve Land for Future Regional Employment Centers (Pg. 98 & 99)</p> <p>Major Strategy 4 (under goal of plentiful jobs): Accommodate mixed use TOD (Relates to Policy 6.4.3 listed above but does not specifically call out employment centers)</p>	Pg. 98, Pg. 99
	Action:			
	Misc. imp.			
Regional Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	

	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Urban Activity Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	

Multi-Purpose Center	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compact, mixed-use development within an easy walk of a transit station. Its pedestrian-oriented design encourages residents and workers to drive their cars less and ride mass transit more. These “transit villages” are usually moderate to high density, matching the existing scale of dev. and can be new construction or redevelopment. (Pg. 182) • A substantial amount of development at higher densities is anticipated in transit-oriented developments around the FasTracks stations once that system is completed in 2015. (Pg. 45) 	Pg. 182, Pg. 45
	# of times referenced:		10 unique instances. 15 total -includes when the full word is spelled out followed by (TOD)	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Goals:			Pg. 98, Pg. 121,
	Objectives:			
	Policies:		<p>Policy 6.4.1 (under major strategy 4): Allow for mixed use development to occur at transit stops (Pg. 101)</p> <p>Policy 6.4.2 (under major strategy 4): Protect options for non-residential development at North End station (Pg. 101)</p> <p>Policy 6.4.3 (under major strategy 4): Provide efficient transportation connections between FasTracks stations and employment centers (Pg. 101)</p> <p>Policy 7.1.3 (under major strategy 1): Create an Eastlake Historic District (Pg. 123)</p> <p>o It is envisioned that transit-oriented-development (TOD) be encouraged in the district (Pg. 123)</p>	Pg. 101, Pg. 123,
Strategies:		Major Strategy 4 (under Plentiful Quality Jobs): Accommodate Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development (Pg. 98 & 101)	Pg. 98, Pg 101	

Actions:		<p>Catalyst Actions for City of Plentiful Jobs: #4 Plan and Zone the Appropriate Transit Station Areas for the Desired Uses and to Avoid Premature, Speculative Development (Pg. 158)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o One important tool could be the development of a subarea plan which could address issues such as development standards, overlay criteria, and transit-oriented development needs (Pg. 159) o Another useful approach would be tracking case studies of the many metro area TODs already under development (Pg. 159) 	Pg. 158, Pg. 159,
Misc. imp.			

City of Thornton Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		2007 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015, FasTracks, a commuter rail line with five transit facilities is anticipated to be operational in Thornton's planning area (Pg. 93) 	Pg. 93,
	# of times referenced:		16	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed FasTracks commuter rail system will require active City coordination with RTD and adjacent municipalities (Pg. 74) Policy 5.5.5 in Section 5 Quality & Diverse Neighborhoods: Create well-designed and integrated mixed-use developments at FasTracks stations and ensure suitable pedestrian connections with surrounding neighborhoods (Pg. 90) Major Strategy 4 under Section 6 Plentiful Quality Jobs: Accommodate Mixed Use TOD (Pg. 101) The FasTracks line through Thornton will provide an opportunity to attract employers who seek a unique mixed use environment and transit access to other metropolitan employment centers (Pg. 101) Policy 6.4.3: Provide efficient transportation connections between FasTracks stations and employment centers. (Pg. 101) Coordinate necessary transit improvements to aid in the future development of the FasTracks project (Pg. 120) Catalyst Action 4 for a City of Plentiful Quality Jobs: Plan and Zone the Appropriate Transit Station Areas for the Desired Uses and to Avoid Premature, Speculative Development Background While the FasTracks system is not expected to open until at least 2015, steps taken now can preserve the opportunity to use the system to foster the goal of Thornton as a City of Plentiful Quality jobs (Pg. 158) 	Pg. 74, Pg. 90, Pg. 101, Pg. 120, Pg. 158
	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRCOG has adopted the Metro Vision 2030 Plan to guide growth in the Denver Metropolitan region for the next 20 years (Pg. 33) 	Pg. 33
	# of times referenced:		2	
	Source of Term:			

Metro Vision	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRCOG has adopted the Metro Vision 2030 Plan to guide growth in the Denver Metropolitan region for the next 20 years (Pg. 33) o The City of Thornton has signed an intergovernmental agreement along with many other members of DRCOG called the Mile High Compact which addresses planned growth within the DRCOG region. (Pg. 33) 	Pg. 33

City of Thornton Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term		2012 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
Regional Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not Applicable	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Community Center	Definition		• Used to describe a type of institutional use, does not appear associated with concept of urban centers (Pg. 76)	Pg. 76,
	# of times referenced:		3	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Used but in reeference to something not assicated with urban centers concept	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Center	Definition		Not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	

	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Urban Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific geographic areas in the Denver Metro area that have been identified in the DRCOG Metro Vision Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These areas are proposed to be of higher-density, mixed-use, transit and pedestrian-friendly design. Thornton currently has four identified Urban Centers. (Pg. 227) • Metro Vision 2035 identifies four urban centers in Thornton (Pg. 36) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I-25/HWY 7 (Larkridge), North End Station, Thornton City Center, & Eastlake (Pg. 36) 	Pg. 227, Pg. 36,
	# of times referenced:		15	
	Source of Term:		DRCOG Metro Vision Plan	
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:			
	Strategies:			
	Actions		<p><u>EVALUATION & PROGRESS of 2007 Action Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyst Action 5 (under quality and diverse neighborhoods): Develop programs to ensure an adequate supply of quality community and neighborhood scale commercial centers and decrease underutilized retail space through redevelopment to other uses (Pg. 158) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The City is planning to identify retail land needs in south Thornton in the Washington Street/Pearl Street area as part of the Urban Center Plan being developed in 2012-2013. (Pg. 158) <p><u>ONGOING ACTIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyst Action 2 (under quality and diverse neighborhoods): Complete the Thornton Urban Center Plan and other TOD plans (Pg. 164; mentioned on pg. 35 as well) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Urban Center Plan will cover the southern part of Thornton (Pg. 164) ○ It will use of Federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) dollars (Pg. 164) 	Pg. 158, Pg. 164, Pg. 35,
	Misc. imp.			
	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to serve as a primary location for non-retail employment, providing flexibility for the location of such diverse uses as offices, manufacturing, educational facilities, post-secondary (college) educational facilities, and medical centers/hospitals. (Pg. 71) • Incidental accessory and supporting uses – such as restaurants, hotels, child care centers, mixed use urban villages without housing, and small-scale retail – could also be permitted, concurrent with or subsequent to the development of a permitted principal use. (Pg. 71) • Characterized by regional access, available labor, and amenities. (Pg. 109) 	Pg. 71, Pg. 109,
	# of times referenced:		Referenced 27 times in document	
	Source of Term:		Not mentioned	
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			

Employment Center	Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the North Washington Subarea Plan -Policy 6.1.4 under major strategy 1 (Pg. 113) • Proactively annex and zone land for nonresidential development -Policy 6.3.1 under major strategy 3 (Pg. 114) • Use incentives and programs to preserve land for quality employment -Policy 6.3.2 under major strategy 3 (Pg. 114) • Use infrastructure to encourage desired uses or discourage premature development -Policy 6.3.3 under major strategy 3 (Pg. 114) • Protect options for nonresidential development at North End station -Policy 6.4.2 under major strategy 4 (Pg. 114) • Provide efficient transportation connections between FasTracks stations and employment centers -Policy 6.4.3 under major strategy 4 (Pg. 114) 	Pg. 113, Pg. 114,
	Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Reserve Land for Future Regional Employment Centers" -major strategy #3 under Section 6 -Plentiful Quality Jobs (Pg. 112 & Pg. 113) • "Accommodate Mixed Use TOD"-major strategy #4 under Section 6 -Plentiful Quality Jobs (Pg. 114) <p>o Notes that the FasTracks line through Thornton will provide an opportunity to attract employers who seek a unique mixed use environment and transit access</p>	Pg. 112, Pg. 113
	Action:	<p>EVALUATION & PROGRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyst Action 1 (under plentiful Quality Jobs): Implement the North Washington Subarea Plan(an identified employment center)(Pg. 158) <p>o It is noted that this has progressed considerably (Pg. 158)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New zoning category of Employment Center was approved in 2009 (Pg. 159) • North Washington Subarea Overlay District was approved in 2006 (Pg. 159) <p>ONGOING ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyst Action 3 (under plentiful quality jobs) Improve public infrastructure to stimulate and leverage private investment in the North Washington Subarea 	Pg. 158, Pg. 159,
	Misc. imp.	<p>Section 6 Plentiful Quality Jobs -6.3 Core Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended future employment centers are located along the I-25 and E-470 corridors (Pg. 109) <p>o These are mapped on (page 108)</p> <p>o Two existing employment centers along the I-25 employment corridor -one in the Civic Center area, and one northeast of the I-25 and 120th Avenue interchange (Pg. 109)</p> <p>o One new employment center has been described in detail within the North Washington Subarea Plan, adopted in 2005 (Pg. 109)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Comp. Plan identifies the opportunity for an additional employment center along E-470 at its interchange with Quebec Street. (Pg. 110) • Future employment centers should be proactively prepared for development with required infrastructure such as improved roads and water, wastewater, drainage, and fiber optic systems in place. (Pg. 110) • Capital improvements and other revenue sources must be committed with public-private partnerships developed to assemble land and attract new primary employers that provide quality jobs. (Pg. 110) 	Pg. 108 Pg. 109,
Regional Activity Center	Definition	Term not used	
	# of times referenced:	None	
	Source of Term:	NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used
	Goals:		NA
	Objectives:		NA

	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Urban Activity Center	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		None	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
	Definition		Term not used	
	# of times referenced:		None	

Multi-Purpose Center	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not used	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compact, mixed-use development within an easy walk of a transit station. • Its pedestrian-oriented design encourages residents and workers to drive their cars less and ride mass transit more. • These “transit villages” are usually moderate to high density. (Pg. 227) 	Pg. 227
	# of times referenced:		28 unique references. 36 total (includes "Transit Oriented Development (TOD)")	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
	Goals:			
	Objectives:			
	Policies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for mixed use development to occur at transit stops -Policy 6.4.1 under section 6 major strategy 4 (Pg. 114) • Protect options for nonresidential dev. at North End station -Policy 6.4.2 under section 6 major strategy 4 (Pg. 114) • Provide efficient transportation connections between FasTracks stations and employment centers -Policy 6.4.3 under section 6 major strategy 4 (Pg. 114) • Create an Eastlake Historic District -Policy 7.1.3 under Section 7 major strategy 1(Pg. 142) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Eastlake Historic District is envisioned as a TOD (Pg. 142) 	Pg. 114, Pg. 142,
Strategies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Accommodate Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development" -major strategy 4 under section 6- Plentiful Quality Jobs (Pg. 112) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o North End station is cited as being suitable for regional employment uses (Pg. 114) 	Pg. 112, Pg. 114,	

Actions:		<p>EVALUATION & PROGRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyst Action 1 (under plentiful Quality Jobs): Implement the North Washington Subarea Plan(an identified TOD District -Pg. 158 & 159) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is noted that this has progressed considerably (Pg. 158) • New zoning category of Transit Oriented Development was approved in 2009 (Pg. 159) • North Washington Subarea Overlay District was approved in 2006 (Pg. 159) • Catalyst Action 4 (under plentiful quality jobs) Plan and Zone the Appropriate Transit Station Areas for the Desired Uses and to Avoid Premature, Speculative Development (Pg. 160) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plans for all the FasTracks transit station areas are complete, or proposed for completion in the next few years. (Pg. 160) •The Eastlake Station Transit Oriented Development Master Plan report was adopted in Feb. 2009. (pg 34 & 160) ○ Area is already zoned to accommodate TOD type uses as a result of recommendations from the 2003 Eastlake Subarea Plan (Pg. 160) (TOD Station Area Plan) • Upon completion of all of the station area plans, theCity’s new TOD zoning category can be applied, as needed, to land appropriate for TOD-related land uses. (Pg. 160) <p>ONGOING ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Thornton Urban Center Plan and other TOD plans -Action #2 under quality and diverse neighborhoods (Pg. 164) • TOD planning endeavors are proposed in 2013 and 2014 using TIP allocated monies <p>○These include TODs at three proposed transit stations on the North Metro Corridor at 88th Avenue, 104th Avenue, and 144th Avenue.</p>	Pg. 158, Pg. 159, Pg. 160,
Misc. imp.			

City of Thornton Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		2012 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FasTracks is a comprehensive transit expansion plan for the Denver metropolitan area to build new commuter rail and light rail, bus rapid transit and station parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FasTracks will also enhance bus service for easy, convenient bus/rail connections across the eight-county metropolitan The future construction of the FasTracks North Line will provide commuter rail with six proposed transit stations in Thornton's planning area 	Pg. 216
	# of times referenced:		31	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed FasTracks commuter rail system will require active City coordination with RTD and adjacent municipalities (Pg. 82) Policy 5.5.5 Under Major Strategy 5 in Section 5 Quality & Diverse Neighborhoods: Facilitate the development of well-designed and integrated mixed-use developments at anticipated future FasTracks stations and ensure suitable pedestrian connections with surrounding neighborhoods. (Pg. 104) Major Strategy 4 Under Section 6 Plentiful Quality Jobs: Accommodate Mixed Use TOD (Pg. 114) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FasTracks line through Thornton will provide an opportunity to attract employers who seek a unique mixed use environment and transit access to other metropolitan employment centers (Pg. 114) Policy 6.4.3 Under Major Strategy 4: Provide efficient transportation connections between FasTracks stations and employment centers (Pg. 114) Coordinate necessary transit improvements to aid in the future development of the FasTracks project (Pg. 134) Catalyst Action For Plentiful Quality Jobs #4: Plan and Zone the Appropriate Transit Station Areas for the Desired Uses and to Avoid Premature, Speculative Development (Pg. 160) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for all the FasTracks transit station areas are complete, or proposed for completion in the next few years (Pg. 160) The original FasTracks funding estimates approved by voters in 2004 were insufficient to build out the entire transit system, including the North Metro Corridor (Pg. 170) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this juncture, it is unclear whether the corridor will be fully financed and what timeline will be followed (Pg. 170) The City is monitoring the situation carefully and playing a part in decision making where possible (Pg. 170) Whatever the final outcome is, the City must ensure that the results are optimized for the benefit of Thornton's residents (Pg. 170) 	Pg. 82, Pg. 104, Pg. 114, Pg. 134, Pg. 160, Pg. 170,
Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metro Vision 2035 is the DRCOG region's current plan to guide growth, transportation and environmental quality into the future (Pg. 221) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metro Vision is the foundation of all of the DRCOG's long-range planning activities (Pg. 221) 	Pg. 221,	
# of times referenced:		10		
Source of Term:				

Metro Vision	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2000, the City of Thornton signed an intergovernmental agreement, along with other members of DRCOG, called the Mile High Compact which addresses planned growth within the DRCOG region. (Pg. 36) o DRCOG adopted the Metro Vision 2035 Plan to guide growth in the Denver Metropolitan region for the next 20 years. (Pg. 36) • Metro Vision 2035 identifies four urban centers in Thornton (Pg. 36) o The Future Land Use Map is in alignment with the urban center concept and shows higher intensity development in the identified urban center areas (Pg. 36) 	Pg. 36,

City of Lone Tree Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term		2008 Comprehensive Plan		
		Rating	Definition	References
Regional Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Neighborhood Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
	Definition		• City Center is designed to serve as an urban center in the south metro region and the focal point of Lone Tree, the City Center is planned for a higher intensity of mixed-use, transit-oriented development (Pg. 18)	Pg. 18
	# of times referenced:		1	

Urban Center	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	Mentioned once, no implementation	
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		None	
	Policies:		None	
	Strategies:		None	
	Actions		None	
	Misc. imp.		None	
Employment Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Lone Tree decision makers have recognized that cleaner industries, advances in technology, and attention to design have reduced the need to isolate residences from basic conveniences, services, and employment centers -from guiding principles (Pg. 12) o Practices such as compact, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development have replaced the mid-late 20th century models of suburban development, where land uses were separated (Pg. 12) 	Pg. 12
	# of times referenced:		2	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	0	None	
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		None	
	Policies:		None	
	Misc. imp.		None	
Regional Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Objectives:		NA	

	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Urban Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Multi-Purpose Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Center is designed to serve as an urban center in the south metro region and the focal point of Lone Tree, the City Center is planned for a higher intensity of mixed-use, transit-oriented development (Pg. 18) Compact development, mix of uses, pedestrian orientation, connection to bicycle and walking trails, gathering spaces, etc (Pg. 30) 	Pg. 18, Pg. 30
	# of times referenced:		15	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	3		
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage transit use and create community hubs, by incorporating a lively mix of development around transit stations, by orienting development toward the pedestrian, by providing adequate and safe multimodal access, and by ensuring quality design. TOD Objective under Land Use Section (Pg. 30) 	Pg. 30,
	Policies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support vertical and horizontal mixed-use development within a ¼ mile of transit stops, which focus on the pedestrian and discourage auto-dependent uses --Policy 1 under Land Use Section (Pg. 30) Support multi-family development and a mix of housing types around TODs, with the highest level of development density located closest to the stop TOD Policy 2 under Land Use Section (Pg. 30) Encourage efficient and safe access to and around TODs by pedestrians and cyclists by providing connections from outlying areas to transit stations, providing wide sidewalks (on both sides of the street) with differing materials at crosswalks, adequate signage, lighting, wayfinding, and bike racks and storage lockers. TOD Policy 3 under Land Use Section (Pg. 30) Enhance the pedestrian experience by providing sheltered seating, public restrooms, trash receptacles, street lamps, planters, public art, and gathering spaces such as plazas and pocket parks TOD Policy 4 under Land Use Section (Pg. 30) Provide adequate access by automobile, shuttles, buses, bicycles and pedestrians, encouraging an interconnected street network around blocks 200-400 feet long, and design streets to accommodate multimodal traffic. Traffic-calming measures are encouraged around TODs and other residential and mixed use areas, and structured parking, on-street parking, and shared parking is supported TOD Policy 5 under Land Use Section (Pg. 30) Orient buildings to the street, with windows at street level to provide interest to the pedestrian (as opposed to long, blank walls), and locate surface parking, along with dumpsters, loading docks, service entrances, and storage, to the rear of buildings TOD Policy 6 under Land Use Section (Pg. 31) Require design standards that ensure quality and unify development, while at the same time affording some variety in architectural styles, detail and materials to add interest. TOD Policy 7 under Land Use Section (Pg. 31) 	Pg. 30, Pg. 31
	Strategies:		None	
	Actions:		None	
Misc. imp.		None		

City of Lone Tree Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		2008 Comprehensive Plan		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition			
	# of times referenced:		3	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though funding for the light rail extension is secured due to the success of a voter approved initiative in 2004 (FasTracks), efforts are being made by the City to accelerate the construction of these last stations to advance the City and the region's planning objectives (Pg. 72) 	Pg. 72,
Metro Vision	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metro Vision 2030 was established by DRCOG to guide future growth and development in the Denver Metro Area (Pg. 90) 	Pg. 90
	# of times referenced:		5	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area slated for urban development on the City's General Land Use Plan map is recognized by and consistent with the DRCOG's Metro Vision 2030 Plan (Pg 20) 	Pg. 20

Greenwood Village Plan Analysis

Urban Center Terms

Term		2004 Comprehensive Plan (Amended through 2012)		
		Rating	Definition	References
Regional Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Neighborhood Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All uses of the term directly relate to the Holly/ Orchard Neighborhood Center Unclear whether this relates to high density development 	
	# of times referenced:		5	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster improved pedestrian connections to the Holly/Orchard Neighborhood Center and neighborhood and community facilities -- Listed as transportation objective (Pg 82)	Pg. 82
	Policies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing pedestrian connections to the Holly/Orchard Neighborhood Center --Planning Area Policy 3e (Pg. 94) Ensure safe crossings to Holly/Orchard Neighborhood Center and the library used by planning area residents --Planning Area Policy 8c (Pg. 95) 	Pg. 94, Pg. 95
	Strategies:		None	
	Actions		None	
	Misc. imp.		None	

Urban Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrated areas of development, more dense and mixed-in-use than surrounding areas (Pg 23) • Serve as transit destinations, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use locations of high intensity (Pg 23) • There are three types of urban centers: (Pg 23) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Mixed-Use Centers</u>- envisioned as high-intensity, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use locations providing a range of retail, business, civic and residential opportunities for the surrounding trade area. (Pg 23) ○ <u>Activity Centers</u> Similar, but focused mostly on employment. They may not contain the same mix of uses, particularly residential (Pg 24) ○ <u>Regional Corridors</u>- Have some component of residential, but are distinguished by their larger size and linear characteristics. EX=The Southeast /I-25 Regional Corridor (Pg 24) 	Pg. 23, Pg. 24
	# of times referenced:		7	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING			
	Goals:	1	None	
	Objectives:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of the DTC and Greenwood Plaza master plans is to create a balanced mixture of land uses that establish an urban center with a tree-lined street system in a suburban setting (Pg. 29) • The Corridor Planning Area (I-25) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As an urban center, provide for recreational opportunities within the planning area --Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Objective for the Corridor Planning Area (Pg. 102) 	Pg. 29, Pg. 102
	Policies:		None	
	Strategies:		None	
Actions		None		
Misc. imp.		None		
Employment Center	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems focused on areas of high density employment -Example: Denver Tech Center • No real mention of creating a mixed-use area of development ○ Mentions that the objective of the DTC and Greenwood Plaza master plans is to create a balanced mixture of land uses that establish an urban center with a tree-lined street system in a suburban setting (Pg. 29) 	
	# of times referenced:		18	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote linkages to and from employment centers --Transportation Objective for West End Planning Area (Pg. 65) • Promote pedestrian commuter linkages to and from employment centers --Transportation Objective for Rural Homestead Planning Area (Pg. 74) • Provide for high quality pedestrian connections throughout the planning area for commercial and employment centers --Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Objective for Arapahoe Road Planning Area (Pg. 117) 	Pg. 65, Pg. 74, Pg. 117
	Policies:		None	
	Strategies:		None	
Action:		None		
Misc. imp.		None		
	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	

Regional Activity Center	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions		NA	
	Misc. imp.		NA	
Community Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Neighborhood Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Urban Activity Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
Actions		NA		

	Misc. imp.		NA	
Multi-Purpose Center	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Goals:		NA	
	Objectives:		NA	
	Policies:		NA	
	Strategies:		NA	
	Actions:		NA	
Misc. imp.		NA		
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	Definition			
	# of times referenced:			
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	1		
	Goals:		None	
	Objectives:		None	
	Policies:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage transit-oriented development at the proposed Orchard Light Rail Station to support ridership and reduce traffic congestion. The Orchard Light Rail Station shall be designed in a convenient and safe walking environment, and uses may include attractive community and regional commercial, office/employment, parks and open space, and community uses. --Land use Policy 1i. under the Corridor Planning Area (Pg. 104) 	Pg. 104
	Strategies:		None	
	Actions:		None	
Misc. imp.		None		

Greenwood Village Plan Analysis

Plan & Program Terms

Term		2004 Comprehensive Plan (Amended through 2012)		References
		Rating	Definition	
FasTracks	Definition		Term not mentioned	
	# of times referenced:		0	
	Source of Term:		NA	
	COMPOSITE RATING	NA	Term not mentioned	
	Implementation		NA	
Metro Vision	Definition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro Vision 2035 is the long-range growth plan for the Denver region and is designed to preserve and enhance the metropolitan area's quality of life (Pg 23) • The Southeast /I-25 Regional Corridor, reflected in the Metro Vision 2035 Plan, include several of the mixed-use developments along I-25 in Greenwood Village (Pg 24) 	Pg. 23, Pg. 24
	# of times referenced:		9	
	Source of Term:			
	COMPOSITE RATING	2		
	Implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenwood Village supports Metro Vision 2035 as a plan for addressing growth in the metropolitan area. The City Council has adopted by ordinance the Urban Growth Boundary Map and has signed the Mile High Compact, thereby making a commitment to regional planning policies (Pg. 25) • The Greenwood Village Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the Metro Vision 2035 Plan (Pg. 25) • The Comprehensive Plan envisions a hierarchy of centers within the community that are well connected and promotes the Southeast I-25 Corridor as the most important urban corridor in the region (Pg. 25) • The Greenwood Village Comprehensive Plan outlines land use strategies and objectives consistent with the Metro Vision 2035 Plan, which advocates a greater concentration of housing at mixed-use centers (Pg 27) • Consistent with the DRCOG Metro Vision 2035 goals and objectives and its Urban Corridor policy, the Greenwood Village Comprehensive Plan establishes policies regarding limited residential in-fill and commercial redevelopment opportunities that preserve and enhance the aesthetic quality of the Village (Pg 31) 	Pg. 25, Pg. 27, Pg. 31

Appendix B: Interview Guide

I. PRELIMINARIES [2 MINUTES]

[Introduce yourself; note about IRB process and how this is required.]

Background and Benefits

You are being asked to participate in a study that involves research. In this study, we will collect data from plans, maps, property records and interviews with experts on regional and local planning in the Denver metropolitan area. The purpose of this research is to examine the efforts being made at the regional and local level to develop mixed use centers.

The findings will benefit local jurisdictions by sharing experiences and recommending changes that can improve policies and programs in the long term. We will be happy to share the findings with you and your organization.

Participation and Recording

If you are willing to participate I will interview you about your views of these regional and local efforts. The interview will take 30-45 minutes and involve a series of questions. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. I would like to record the interview so that I can obtain an accurate account of what you have said. If you prefer that our interview not be recorded, please let me know

Risk and Confidentiality of Records

The records of this study will be kept private. In any publication, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file and password protected computer. Only the research team will have access to the audio recordings and transcripts.

We anticipate minimal risk for participating in this study, but there is a chance that someone could determine the source of a quote or information based on its content.

Statement of Consent

Do you have any questions about this study or how it is being conducted?

Are you willing to participate in the interview?

- No: Thank them for their time
- Yes: Next question

Are you willing to have this interview be recorded?

- No: Thank you, I will just take notes as we talk
- Yes: Start recording interview and repeat verbal consent request

[START RECORDING AND MAKE SURE TO REPEAT STATEMENT OF CONSENT]

II. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Could I have you quickly state your name and current position with the city of **XXXX**?

2. And how long you have been with the city of **XXXX**?

I would like to ask you some questions about your most recent comprehensive plan and how it relates to the regional plan developed by DRCOG. I'm particularly interested in centers, which may be called "urban centers," "mixed use centers," during the course of this interview. You may also know them as some other term –e.g. regional centers, activity centers, etc.

The first several questions focus on the impact regional activities have played on the adoption of centers policies:

3. Do you have a sense for when **CITY** embraced the concept of urban centers?

4. I'm going to ask a series of questions about the factors that have been most important in supporting centers policy. Can you indicate how important each item has been on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 where **five is very important** and **one is not at all important**.
 - a. Regional Metro Vision plan?

1) Not at all important	2)	3)	4)	5) Very Important

b. Regional transportation funding incentives –e.g. grants or other funding from DRCOG or RTD?

1) Not at all important	2)	3)	4)	5) Very Important

c. Investment in light rail lines and stations?

1) Not at all important	2)	3)	4)	5) Very Important

d. Interest in bringing more sales tax revenue to the **City of XX**?

1) Not at all important	2)	3)	4) S	5) Very Important

e. Interest in attracting more multi-family housing to the **City of XX**?

1) Not at all important	2)	3)	4)	5) Very Important

5. How has the regional plan (Metro Vision 2035) influenced the **City of XXX** local plan in terms of regional growth and planning for centers?
 - a. Were these influences significant or minor?
 - b. What aspect of the plan has had the most significant influence?

6. In terms of your planning for centers, how much have you worked with DRCOG?
 - a. What about RTD?
 - i. Do you work closely with them on station area planning?

7. How much was the **CITY of XX** involved in the metro vision process which led to the development of centers policies at the regional level?

The next three questions relate to development around designated centers in your community:

8. In terms of development around centers right now, which would you cite as the most successful centers in your community?

9. What has been the chief driver in terms of activities around these centers?
 - a. How much has been planning driven?
 - b. How much has been market driven?
 - c. How much of it has been the introduction of light rail?

10. What kind of investment has the city been making in some of these centers?

I would now like to ask you some questions about political and community response to centers policies:

11. Has there been local political support or resistance in planning for centers?

a. Do you have a sense for what has been driving support or opposition?

12. Has there been community support or resistance in planning for centers?

a. Within the community, do you have a sense for what has been driving support or opposition?

13. In the early stages of designating centers, what was the incentive from the city's standpoint of adopting centers policy?

Conclusion

14. Are there other factors about centers in your city that I have not asked about?

III. THANK YOU [2 MINUTES]

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me and answer questions about urban center policies in the Denver Metropolitan Region. We appreciate your insights. Our next steps include interviewing other key agencies and organizations in Denver Metro Region. Based on what we learn in interviews as well as through extensive analysis of comprehensive planning documents, we will begin drafting a summary of our findings. If you have any follow up comments on urban centers policies that we didn't cover in this interview, please feel free to email us afterwards.

We'll be using information we collect to write reports and academic papers. We will share drafts throughout the process and a final report will be available later this year.

Feel free to contact us by email or phone (440-832-1027) if you have anything further you'd like to share.