



Moving **Forward**

Community Vision
Future Employment & Population Growth
Mile High Compact & Urban Growth Boundary
City Image, Character & Urban Design
Land Use Vision



Introduction

Lakewood 2025: Moving Forward is a guide for physical and economic development in the city over the next 10 years. It provides direction for achieving the community vision, as identified during the development of the Plan, through strategies addressing land use, housing and neighborhoods, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and community design needs. The Plan was created through a series of public activities providing a range of opportunities for input from those having an interest in the city's future.

Significant economic growth is projected for the Denver metropolitan region. The city has many existing assets and will be positioned to benefit from anticipated growth through the development of a long-range plan for the future. Lakewood, like many other first-ring suburbs that experienced substantial growth between the 1940s and 1970s, continues to thrive; however, it faces challenges to long-term economic health due to aging and obsolete structures and infrastructure, limited opportunity for new development, and increased needs in the face of limited resources.

Even as the Colorado economy improves from the most recent recession, Lakewood will continue to face some physical and economic challenges. The city's older housing stock may not meet the preferences of those moving to the region. Potential sales tax stagnation may result from older commercial properties that cannot meet the needs of future tenants. Decision-makers will have to seek new methods of addressing community development patterns and the provision of services and amenities. Those guiding the development of this Plan openly recognize the challenges and opportunities affecting the city's ability to grow in the future and seek to identify new ways to address these challenges directly and proactively. To meet the needs of the community, Lakewood must prepare a plan that creates a direction for the city's future growth and positions the city to be a partner in revitalization, reinvestment, and redevelopment.

This Plan builds upon the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and retains many of the forward-thinking concepts that were presented in that Plan and that are still relevant today, such as the following:

- Mixed-use development in focused locations throughout the city.
- Strategic growth areas for economic development.
- Redevelopment opportunities, including those in brownfield areas.
- Increased historic preservation efforts.
- Improving alternative transportation modes for greater accessibility.
- Enhancing existing neighborhoods through investment.
- Investing in the City's open space, parks, and recreational amenities.
- Increasing public art and cultural amenities to improve the community's quality of life.
- Improving public buildings so they are attractive, functional, and energy efficient.

Through continued implementation of these concepts, Lakewood has become a leader in creating compact urban infill, improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities, installing public art, and increasing transit usage. These achievements lay the groundwork for even greater improvements in the coming decades.

This Plan establishes a set of coordinated goals and action steps to guide the city's development future and provides a resource for City departments, investors, property owners, and others seeking to invest in the community. Many in the community expressed a desire to preserve the characteristics that led them to call Lakewood home; however, all recognize the challenges facing the community and the significant decisions that must be made to ensure the community's future.

To that end, a vision was crafted that captures the best the community has to offer and expresses specific goals that must and can be achieved.

COMMUNITY VISION

Overview

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to identify and articulate residents' values and goals and help the community achieve its desired future through the vision statement, and in later chapters, goals and action steps.

It is clear that the Plan must help the City foster an enhanced quality of life for Lakewood's residents; ensure the City responds effectively to residents' social, economic, environmental, and development concerns; and achieve rational and logical patterns of growth.

The vision for Lakewood may mean something different for different people. For its ambitious City Council, it means creating a plan that represents the community's collective will to create a top tier American City. For Lakewood residents it means creating a welcoming and vibrant community that continues to improve its quality of life.

City leaders, the advisory committee, stakeholders, and the public have given clear, early direction: decisions must be geared toward improving the quality of life of those who live, work, and operate businesses in Lakewood. Lakewood's exceptional quality of life is clearly its most important asset. Lakewood's great schools, family and business-friendly environment, location, and beautiful surroundings strengthen the city's competitiveness.

People relocate and settle in places that are appealing on various levels, giving them a balance of economic stability, recreational opportunities, healthy surroundings, cultural experiences, and educational foundation. It is understood that communities that offer such amenities are better able to forge the social, civic, and cultural bonds that allow a community to prosper and flourish over time.

Vision Statement

The vision statement is intended to set a direction for the future of the city rather than being simply a prediction. The statement describes what Lakewood should become and what it strives to achieve. The vision statement is meant to be optimistic, affirming, and aspiring to make a greater city in the future.

Following the series of open houses conducted during the fall of 2013 during which input was solicited regarding the city's future, and discussions among the members, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee developed this vision statement for Lakewood as the city moves forward toward 2025:

Lakewood is one of the most livable cities in the United States. Lakewood's spectacular location near the mountains, open spaces, and Denver allows residents to take advantage of an abundance of recreational and urban amenities.

We are an enduring community with a rich history and unique identity. We are a leader in the Denver metropolitan region and will continue to be a model, sustainable, and resilient community that residents and visitors will enjoy for generations.

In 2025 we envision a City that is:

Livable with a high quality of life. Lakewood is an inviting, attractive, diverse and inclusive community. Lakewood is known for its hometown character and unique single-family neighborhoods, while also providing a variety of housing types and choices for all residents. Lakewood is a healthy, safe, and secure city with high-quality parks and recreation centers; a commitment to the arts, culture and heritage; and an active and engaged citizenry.

Mobile with an integrated transportation system designed for pedestrians, bicycles, public transit and automobiles equally. Lakewood has facilities that are accessible and navigable to all regardless of physical mobility.

Innovative with a diverse and resilient economic base of local businesses and national employers. The City accommodates changing economic conditions and innovations. Lakewood has a strong downtown and vibrant, well-designed and revitalized mixed-use urban and neighborhood centers.

Sustainable with a commitment to social equity, protecting the unique natural environment, and responsibly integrating sustainable practices into land use, built structures, transportation, and the local economy. Lakewood is a steward of environmental health and irreplaceable natural resources.

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT & POPULATION GROWTH

Overview

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) projects that Lakewood's population will increase by approximately 47,000 people between 2010 and 2035. DRCOG also estimates that employment within the city will increase by approximately 33,500 jobs. Employment is projected to increase at a much faster rate than the increase in population. These increases within a city that is largely built out will require specific focus on infill development and redevelopment, particularly along existing corridors with aging and underperforming office development and commercial centers.

The projected population increase to 190,000 people by 2035 will require a significant number of new residential units to be constructed. The total number of units necessary to support the projected growth will be approximately 20,300, based on the current average household size of 2.32 people. The average yearly increase in the number of units will need to be approximately 812 to meet the demand. It is anticipated that a majority of the units necessary to accommodate population growth will be multifamily and will be concentrated within the growth areas identified within the *Lakewood Innovates* chapter of this Plan.

Table 3-a: Population & Dwelling Unit Growth

	2010	2013	2025	2035
Population (Projected)	143,000	147,000	171,000	190,000
Percent Change (From 2010 Base)	--	2.8%	19.6%	32.9%
New Dwelling Units (Cumulative)	--	2,436	12,180	20,300

Source: Denver Regional Council of Governments, 2013; City of Lakewood

The projected increase in employment within the city to 107,000 jobs by 2035 will also require a significant amount of new or redeveloped commercial space. Lakewood currently contains over 23.4 million square feet of industrial, office, and retail space. To accommodate the anticipated increase in new employees, an additional 8 million square feet of space will be necessary based on standard square footage requirements per employee identified by office, retail, and industrial organizations. However, as physical workspaces for retail and office uses change, a majority of the growth may be accommodated through redevelopment of aging commercial centers at higher densities rather than new development. Areas where growth is anticipated are identified within the *Lakewood Innovates* chapter of this Plan.

Table 3-b: Employment & Commercial Space Growth

	2010	2013	2025	2035
Employment (Projected)	73,500	77,500	93,600	107,000
Percent Change (From 2010 Base)	--	5.4%	27.3%	45.6%
New Commercial Space (Cumulative)	--	0.96 Million SF	4.80 Million SF	8.00 Million SF

Source: Denver Regional Council of Governments, 2013; City of Lakewood

MILE HIGH COMPACT & URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

Overview

In August of 2000, the City of Lakewood joined with the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the region's metropolitan planning organization, 25 other cities, and five counties in adopting the Mile High Compact. The Compact outlines the regional planning process, the elements that will be included in every community's comprehensive plan, and the development of urban growth boundaries for each of the communities and counties. Since its initial adoption, an additional 20 jurisdictions have joined the Compact.

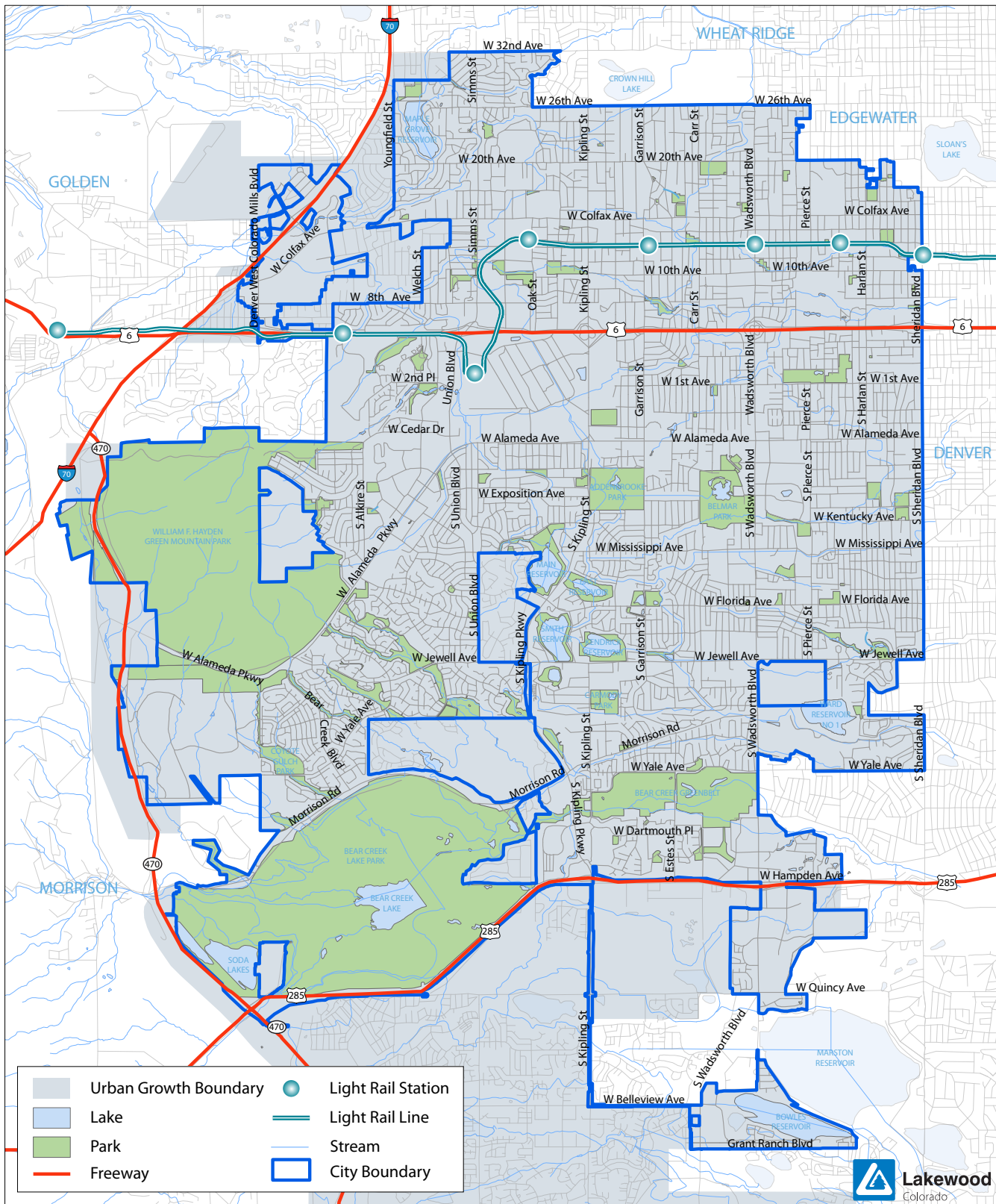
The Compact requires that comprehensive plans include the following elements:

- Land use and growth coordination
- Provision of services and community facilities
- Utilities
- Transportation and transit
- Parks and recreation
- Open space
- Economic viability
- Housing
- Urban design, community image, and identity
- Environmental resources and hazards

This Comprehensive Plan addresses each of these topics, either within this chapter or in one of the other four major chapters.

The Compact also requires that each community adopt an Urban Growth Boundary. Lakewood's adopted map identifies areas where future growth and annexation may occur. The growth boundaries have been coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions and Jefferson County. Most of the areas within the growth boundaries have been either partially or completely developed within the unincorporated county. Only a few areas to the south and west of the existing city boundaries include undeveloped properties.

Annexation within the Urban Growth Boundary would increase the city's population and sales tax base, but would not necessarily allow for future growth, with the noted exceptions identified above. Therefore, the population and employment projections found within this chapter do not include potential increases associated with annexation of these areas.



Map 3-a

Urban Growth Boundary

0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles



CITY IMAGE, CHARACTER & URBAN DESIGN

Overview

As Lakewood continues to develop and mature, the city image, character and design will become increasingly important in attracting and retaining residents and businesses.

Advancing the city's quality of life requires an integrated approach that considers the built environment and the needs of the community in establishing identity and a sense of place. The city's image should be based on the important relationships between place, people, quality of life, development diversity, urban design, accessibility, and mobility.

Urban design is not only a professional discipline, but also an attitude toward the urban environment. Urban design can touch on many aspects of the physical form on the city from land use to building architecture and transportation infrastructure.

The city's image and character also depends on the maintenance and reinvestment in older portions of the community. As identified in the *Lakewood Innovates* chapter, revitalization and redevelopment of underutilized and underdeveloped commercial properties will be key to improving the overall image of the city and attracting new residents and businesses. Encouraging private development and redevelopment that reflects the mixed-use desires of both the baby-boom and millennial generations will also lead to a positive image. Targeted public investments in infrastructure improvements and place-making elements are important as well.

The City has taken significant steps toward improving the character and design of new development and redevelopment within the community. The 2013 adoption of the mixed-use oriented Zoning Ordinance and the subsequent remapping of the city's commercial and office corridors to allow for a broad mix of uses and high densities will positively influence the urban design character of the community for decades to come.

Community branding, as well as identity initiatives and considerations in the built environment, around important gateways and along primary transportation corridors can also promote the city's image and character.

Community Image & Character

Lakewood's distinctive neighborhoods and commercial districts and corridors are great assets to the City and provide the framework for a complete and well-functioning community. Some areas of the city date back to the 1880s, while others are still emerging, but each has elements that set it apart from others and establishes its identity.

As a community that is almost completely built-out with little remaining vacant land to be developed, it is important to maintain the character of Lakewood's unique neighborhoods without precluding new development and redevelopment. The design and quality of infill development is critical to ensuring that new buildings fit into existing neighborhoods.

Preserving character does not always mean maintaining the status quo. In many cases change is welcome, as new investment can contribute to the beauty, vitality, and function of neighborhoods, and commercial and mixed-use areas. However, new development, whether in the form of infill, redevelopment, or new development should always contribute to the creation and preservation of community character and creation of a sense of place.

Lakewood's community image and character is partly defined by physical qualities that are sometimes repeated within neighborhoods, along corridors, or within mixed-use nodes, such as landscaping, building massing, architectural elements, and materials and colors. Community image and character can also be defined by factors such as topography, natural features, street layout, streetscape treatments, landmarks, and civic uses.

With Lakewood's desire to enhance its regional competitiveness and its increased emphasis on mixed-use and transit oriented development, the visual physical appearance and quality of retail, office and industrial developments are more important than ever. The contributions they make to enhancing city identity, as well as their appeal and functionality for workers, customers and visitors reflect the overall quality of life in the city. As commercial and mixed-use developments are dominant within growth and activity areas, it is important for building placement and design to complement the physical character of adjacent developments (especially where uses are different), organize user and visitor movements to focus on public activity, strengthen safety, and support positive street environments and individual district character.

Reinforcing neighborhood, corridor, and node characteristics and identity will continue to be an important part of planning within the City. As identified throughout this Comprehensive Plan, the City will continue to support the diverse image and character of the community by maintaining the existing characteristics of neighborhoods with existing single-family residential zoning; creating appropriate transitions between commercial, multifamily, and mixed-use development and single-family zoned areas; and encouraging contextually appropriate infill and redevelopment projects.

Placing a high priority on residential building design is particularly important for the livability of one of Lakewood's greatest assets, its residential neighborhoods. Through over 100 years of the city's evolution, the collection of neighborhoods is physically and culturally diverse. They include a mix of housing types, architectural styles, and densities. While some of the city's neighborhood boundaries are defined by natural or physical features such as freeways and major arterial streets, many are defined by less tangible boundaries such as tradition, community identity, and age of the housing stock.

The overall qualities of the city's more livable neighborhoods that should be emulated in the design of new development include building scale, size and spacing, pattern, relationship to the street, architectural detailing, and materials, as well as a variety of unit types, and an abundance of street trees. Many existing neighborhoods can be improved with private reinvestment to maintain the same degree of attractiveness and livability over the next century. Measures to maintain and enhance these neighborhoods can include public actions, such as stricter control over architectural design and character, and street or park improvements, as well as private actions related to building rehabilitation and reinvestment.

Many of these topics are described in more details within the *Lakewood Lives* and *Lakewood Innovates* chapters of this Plan and articulated through the goals and action steps.



Urban Design

Urban design is concerned with the arrangement, appearance, and functionality of the city. It is the visual and sensory relationship between people and the built environment. The built environment includes buildings, parks, neighborhoods, and streets. Architecture and urban form, major elements of urban design, can play a significant role in defining Lakewood's sense of place within its neighborhoods, corridors, and nodes.

Lakewood residents desire a city characterized by a strong identity and sense of place. This character is, and will continue to be, derived from the built environment. Lakewood's urban design identity includes a broad array of development types that together form the community. These types include large lot single-family neighborhoods where horses and other large animals are permitted and embraced as part of the community to urban places like Downtown Lakewood with the busy mixed-use streets of Belmar. In the future, the areas around Lakewood's West Rail Line stations will provide another layer of identity and sense of place with mixed-use and walkable nodes of activity.

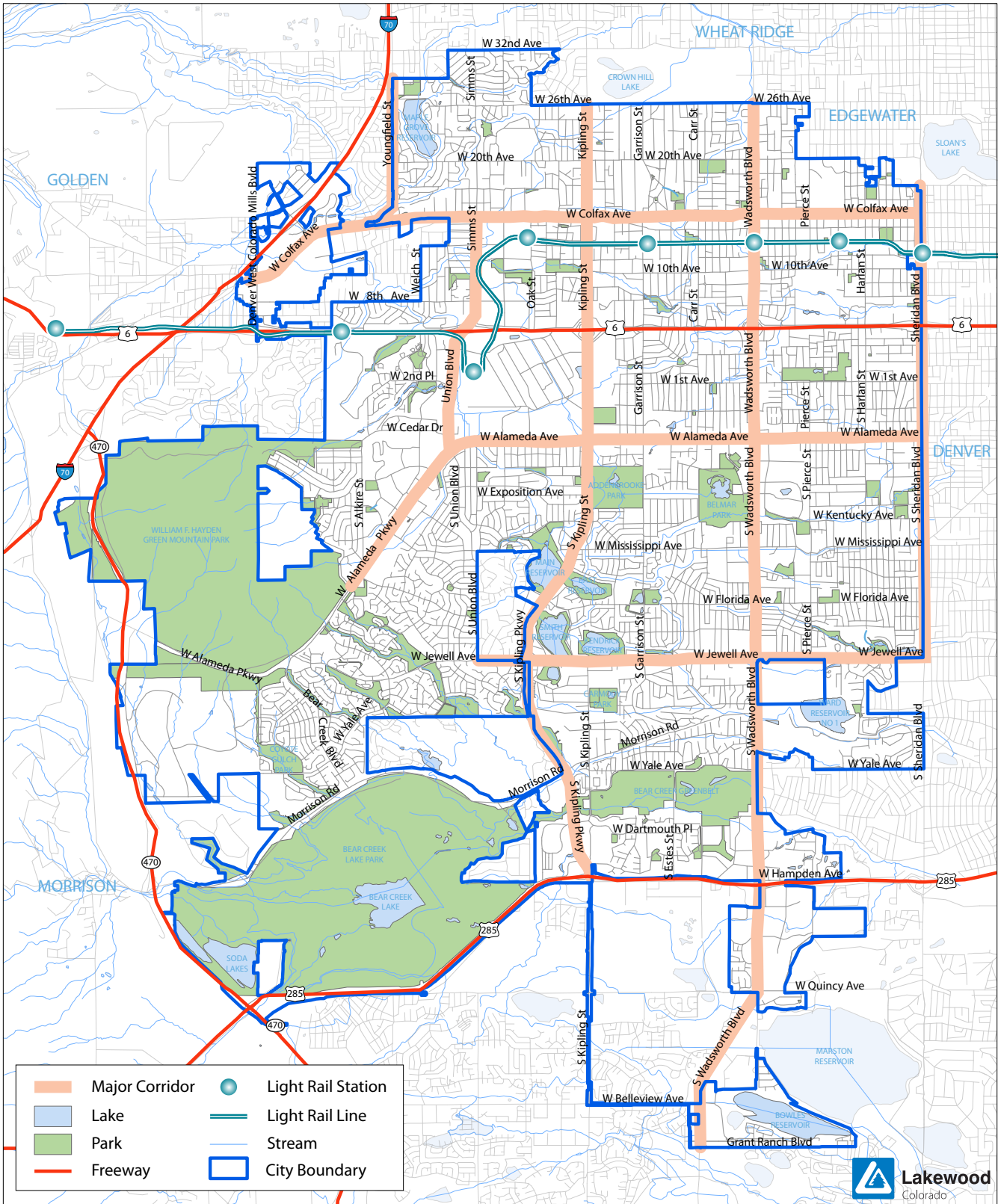
Urban design focuses on place-making and on those physical features that shape the community. It addresses the design of buildings and the spaces between buildings, which is also referred to as the built environment. Shaping this environment through high-quality urban design reflects the various desires of the community.

Within Lakewood, pedestrian-friendly areas should be designed to provide a sense of security and safety for the residents and visitors who use them. Commercial and mixed-use areas must be carefully planned and be aesthetically appealing to provide the perception of economic investment and success, which lead to the tangible results of higher sales tax revenue and an increased residential population within the city. Neighborhoods will retain the unique elements that make them special while contributing to the community as a whole.

As a city that was formed through the incorporation of a collection of neighborhoods with broadly different characteristics, and with new subdivisions that are unique unto themselves, urban design and the creation of well planned commercial and mixed-use developments and areas can help further knit the community together.

Lakewood should continue to enhance the streetscape and urban design along the city's major commercial and mixed-use corridors through coordinated public and private improvements, as identified in the *Lakewood Moves* and *Lakewood Innovates* chapters of this Plan. These corridors include all of the arterial streets within the community, as well as several collector streets as identified on Map 3-b on the following page.





Map 3-b

Major Corridors



Making the commercial and mixed-use corridors inviting and pleasant for people is an important step in the urban design evolution of the city. The urban elements of these corridors should always be designed to encourage pedestrian activity and interaction. The design of the streetscape, including lighting, signage, street trees, and landscaping, should be considered with any public improvements or private development taking place along these corridors.

Historically, most of the city's major corridors lack a sense of place or character. Within these corridors, the focus has been on providing easy access by automobile and encouraging elements that are meant for drivers and not pedestrians or bicyclists. Buildings along these corridors tend to be set back from the street, with vast parking lots between the two. Numerous curb cuts and the lack of sidewalk connections to building entrances create an inhospitable pedestrian experience. In many instances pedestrian and bicycle facilities parallel to the street are not buffered from the traffic lanes, creating an unsafe journey for those not in an automobile. Along several corridors, sidewalks do not even exist in many locations.

Establishing an improved image and character, transforming the existing streetscape, and changing the relationship between buildings, autos, people, and streets are key goals within the identified corridors. Landscape, sidewalk, and lighting are among the streetscape improvements that can be accomplished at both the public and private level. Additionally, the City will continue to encourage high-quality private development along the corridors that reflect a more pedestrian-friendly orientation. In many cases, the City's Zoning Ordinance will dictate physical design. However, the architectural and streetscape characteristics of these areas may need further study.

In terms of urban design, Lakewood will strive to incorporate the best aspects of both a suburban community and an urban place through the following urban design concepts and considerations, which are more specifically detailed in other chapters of this Plan:

- Continue to protect and improve the variety of single-family residential neighborhoods while also creating a sense of urban diversity and intensity in certain districts and corridors.
- Continue to create and enhance the City's network of parks, trails, and greenways to beautify the community, provide recreation, enhance quality of life, and balance the effects of increased urban density.
- Continue to improve the appearance of the major commercial and mixed-use corridors within the city by requiring higher quality private landscaping, improving public landscaping, enforcing the Zoning Ordinance to limit the amount of parking located adjacent to streets, and educating developers about the community and economic benefits of quality site planning and architecture.
- Continue to respect all modes of transportation by accommodating the automobile, but not allowing it to dictate all aspects of urban design, and by giving higher priority to pedestrians and pedestrian-oriented development.
- Continue to consider views within and surrounding the city as part of the urban character of Lakewood and evaluate view planes and corridors as part of rezoning considerations.

As the City turns its attention to these corridors through implementation of the goals and action steps identified in this Plan, future public and private improvements will help create a more attractive environment for all of the residents and visitors that utilize these streets.

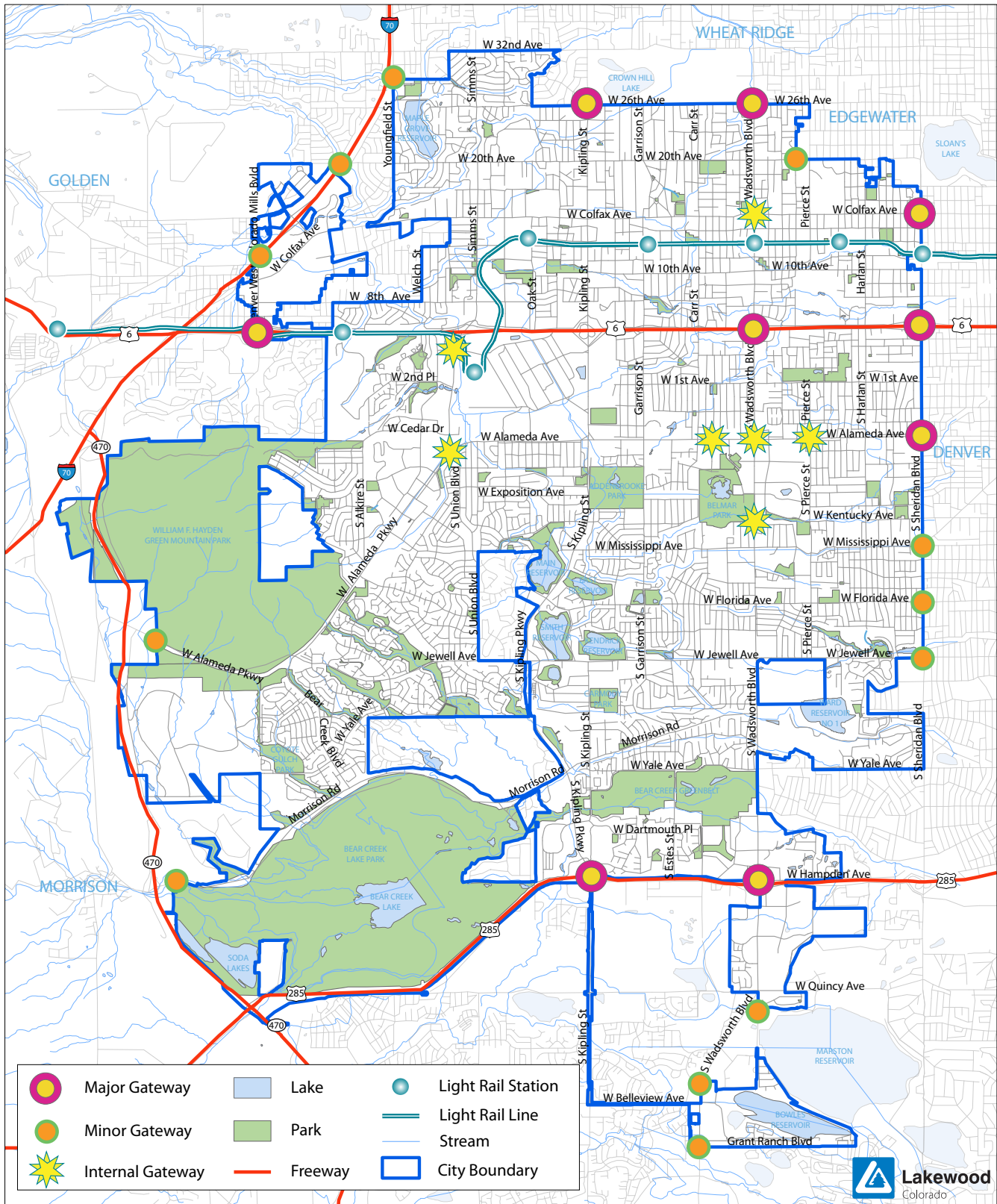


Commercial corridors play an important role in Lakewood's economy, providing shopping, dining, and entertainment options for residents and visitors. The entrances or gateways to these corridors from other adjacent communities should raise individuals awareness of the city, orient visitors and residents to the corridor, and strengthen community identity. Gateways may also be located within the city to identify key districts or areas of interest.

Interesting and high-quality gateways include more than entry markers and signs. Gateways should also be created by surrounding buildings, enhanced landscape treatments, plazas, and streets.

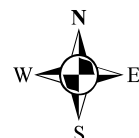
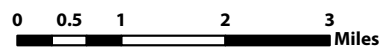
Major gateways to the city should incorporate a variety of elements including signage, enhanced landscaping, potential change in paving or sidewalk style or color, and special urban design elements. Minor gateways should, at a minimum, include signage. Internal gateways should be designed similarly to major gateways to identify key districts within the community.

Gateway locations into the city, and those marking specific districts, are identified on Map 3-c on the following page.



Map 3-c

Gateways



LAND USE VISION

Overview

Lakewood's desired future land use patterns are shown on the Land Use Vision Map, which provides the land use foundation for this Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Vision Map is a graphic representation of the compilation of responses received during the initial series of public open houses held in 2013 and further refined through discussions with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and City staff and officials. The Land Use Vision Map indicates the intended distribution and intensity of land uses over the next 10 to 20 years to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide greater land use predictability and transparency.
- Incorporate recommended land uses from previously adopted neighborhood, corridor, and special area plans.
- Accommodate the anticipated population and employment growth within the city.
- Create a logical framework for future rezonings and appropriate development.

The Land Use Vision Map (Map 3-d on page 3-21) uses color-coded categories to express public policy on future land uses across the city. Its land use designations have been drawn based on existing and desired development patterns, streets, environmental features, and other logical boundaries.

Land Use Category Descriptions

The Land Use Vision Map identifies a number of land use categories. The categories represent the desired land use patterns and development intensities for each area of the city. The land use categories are briefly defined below. Additional detailed descriptions regarding the Growth and Activity Areas can be found in the *Lakewood Innovates* chapter of this Plan.

Stable Neighborhoods

Stable neighborhoods are identified in yellow on the map. It is anticipated that these areas will generally maintain their existing character. These areas of stability encompass the majority of the city's established single-family and multifamily neighborhoods. Being located in an area of stability does not mean that these areas should not or will not change. It means that any changes, whether new developments, rezoning requests, or public improvements, should be carefully planned and implemented so that the character of the area remains. These areas are designated as R-1, R-2, R-MF, and R-MH districts on the Zoning Map.

Industrial

Industrial areas are identified in light gray on the map. These areas are programmed for more intense industrial land uses, including light and heavy manufacturing, some extractive industries, recycling yards, and outdoor storage uses. These uses tend to have greater impacts than the typical commercial service uses, and may require additional buffering or separation from nearby uses. Some of these uses require convenient access to freeways or other major streets for truck deliveries and shipments. These areas are designated as LI districts on the Zoning Map.

Campus

Campus areas are identified in blue on the map. These areas are occupied by colleges and universities, and the Denver Federal Center. Campus properties may be public or private. While campus uses are permitted in a variety of zoning districts, large institutions in a campus setting such as colleges, universities, and hospitals are typically zoned Mixed Use.

Parks & Open Space

Park and open space areas are identified in green on the map. These areas reflect public lands that have been developed for recreational uses or will remain in a natural state as animal and plant habitat. Recreation and community centers are also included within this category. Parks and open space areas are located in a variety of zone districts, but are specifically indicated on the Zoning Map.

Growth Areas

Growth Areas are identified in purple on the map. These areas are locations within the city that have been planned and zoned for higher density employment, retail and residential growth. Growth Areas are located along major transportation corridors, with frequent rail and bus service in addition to automobile access. These areas are typically designated as Mixed Use with Transit or Urban contexts on the Zoning Map.

Community Activity Areas

Community Activity Areas are identified in red on the map. These are areas that have been planned and zoned primarily for higher density employment and retail growth. Community Activity Areas are intended to accommodate additional employment and retail opportunities on a smaller scale than those found in Growth Areas. Community Activity Areas are located along major streets that provide adequate vehicular access, but are also close to residential neighborhoods with bike and pedestrian access. These areas are typically designated as Mixed Use with a Suburban context or C-R on the Zoning Map.

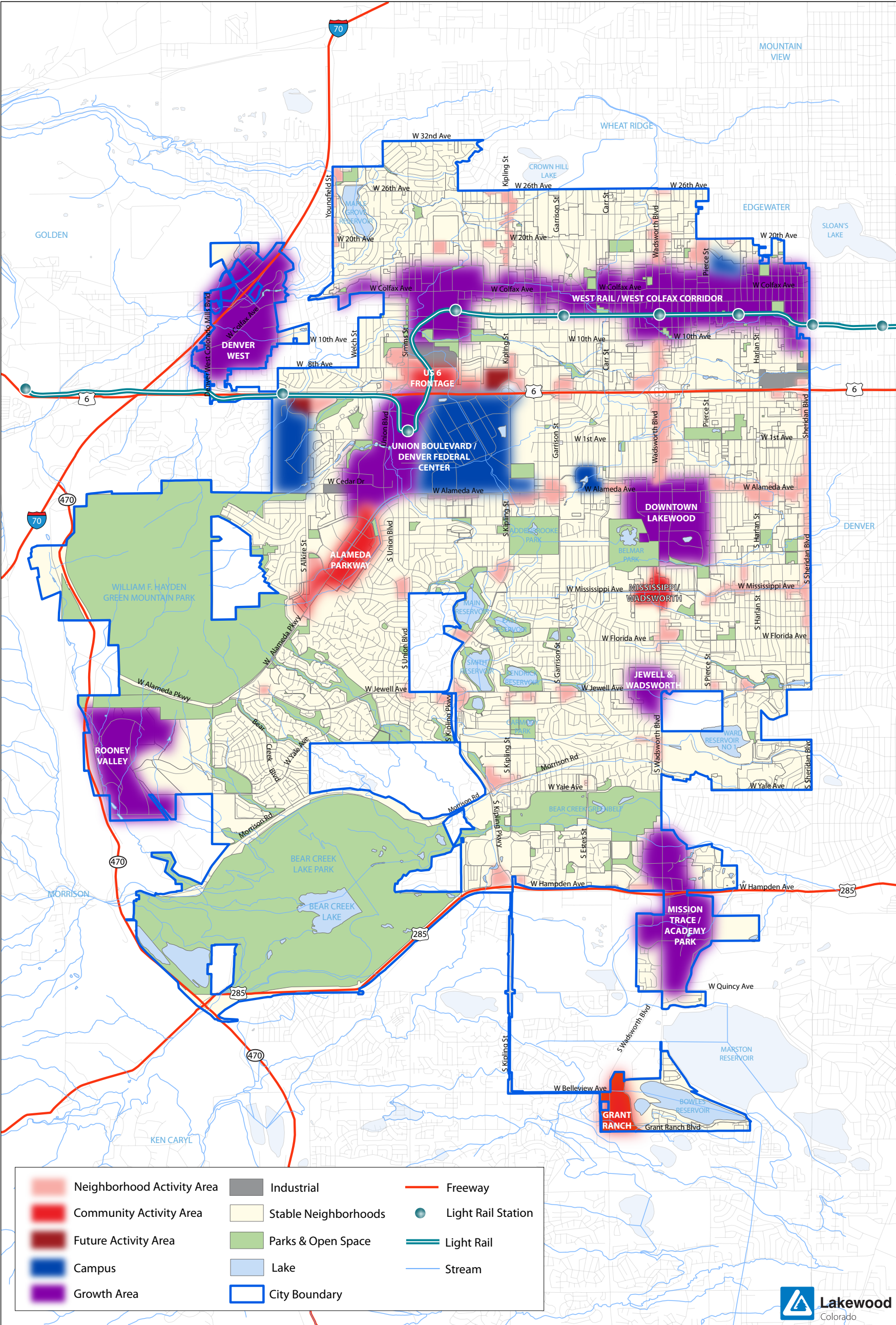
Neighborhood Activity Areas

Neighborhood Activity Areas are identified in pink on the map. These areas are small-scale commercial and mixed-use areas primarily found within or in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. These areas are generally accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as motor vehicles. These areas are typically designated as Mixed-Use Neighborhood on the Zoning Map.

Future Activity Areas

Future Activity Areas are identified in brown on the map. As the city's population and employment base continues to grow, additional activity areas will need to be created. These Future Activity Areas may be either Community Activity or Neighborhood Activity in scale.

LAND USE VISION MAP



Map 3-d



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