

Project Summary

The *Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan* (Plan) is the first neighborhood and community planning project proposed under the PlanCOS Vibrant Neighborhoods key initiative for a Neighborhood Planning Program. It outlines priorities, goals, and strategies related to mobility, economic development, and housing, along with other determinants identified through a locally informed public input process. The Plan is tactical and advisory, will help guide efforts and efficient use of public and community-based resources and reflects a City-Community partnership that reinforces the importance of neighborhood planning.

The planning area is geographically situated between Interstate 25 and Powers Boulevard with a northern boundary of Fountain Boulevard and the southern boundary being the City limits to the south along Milton E Proby Parkway. The area includes six PlanCOS neighborhoods: Spring Creek, Pikes Peak Park North, Pikes Peak Park South, Southborough, Deerfield Hills, and Soaring Eagle.

A Map of the Plan area can be viewed here:

<https://coloradosprings.gov/document/plan4aadjusted6202107132022.pdf>

File Number	Plan Type	Decision Type
NPLN-25-0001	Neighborhood Plan	Legislative

Prior Land-Use History and Applicable Actions

<i>Action</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
Comprehensive Plan	PlanCOS	2019
Study	Hancock Expressway / Academy Boulevard Planning and Environmental Linkages Study.	2015
Action Plan	The South Academy Economic Opportunity Zone Action Plan	2014
Master Plan	Academy Blvd Corridor Great Streets Plan	2011

History

A presentation to City Council in March 2022 by the Planning Department proposed re-initiating a systematic neighborhood planning program consistent with the recommendations of PlanCOS. The Neighborhood Planning Program is a key initiative of PlanCOS, which recognizes that “effective and viable small area and neighborhood land use plans are essential for implementation of the PlanCOS vision. PlanCOS sets the overall vision and framework, but neighborhood plans are necessary to apply this larger vision in a practical manner.” Neighborhood plans and community strategies “allow planning and implementation at a scale that can address the unique characteristics and needs of different areas of the city.”

The Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan is the first project proposed under this Neighborhood Planning Program; a matrix of comprehensive planning factors help guide the organization and order of these community area plans. The Plan’s priorities leverage smart growth principles and support livability in alignment with PlanCOS goals. To accomplish these principles the Plan is partnered with the community’s vision for the area, a Community Strategy that was created in concert with the Neighborhood Plan. Robust implementation of this Neighborhood Plan will focus on promoting infrastructural improvements, encouraging transit and walkability, supporting safety initiatives, fostering economic development and job growth, and advancing redevelopment to meet contemporary standards. The Community Strategy will highlight the areas cultural and economic assets, community hubs and community partnerships, and food and healthcare access.

The Plan is aligned with the City’s Strategic Plan, which seeks to prepare for the future by fostering flourishing communities and promoting safe, economically prosperous, culturally rich, and welcoming neighborhoods.

Link to the draft Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan on the City website:

<https://coloradosprings.gov/SEcommunityplan>

Applicable Code

This Neighborhood Plan was drafted and reviewed under elements of the Unified Development Code. All subsequent references within this report that are made to “the Code” and related sections are references to the Unified Development Code.

7.1.103: PURPOSE:

The purpose of this UDC is to:

- A. Promote health, safety, and general welfare of the public;
- C. Implement the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan;
- F. Encourage adequate multi-modal transportation facilities;
- G. Promote opportunities for affordable and attainable housing throughout the City; and
- H. Facilitate adequate provision of utilities, schools, parks, and other public infrastructure services.
- I. Enhance the quality, diversity, and safety of neighborhoods by encouraging pride and investment. (Ord. 23-03)

Stakeholder Involvement

Public Engagement

Steering Committee	Eight Southeast Strong Steering Committee stakeholder meetings and charrettes were held with area leadership and resident participation.
Stakeholder Interviews	Eleven one-on-one interviews were held by the project team.
Public Meeting	A public workshop with over 70 attendees was held in October of 2024 to discuss and review the community’s priorities related to the draft Plan.
Online Survey	Targeted focus area events, communication, and social media promotion were organized including area advocacy groups such as RISE Southeast and Colorado Springs School District 2.

Review Process

- Southeast Strong Plan Steering Committee
- City Technical Support Team

Public Engagement

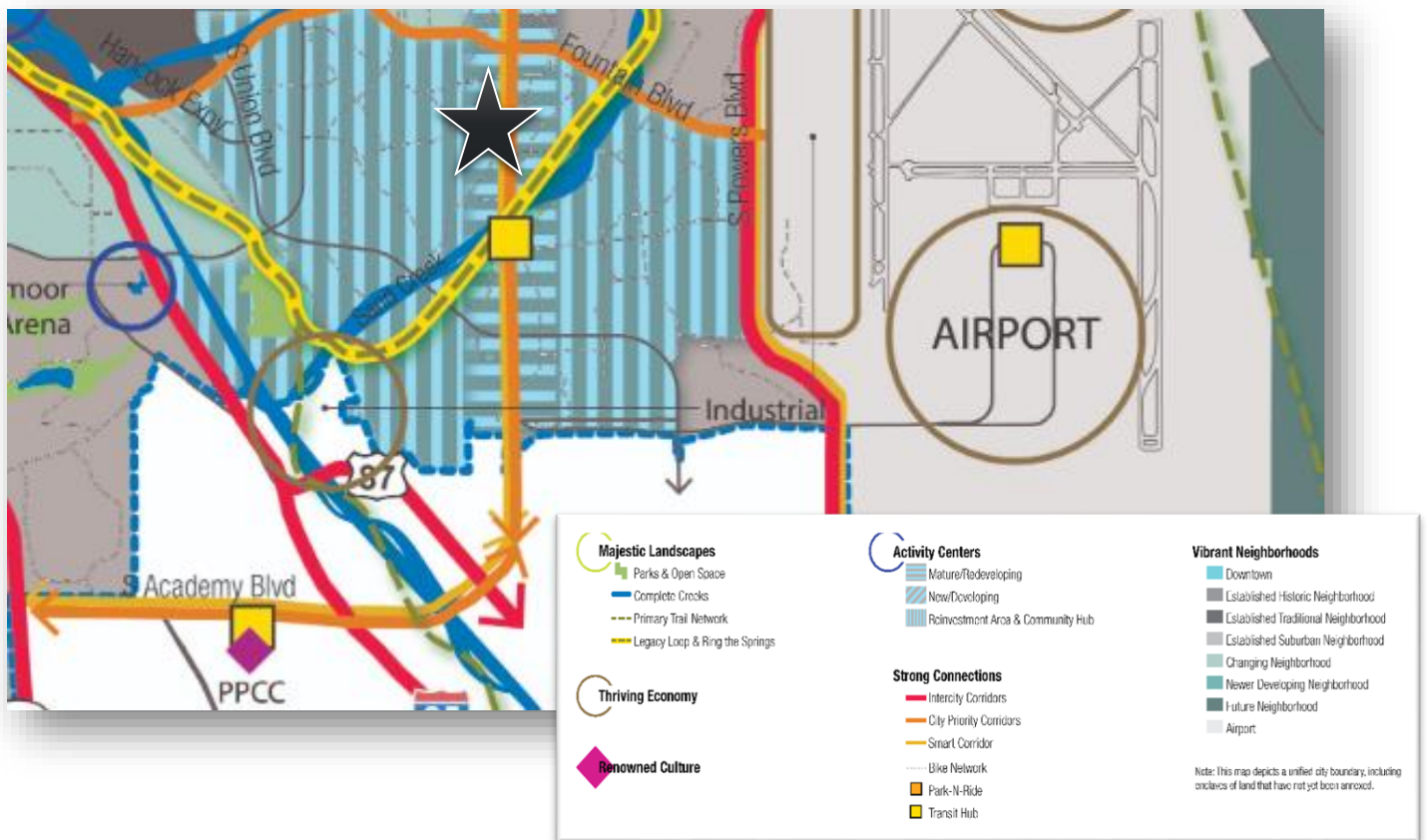
Throughout the Plan creation, a variety of opportunities for public input were provided. The City issued a press release in both English and Spanish announcing the draft plan and publicized the opportunities for public input; additional announcements promoted the public hearing. The survey was published on the City’s Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan website in both languages. The public meeting was considered successfully attended by the area residents and stakeholder community with over 70 attendees. Feedback collected through these efforts informed the Neighborhood Plan and the supporting Community Strategy.

Participating City Departments and Agencies

City Planning Department
Office of the Mayor
City Economic and Small Business Development Department
City Housing and Homelessness Response Department
Colorado Springs Utilities
City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department
City Police Department
City Public Works Department
City Office of Accessibility
Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority

Compliance with PlanCOS

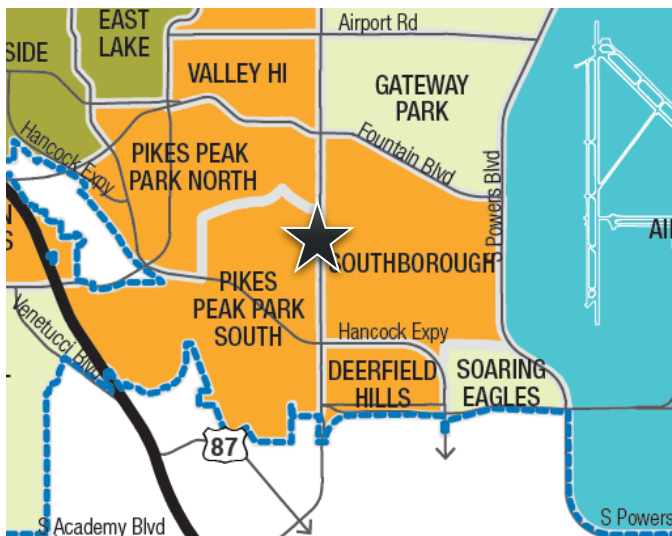
PlanCOS Vision



PlanCOS identifies southeast Colorado Springs in the Vision Map as an activity center for reinvestment and community hub planning. The Neighborhood Planning Program evaluated factors such as the presence and age of master plans, infill development, and low- to moderate-income (LMI) levels, and concluded that the area had a significant planning need. As a result, the first community plan was directed to this neighborhood.

The Map outlines priority areas, locations, and landscapes, providing a “starting point” for city initiatives and development proposals. This Vision also functions in coordination with the City’s Unified Development Code.

Neighborhood plans help clarify and expand on details necessary for implementing PlanCOS. The City’s Unified Development Code (UDC) Section 7.5.706 states that neighborhood plans should guide land use recommendations for the neighborhoods they address. New plans are expected to follow the guidelines and vision of PlanCOS and include common desired elements.



Predominant Typology

- Downtown
- Newer Developing Neighborhood
- Changing Neighborhood
- Established Historic Neighborhood
- Established Traditional Neighborhood
- Established Suburban Neighborhood
- Airport
- Future Neighborhood

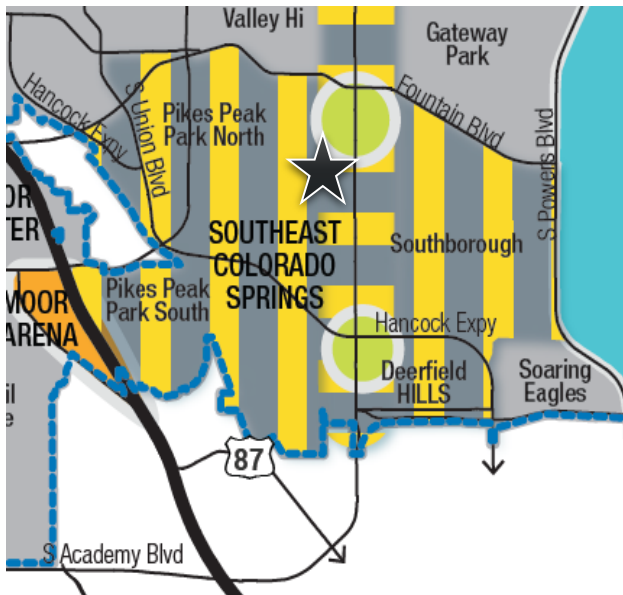
Vibrant Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Plans, as defined by PlanCOS, provide “the additional detail required for effective application and implementation of the Vibrant Neighborhoods Chapter.”

The neighborhoods included in the Southeast Strong Plan and Community Strategy are identified as “changing” or vulnerable to change.

Big Idea: Reclaim Neighborhood Space – “As our city matures, a decline of any neighborhood will not serve us well. Neighborhood disinvestment affects our entire city. If we are not paying attention and being proactive as a city, we should expect areas to change in undesirable ways. A key tenet of this Plan is that viable opportunities for neighborhood reinvestment need to be identified, prioritized, and pursued in all neighborhoods, but particularly those that are most vulnerable.”

Each big idea in the Southeast Strong Plan is supported by goals and strategies aimed at improving livability and safety across its six neighborhoods, while also encouraging community pride and reinvestment.



Predominant Typology

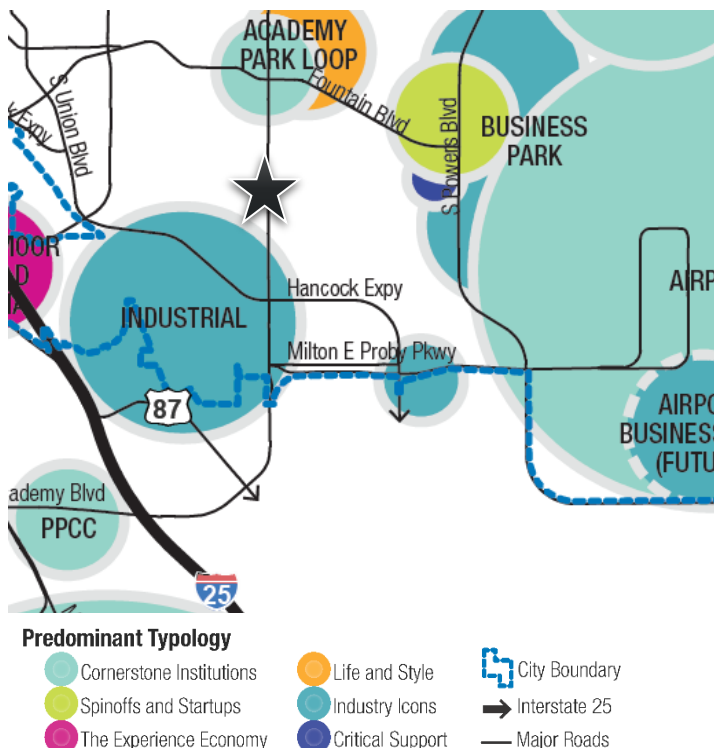
- Neighborhood Centers
- Community Activity Centers
- Entertainment and Commercial Centers
- Regional Employment and Activity Centers
- Downtown
- Mature/Redeveloping Corridors
- New/Developing Corridors
- Reinvestment Area and Community Hub

Unique Places

The southeast neighborhoods identified in this PlanCOS chapter are designated as “Activity Centers” for reinvestment and community hub planning, with South Academy Boulevard highlighted as a mature and redeveloping corridor.

Big Idea: Be a City of Places – “...Missing in some areas are the unique and special places for these communities to identify with and gather in. Places are what make a city special and how we share it as a community. The best and most special places have a combination of common desired elements and unique attributes. This Plan is about community building through placemaking everywhere in the city. The Plan looks to incorporate centers in neighborhoods throughout the city.”

The Southeast Strong Plan expands on this concept through its big idea chapters, *Reflect and Celebrate Our Diverse Culture* and *Create Special Places and Community Hubs*, which encourage investment in and expansion of community hubs, with a focus on major corridors such as South Academy Boulevard.

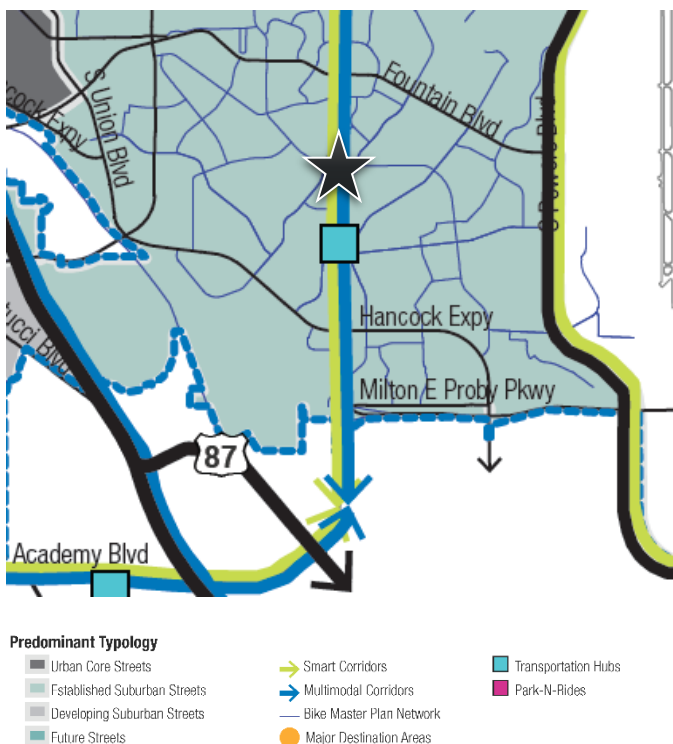


Thriving Economy

The large industrial land uses in the southeast are cornerstones of the PlanCOS *Industry Icons* theme and play a critical role in supporting the city's overall economy.

This vision statement *"fosters an environment of inclusivity and economic diversity by attracting an innovative and adaptive workforce, advancing existing and targeted employment sectors, and investing in quality of life..."* The related big idea, *Embrace Sustainability*, *"...begins with core services such as public safety and water availability but extends to other infrastructure and programs."*

The Southeast Strong big idea chapter, *Grow and Support Our Businesses, Entrepreneurs, and Housing*, outlines goals and strategies to retain and support small businesses and primary employers, expand education and vocational training programs, and strengthen safety and infrastructure initiatives.

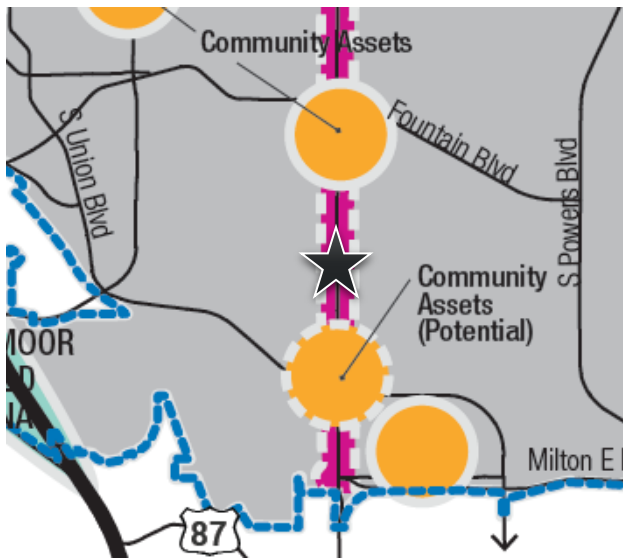


Strong Connections

The area's major corridors, South Academy Boulevard and Powers Boulevard, are identified in PlanCOS as *Smart and Multimodal Corridors* that support the broader public transit system.

Strong Connections envisions a city that *"adapts to how we move by transforming our corridors to support our future generations' health and mobility needs, enhancing economic vibrancy, upgrading infrastructure, and improving regional connectivity."*

The Southeast Strong Plan's big idea, *Upgrade How We Move*, advances this vision by planning for connected multimodal transportation and expanded transit services. The Plan also prioritizes safe, walkable neighborhoods as a key community goal.



Predominant Typology

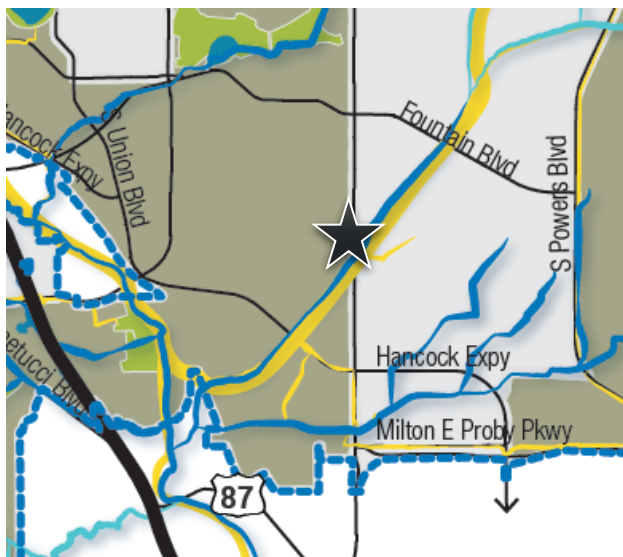
- Defining Institutions
- Historic Districts
- Creative Districts and Corridors
- Cultural and Tourist Attractions
- Community Assets
- Pop-Up Culture

Renowned Culture

Colorado Springs' culture is well recognized, and the PlanCOS Vision Map identifies the southeast as having potential "Community Assets" or community hubs.

This vision statement *"promotes and embraces arts, culture, and education as essential parts of our lives and our identity. This builds on the efforts of General Palmer and many others who envisioned culture as the cornerstone of the community—where creative energy generates new possibilities, interpersonal connections, and unprecedented philanthropy."*

The southeast has a strong legacy of cultural diversity. The Plan's big idea, *Reflect and Celebrate Our Diverse Culture*, and the Community Strategies' *Create Special Places & Community Hubs* sets goals and strategies for establishing the area as the city's cultural destination. These efforts support PlanCOS big ideas to *"Grow and Celebrate Our Culture, Create Cross-Cultural Connections, and Celebrate Our Partnerships."*



Predominant Typology

- Neighborhood Greenspace
- Sports and Active Recreation
- Natural Resources and Regional Recreation
- Community Education Landscapes
- Trails and Connections
- ➔ Major Trail Corridors
- Complete Urban Creeks
- Complete Greenways

Majestic Landscapes

The southeast contains many smaller neighborhood parks, some newly renovated and others still underdeveloped. The area map also highlights regional sports complexes and the Sand Creek trail as key assets for activity and connectivity.

This PlanCOS vision *"values our natural and man-made outdoor spaces and celebrates our location at the base of America's Mountain by designing a city oriented around our iconic landmarks. We ensure our community can engage with and enjoy these places through an integrated system of parks, streetscapes, and natural areas."*

The Southeast Strong Plan highlights the redevelopment of Panorama Park and calls for additional amenities. These priorities align with PlanCOS big ideas to *"Provide Parks for the People, Engage with Our Landscapes, Invest in Resilient and Adaptable Landscapes, and Complete Our Creeks."*