

SOUTHEAST STRONG



SOUTHEAST STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

DRAFT 8/2025



DEDICATION

Southeast Colorado Springs is characterized by a strong sense of community and a deep understanding of its historical roots. From these arose an inspiring and devoted community-led movement, sparking meaningful transformation and driving positive change within a challenging built environment.

This plan is not the beginning or the end. It is built upon a foundation laid by the tireless and passionate work of Southeast Colorado Springs residents, businesses, and organizations and is a reflection of their persistence and strength. This plan is a dedication to the collaborative partnerships formed and a commitment to work hand in hand into the next era for Southeast.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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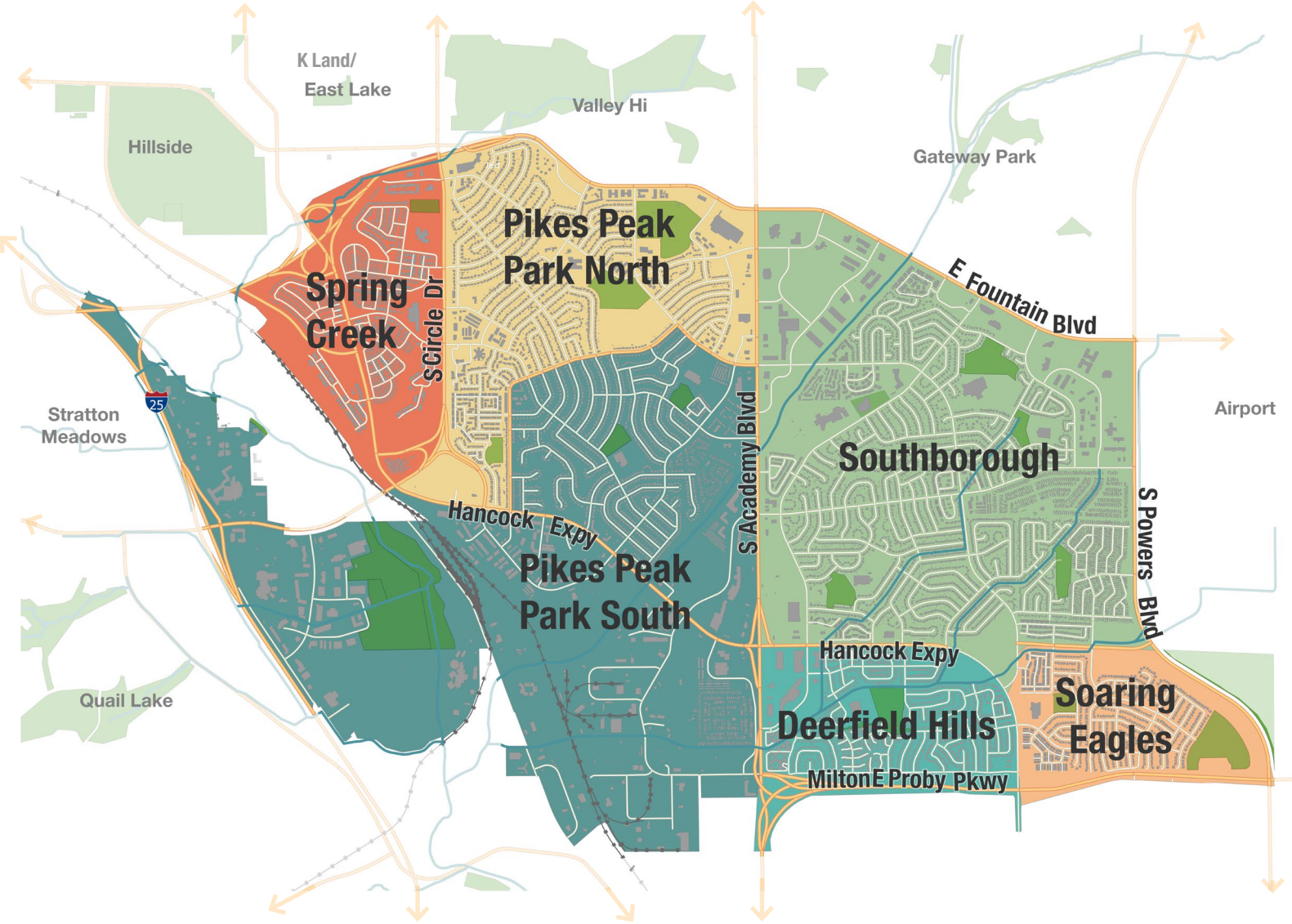
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SOUTHEAST STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS





SOUTHEAST STRONG

SOUTHEAST STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

INTRODUCTION

PLANCOS AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROGRAM

PlanCOS, the City of Colorado Springs' comprehensive plan, calls out the need for a neighborhood planning program. As stated in PlanCOS, "Everybody is in a Neighborhood," and the "Plan purposefully moves us in the direction of enhanced neighborhood identity, planning, support, and livability." PlanCOS goes on to say that "Individual neighborhood plans will focus attention on the ideas and goals of each neighborhood and the overall community plan." PlanCOS neighborhoods are considered macro-level geography. The City Planning Department's Neighborhood Planning Program structure emphasizes community planning for neighborhoods based on shared geography, assets, and needs.

By civic collaborative partnering with local organizations and their communities to address an



established vision and goals for future generations, community plans, coordinated with City departments, can identify strategies and actions to support public safety, infrastructure, housing solutions, economic vitality, and community activation, furthering progress toward the City's Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

The Neighborhood Planning Program began by identifying communities loosely based on City Council Districts, where the elected representative could chair the steering committee. Using PlanCOS neighborhood areas, a matrix of factors concluded planning needs, directing the first community plan to these Southeast Colorado Springs neighborhoods.

WELCOME TO THE SOUTHEAST STRONG COMMUNITY PLAN AREA

The Southeast Strong area does not encompass all of southeast Colorado Springs, as its boundaries differ based on resident's experiences and historical recollections. For this Plan, the area is bounded by Martin Luther King Bypass/US 24 and Fountain Boulevard to the north, Powers Boulevard to the east, Milton E Proby Parkway and the City boundary to the south, and Interstate 25 to the west.

PLANNING NEED

The 2023 Southeast Healthy People and Places Assessment and the 2023 El Paso County Health Assessment further identified that the greater Southeast neighborhoods face significant challenges related to poverty and health inequities. This area has a history of higher commercial vacancies, challenges with the built environment, and residents struggle with access to healthy food options, which can contribute to higher poverty rates compared to other parts of the City. Additionally, the area lacks comprehensive planning, both privately and publicly initiated. A list of related reports, assessments, and plans can be found on page 60.

PLAN PARTNERS

PLANNING RESULTS

In 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (USDA) awarded a \$9 million grant to the City of Colorado Springs Forestry Division. This funding will support efforts to improve the health and condition of more than 12,000 trees in southeast Colorado Springs. The project aims to enhance environmental quality, public health, water resources, the local economy, and neighborhood aesthetics. The Southeast Community Health Assessment, included as Appendix A, helped establish the need for this grant.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Boys and Girls Club
- Care and Share
- Centro de la Familia
- Colorado Springs Housing and Building Assoc.
- Colorado Springs Senior Center
- Faith based community
- Family Success Center - Pikes Peak United Way
- Harrison School District 2
- Hey Neighbor
- Peak Vista
- Pikes Peak Library District
- Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center
- Pikes Peak State College
- Pikes Peak United Way
- Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- RISE Southeast
- SCORE Southern Colorado
- Silver Key
- Solid Rock CDC
- Thrive Network

CITY, COUNTY, STATE PARTNERS

- Office of the Mayor
- City Council
- City Long Range Planning and Land Use Review
- City Housing and Homelessness Response
- City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services
- City of Colorado Springs Public Works
- Colorado Springs Utilities
- City Engineering
- City Traffic Engineering
- City Office of Accessibility
- City Neighborhood Services
- City Human Resources
- City Economic Development and Small Business Development
- Mountain Metro
- Colorado Springs Police Department
- Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority
- El Paso County Public Health
- DOLA and the State of Colorado

The community partners listed are not a complete list of community organizations working in the area or in partnership with the City. The community organizations supporting their residents are the pillars of this community, and the City of Colorado Springs recognizes these groups' work and the support they provide to their community and the City as a whole. Implementation of the goals and strategies of the Neighborhood Plan and the Community Strategy are dependent on these partners.

CITY COMMITMENT

The City of Colorado Springs' commitment: Shape and sustain a built environment and economy that supports healthy living and reflects the uniqueness, strength, and power of the Southeast community.



BIG IDEAS

THE IDENTITY OF THE SOUTHEAST STRONG PLANNING AREA IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF BOTH THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK HERE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT. REFLECTING AND CELEBRATING THE AREAS DIVERSE CULTURE AND STRONG LEGACY PRIDE PROVIDES FOCUS ON THE SOUTHEAST AS A DESTINATION OF CULTURE AND ECONOMY.



GROW AND SUPPORT
OUR BUSINESSES,
ENTREPRENEURS, AND
HOUSING



LIVE BETTER,
LIVE LONGER



UPGRADE HOW WE
MOVE



SUPPORT OUR
SAFETY



CREATE SPECIAL
PLACES &
COMMUNITY HUBS



REFLECT AND
CELEBRATE OUR
DIVERSE CULTURE



HEALTH & FOOD
ACCESS

BIG IDEAS

PLAN STRUCTURE

THIS PLAN IS A TOOL

This Plan seeks to connect and make use of partner resources while promoting collaboration with City departments. It focuses on meeting the needs of the community and six neighborhoods to facilitate access to economic opportunities, healthy living conditions and safe affordable housing.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME SOUTHEAST STRONG

RISE Southeast – Resilient, Inspired, Strong, and Engaged – contributed the name ***Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan and Community Strategy***

PLAN’S STRUCTURE

The Southeast Strong Plan consists of BIG IDEA concepts and outcomes (chapters) which establish the COMMUNITY VISION statements in the Plan.

To accomplish the community’s vision for the area, a Community Strategy was created in conjunction with this Neighborhood Plan. All the Big Ideas in both are associated with goals, priority goals, and the strategies needed to achieve them. The priority goals of the community have been reviewed by City departments, associated agencies, the Plan’s Steering Committee, and community organizations. Each of the priority goals are placed at the front of their corresponding chapter.

The implementation of this Plan includes using the Community Strategy and active support by the implementation team, which is made up of residents, partner organizations, and City staff. Tracking, measuring, and reviewing the goals will provide a framework for monitoring the progress of this Plan and other plans in the City. The methods to accomplish the Big Ideas are defined as follows:

- **PRIORITY GOALS** – the primary goals and shared objectives of the community and City
- **GOALS** – additional identified objectives for the area
- **STRATEGIES** – lists of solutions for accomplishing the goals
- **ACTIONS** - list of tasks continuing and in other existing plans or projects in the area

Actions in this Plan, particularly in the chapter on transportation, are considered progress already underway through an existing plan or project. Monitoring will continue as a method to support the Southeast. These directives have been reviewed by specific City departments, associated agencies, or community organizations. When a City department, associated partner agency, or community organization partner has been identified, collaboration with the Planning Department will help guide actions and decisions to further the goals outlined in this Plan.

Community-led organizations have been doing the work in the Southeast, and this Plan intends to support and highlight those endeavors while addressing additional planning needs and recommendations from the City and its partners.

PLAN’S STEERING COMMITTEE

The Southeast Strong Steering Committee guided the process, structure, and content of the Plan by placing the goals and strategies at the forefront and suggested limiting the number of online surveys. The Plan was translated into Spanish, and efforts were made to engage the Spanish and Korean-speaking communities.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

USE THE PLAN

1. A guiding document for land use review applications and initiatives
2. A long-range vision pertaining to the physical development of the area, including but not limited to:
 - Priorities and areas of focus
 - A consideration in development of capital improvement priorities
 - Guidance for grant applications and community partnerships

CITY STAFF USE OF THE PLAN

Neighborhood plans can be considered topical subsets of the City’s larger community vision as laid out in PlanCOS. Staff will work with applicants and stakeholders to review development proposals in the Southeast Strong planning area and provide decision-makers with information about how proposals and capital improvement projects align with the Plan.

BUSINESS AND DEVELOPER USE OF THE PLAN

The Plan provides guidance on how to best achieve the community’s vision in ways that allow businesses to grow, adapt, and implement their goals. Acting as a roadmap for developers, the Plan includes maps, goals, and strategies that outline desired development patterns. Land use proposals should address community concerns and developers should collaborate with residents on buildout decisions.

ELECTED OFFICIALS USE OF THE PLAN

Elected officials can use this Plan to position the Southeast for the future by ensuring accountability of City departments and making informed decisions that align with the goals of the Plan. The City Council representative will play a key role in advocacy and guiding the Plan’s implementation strategies, acting on behalf of and in partnership with the community to advance related City projects and priorities.

NON-PROFITS USE OF THE PLAN

Nonprofits can use this Plan to:

- Collaborate with the City,
- Promote the Southeast Strong area in grant requests,
- Identify community needs, and
- Incorporate its recommendations into their strategic planning sessions.

Aligning with area nonprofit goals will enhance effectiveness, legitimacy, and community engagement in the Plan’s implementation.

COMMUNITY USE OF THE PLAN

This Plan serves as a tool for the Southeast Strong residents and stakeholders to bridge community needs with capital programming. Citizens and stakeholder groups can champion these goals by using the Plan to guide advocacy actions within the Southeast Strong area.

USE OF THE DEVELOPMENT MAP

This typological map is advisory in nature and should be referenced during land use review processes. The map functions as a reference for desired growth patterns and should be updated regularly to reflect changing conditions.

IMPLEMENTATION



Detached residential on Chelton Rd



Attached residential - SE



Panorama Height Apartments



Apartments on Fountain Blvd. and Chelton Rd

PARTNERS AND IMPLEMENTATION

What will the Southeast Strong planning area look like in 20 years? The area is seeing its built environment change and the implementation of this Plan will guide these neighborhoods for generations to come. A list of community partners can be found on page 3 and in the Plan Goals Partner table in Appendix B. Implementation will require action - monitoring strategies and informing progress and measures reporting while continually collaborating with the community, partners, City, County, and the State.

Plan implementation requires regular updates to stakeholders, residents, and the City's Southeast Strong web page with a focus on annual reporting and a five-year refresh cycle.

PROGRESS AND MEASURES

Annual progress and measures reports will be provided to the community and partners. City departments will weigh in on progress on the related priorities, goals, and strategies in this plan ensuring accountability.

A five-year refresh of the Plan will consider updated trends and population data and monitor other indicators of change in the Southeast Strong area.

ADAPTABLE PLAN

This plan will be monitored and updated. Primary community priority goals will be evaluated during implementation and can be considered ongoing. The Plan's maps, list of partners, and resources are adaptive and responsive to changing conditions.



COMMUNITY

ENGAGEMENT

The Southeast Strong Plan is an effort informed and guided by its residents, the southeast area leaders, and community advocates.

SURVEY OF SURVEYS 2017-2020

The Plan's Steering Committee recognized that the Southeast community had been surveyed extensively and recommended analyzing existing data through a "survey of surveys." This process reviewed comments related to the Southeast area, focusing on zip codes 80910 and 80916. A summary of these findings is provided online at <https://coloradosprings.gov/SEcommunityplan>

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021-2024

The planning process began with the formation of a Steering Committee composed of Southeast stakeholders, leaders, and residents. A technical support team, including members from various City departments, was also assembled. Over four years, the committee discussed the community's priorities, needs, gaps, and existing grassroots efforts. The group recommended drafting the Plan, followed by community review, surveys, amendments, and finalization, including a robust implementation strategy. The Steering Committee held eight meetings during this process and those recommendations were honored.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Residents and organizations invested in the Southeast—those who live, work, play, and care about the community—were interviewed to understand their priorities. Interviews took place at local businesses, non-profit offices, community events, the Sand Creek Library, and the Family Success Center.

PUBLIC MEETING


A large public meeting was held at Stompin' Groundz, a popular local coffee shop, following the world café format. Residents from all six neighborhoods represented in the Plan participated. Attendees sat at six tables, each focused on a priority

area: culture, economic development, health, mobility, housing, and safety. Facilitators guided discussions, helping residents review, discuss, and rate the Plan's priority goals as community priorities. Additional concerns and needs were also documented. The event saw more than 75 attendees. A detailed analysis of feedback from this event is available in Appendix C.

- 11** STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
- 16** STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS
- 75+** ATTENDEES AT PUBLIC MEETING
- 64** SURVEY RESPONSES

PRIORITIES SURVEY

To expand community engagement, a survey was published on the City's Southeast Strong Community Plan website in both English and Spanish. This effort, accompanied by outreach from City and partner organizations, was promoted through social media posts, press releases, stakeholder emails, and Colorado Springs School District 2's 21 social media and email platforms. Feedback collected through this survey further informed the Plan. The lower survey response numbers, especially in Spanish prove further public outreach efforts are needed in future planning efforts.

¿Qué es un plan comunitario?


El Plan Comunitario Southeast Strong es un plan de la Ciudad de Colorado Springs para seis vecindarios: Deerfield Hills, Pikes Peak Park North, Pikes Peak Park South, Soaring Eagles, Southborough, y Spring Creek. Las prioridades de los residentes ayudarán a guiar el plan.

Se espera que este plan proporcione orientación sobre el desarrollo físico en el área. Las recomendaciones de este plan abarcarán temas como transporte, desarrollo económico, celebración de la cultura, vivienda, resiliencia climática, seguridad pública y salud pública.

NECESITAMOS TU OPINIÓN!

REVISA EL PLAN PRELIMINAR

APRENDE MÁS
ENCUESTA ABIERTA HASTA
EL 10 DE NOVIEMBRE





Top Left: Artist mural at Stompin' Groundz - Brayan Montes-Terrazas @Yamz.world
Photos: Public meetings, community engagement, and Steering Committee meetings

DEVELOPMENT MAP

PLANNING AREA BUFFER: In the area of influence consider neighborhood and community connectivity, pedestrian and multi-modal access to areas of influence such as the airport, and other adjacent parks, trails, and pedestrian bridges.

NEWLY PLANNED: Approved and under construction residential, both work force and market rate, and new commercial with 1-10 years development horizons where surrounding amenities should be considered for connectivity planning to rail, transit, parks, and trails.

COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT: Established and developing commercial districts in need of investment to support job growth, neighboring residential and mixed-use districts, and pedestrian and multi-modal connectivity to Sand Creek and Pikes Peak Greenway Trails. Focus on safety, economic development investment and funding, additional housing options, cultural centers, and entertainment destinations.

REINVESTMENT: Established identified commercial districts recommended for evaluation to encourage additional economic growth with a focus on underutilized spaces or incompatible land uses. These focus areas could be for additional housing, URA grant funding for facade improvements, landscape improvements, full-service grocery stores, cultural restaurants, and community event spaces near transit and where additional investment is needed.

RESIDENTIAL REINVESTMENT AND PRESERVATION: Established aging multi-family and modular communities where preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing should continue to seek infrastructure funding and landscape improvements supporting quality of life, age in place, first time home buyers, and rental opportunities where safety standards, landscaping, and amenities are needed.



- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Investment | New Planned | Opportunity Zone |
| Reinvestment | Vacant Land 2023 | Sand Creek |
| Reinvestment Residential | Parks | Area of Influence |

DEVELOPMENT GOAL D1
Foster rehabilitation, development, and redevelopment focusing along major corridors, nodes, trails, and community hubs supporting incremental density, transit-oriented development, and walkability.

STRATEGY D1.A
Promote mixed-use zoning to increase residential density along major corridors. Evaluate zoning on Hancock Expy between Circle Dr and S Academy Blvd for more appropriate transitional uses, buffering residential from industrial.



GROW AND SUPPORT OUR BUSINESSES, ENTREPRENEURS, AND HOUSING



CITY AND COMMUNITY VISION FOR ECONOMY AND HOUSING

Southeast Strong area residents and business owners will have the option to live, work, and play within the planning area, reducing the amount of time and cost to travel and commute. Patrons from all over will frequent local businesses and enjoy their services at nearby vibrant public gathering spaces. A range of housing options will be available to business owners and entrepreneurs. A thriving community can sustain the local economy and keeps dollars within the area mutually benefiting businesses, community centers, schools, pop-up festivals and events. Job opportunities and vocational training begin and continue in nearby educational institutions and programs creating a pipeline into high-paying careers.

Recent successes, such as in economic development and urban renewal adjacent to the Southeast Strong area continue to support and expand the local economy. Peak Innovation Park is attracting large investments providing quality jobs and community spaces for both local and regional residents and workers. The 2022 Colorado Springs Municipal Airport Master Plan outlines and guides development for growth and sustainability over a 20-year planning period. These two large initiatives are creating a hub for economic development driving job creation, tourism, recreation, office development, and industrial uses and serve as opportunities for increasing the attractiveness and viability of Southeast Colorado Springs.

SMALL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY CULTURAL RETAIL

Many vital commercial corridors and neighborhood or community hubs serve both the Southeast Strong area residents, those from nearby neighborhoods, and the region. Notably, neighborhood nodes, often situated near churches and schools or along transportation corridors hold a substantial number of small, community-owned businesses that provide valuable services and employment opportunities.

These establishments are highly valued by the community. In the Southeast Strong area, many commercial centers are tucked into aging strip malls which were developed before current landscape codes were adopted. However, they still face numerous challenges, such as escalating rents and difficulty hiring staff, which put them at risk of closure or relocation. This concern is citywide and particularly acute for some longstanding Southeast Strong area businesses, which have witnessed displacement over the past decades and fear further losses. Southeast commercial districts along S. Academy Blvd have historically higher commercial vacancy rates when compared to other parts of the city (S. Academy Blvd Great Streets Measures Report 2020).

The following recommended policies and programs aimed at preserving existing businesses while exploring avenues to attract new ones that cater to everyday household needs.

TOP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS -PRIORITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL E1

Partner with Southeast Strong area businesses and civic organizations to assist in the promotion of the area as a thriving business ecosystem with a unique cultural identity.

STRATEGY E1.A

Create partnership with City of Colorado Springs Economic Development Department, RISE Southeast, Solid Rock CDC, Pikes Peak Workforce Center and Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center, and others to bolster collaboration and resources to foster a premier business friendly environment that supports new and existing businesses in Southeast Colorado Springs.

STRATEGY E1.B

Analyze key hubs within the area to identify opportunities for future growth and mutually beneficial economic drivers, such as creative or arts districts.

STRATEGY E1.C

Help locally owned businesses in the area, hire and retain a quality workforce, and integrate into the community.

STRATEGY E1.D

Further develop and implement the Urban Renewal Authority's Façade Improvement Program to assist property owners with exterior building or site enhancement opportunities.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT GOAL E2

Collaborate with Colorado Springs Utilities to create standards for water-wise streetscapes to address the area's seasonal heat.

STRATEGY E2.A

Reference the Southeast Community Plan Healthy People and Places Assessment to identify areas of need, and collaborate with Colorado Springs Utilities, Mountain Metro, Public Works, and CSURA to implement mitigation practices—starting within the transit system geography and gradually expanding to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

SMALL BUSINESS & RETAIL

SMALL BUSINESS GOAL E3

Assist small businesses in identifying potential funding resources to help them come into zoning compliance with code requirements such as landscaping and site maintenance.

STRATEGY E3.A

Support a Southeast Strong planning area network for small businesses that aims to build capacity among the areas' various commercial nodes and corridors. A small business alliance could include a membership component aiming to:

- Provide information on issues of concern to small businesses;
- Connect businesses to resources and services offered by the City of Colorado Springs; and
- Build organizational capacity to help identify and create funding options such as special districts

STRATEGY E3.B

Support, uplift, and partner with non-profit and local organizations, such as RISE Southeast, The Thrive Network, SCORE, and Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center to provide technical assistance and business expertise at a local, convenient location that may include:

- Business planning,
- Succession or transition planning,
- Lease negotiations,
- Maintenance fees,
- Lending education,
- Property taxes and other challenges faced by small business owners.



STRATEGY E3.C

Provide business owners information on opportunities for sources of capital, such as programs for upgrading or expanding retail space, storefront improvements, business signage upgrades, and building rehabilitation.

STRATEGY E3.D

Distribute information on private sector opportunities to acquire a building space or property, by utilizing programs such as the Small Business Administration's 504 Loan Program, mobilizing community development organizations, such as Community Development Corporations (CDCs), to acquire commercial property through community land trusts, and exploring programs such as right of first refusal.

STRATEGY E3.E

Connect businesses to agencies that can assist and support sustainable practices, including, but not limited to:

- Education on the benefits of opportunities such as adding solar panels or recycled building materials during project design and establishing waste reduction programs that promote utility efficiencies, composting, and recycling.
- Provide resources on how to successfully establish landscapes with native plantings and xeric principles.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL E4

Attract new retailers to help meet the needs of Southeast Strong area residents by working with the City of Colorado Springs' Economic Development Department, Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority, and El Paso County Office of Economic Development, and local regional chambers of commerce.

STRATEGY E4.A

Assist business organizations in developing small business incubators for property owners and entrepreneurs, particularly in existing vacant and underutilized buildings, as a test market for new retail and services. Successful incubator tenants should then be encouraged to move to permanent storefront locations within the area with assistance from local organizations.

STRATEGY E4.B

Promote the utilization of small business initiative programs, such as tax credit programs including Enterprise Zones, that have the potential to support entrepreneurs through the El Paso County Office of Economic Development.

STRATEGY E4.C

In developed areas that meet the state statute definition of "blight", support opportunities to spur redevelopment.

STRATEGY E4.D

In areas with vacant retail properties focus on repurposing with creative uses such as pop-up shops, co-working spaces, or event venues.

STRATEGY E4.E

Collaborate with the Urban Renewal Authority to establish procedures similar to the current Rapid Response application process for taxing entities that may support new development and redevelopment.

STRATEGY E4.F

Support the Urban Renewal Authority's implementation of a Facade Improvement Program to assist property owners with exterior building or site enhancement.

STRATEGY E4.G

Support retail and craft manufacturing in business park areas, particularly between Harrison High School and the El Pomar Youth Sports Park.

CULTURAL BUSINESSES GOAL E5

Support and develop new initiatives and collective ownership models that have a goal of maintaining a variety of local and culturally significant businesses in the area.

STRATEGY E5.A

Identify and provide support to preserve culturally and/or historically relevant businesses including marginalized groups, through business assistance, property ownership, and other innovative efforts.

STRATEGY E5.B

As new development or redevelopment occurs in the Southeast Strong Plan Area, partner with community agencies to develop strategies and tools to help existing businesses stay in the area.

STRATEGY E5.C

Identify businesses that may be considered as being cultural and/or historic destinations and anchors and explore incentives, marketing support and/or economic development tools to retain them.

PRESERVING & GROWING PRIMARY EMPLOYERS

The area has significant and critical heavy industrial and growing light industrial manufacturing and logistics jobs, including industrial and warehousing in the Pikes Peak Park South neighborhood. Additionally, Peak Innovation Park, located east of the planning area, is an employment sector potentially serving the area. Access to quality jobs and education is key to achieving the PlanCOS vision for a more inclusive city where all residents have access to quality education, jobs, and services. Education and training programs are critical to ensure the Southeast Strong area has job growth and residents have increased access to higher wage jobs.

By supporting Harrison School District 2 (D2) and other D2 partner entities that provide job training within strategic sectors, local businesses and workforce partners can work to train area residents for future job opportunities.

PRESERVE AND GROW JOBS GOAL E6

Preserve existing industrial jobs and create new job opportunities that can benefit neighborhood residents and the regional economy.

STRATEGY E6.A

Where the potential for involuntary displacement is identified, evaluate, and implement methods to mitigate business displacement, such as incentives, property ownership and/or other assistance to existing businesses to preserve jobs in the area.



STRATEGY E6.B

Support local and regional high-value manufacturing places and consider forming manufacturing districts as additional needs are identified and a mobility network that facilitates truck traffic and access to major highways.

STRATEGY E6.C

Support new job growth in manufacturing through new and existing local and regional economic development resources such as shared maker spaces, incubators, or the Enterprise Zone program.

STRATEGY E6.D

As buildings, uses, and supporting technology evolve, consider utilization of special districts and/or other economic development tools to help finance the modernization or expansion of needed infrastructure. For localized infrastructure upgrades, consider general improvement and/or metropolitan districts. For broader district-wide improvements and marketing support, consider a business improvement district(s) or other tools.

EDUCATION AND CAREER GOAL E7

Partner with local school districts, community organizations, and other major area employers in connecting Southeast Strong area residents to promote new career opportunities.

STRATEGY E7.A

In collaboration with major employers within the Southeast Strong area, support the creation of vocational job training, apprenticeship programs, and the Careers in Construction program at D2 area high schools. *(Partners – City of Colorado Springs Economic Department Dept, Harrison School District 2, Pikes Peak Workforce Center, Colorado Springs Housing and Building Association, and the Pikes Peak Business and Education Alliance)*

STRATEGY E7.B

Bolster the Family Success Center partnership organizations as an educational resource for job skills building and family education support.

STRATEGY E7.C

Provide and promote educational opportunities at community centers, libraries, Pikes Peak State College, and other public facilities to connect residents to scholarships and other programs to improve access to learning.

STRATEGY E7.D

Support youth career pathways by promoting Harrison School District 2, the Pikes Peak Business and Education Alliance, and other education institutions located in the area that foster career exploration and career exposure opportunities.



Aerial image of E Hancock Expy looking west



HOUSING & WEALTH BUILDING

The most common measure of housing affordability assesses the burden that housing costs put on a household. If a household pays more than 30% of their gross income on rent and utilities or on mortgage payments, utilities, property taxes and insurance they are considered to be “cost-burdened” and susceptible to displacement. The higher the cost burden, the greater the vulnerability. Cost burden can lead to financial stress and limited access to basic necessities such as medical care, nutritious food, and transportation. For children in particular, housing stability significantly affects educational attainment and lifelong earning potential. For seniors, stable housing ensures a safe and supportive environment for aging in place, maintaining social connections and accessing necessary healthcare services. In addition, affordability does not just refer to subsidized housing for people at extremely low-income levels, it also affects an increasingly wide spectrum of working households across the City.

Supporting the development of housing that reduces the number of cost-burdened households will support financial stability and wealth building over time. The following policies and programs enable these neighborhoods to maintain and improve housing into the future.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITH CAPITAL A: housing where government or other organizations provide financial assistance to reduce housing costs ensuring residents pay no more than 30% of their income on housing.

TOP HOUSING GOALS
-PRIORITIES

HOUSING GOAL HS1

Preserve existing housing inventory for current and future homeowners and renters.

STRATEGY HS1.A

Provide below-market loans to existing Affordable multi-family rental properties in need of minor rehabilitation, and to fund owner-occupied housing rehabilitation for low- to moderate-income homeowners.

HOUSING GOAL HS2

Consider all housing needs for existing and future residents.

STRATEGY HS2.A

Collaborate with developers to tailor Affordable housing projects to include community benefit such as park space, childcare facilities, and other supportive services.

STRATEGY HS2.B

Review using a phased housing approach and build the capacity of non-profits to identify and implement displacement and eviction prevention programs for residents most at risk of displacement, including senior citizens.

STRATEGY HS2.C

Use the City’s housing needs assessment through the Housing and Homelessness Response Department to determine housing needs and gaps.

HOUSING GOAL HS3

Foster the growth of diverse housing options, especially those in proximity to transit, essential services, and amenities, to provide a variety of housing options.

STRATEGY HS3.A

Rental housing should align with community needs, including diverse housing options for various household types, such as families, multi-generational living, aging in place, residents with disabilities, and those requiring supportive services.

STRATEGY HS3.B

Continue to support the allocation of Private Activity Bonds (PAB) and Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds by the City for construction and rehabilitation of Affordable multi-family housing developments.

STRATEGY HS3.C

Pursue innovative additional sources for Affordable housing development, such as Prop 123 funding, philanthropic funders, and other revenue-generating programs.

STRATEGY HS3.D

Ease the process of financing and building ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) for homeowners by streamlining the permitting process, partnering with local lenders to explore expansion of traditional financing tools, and education to homeowners on the responsibilities of serving as a landlord.

PRESERVE HOUSING GOAL HS4

Reinforce the use of various support models to provide homeownership options to residents.

STRATEGY HS4.A

Support property tax exemptions, energy and accessibility support, and foreclosure prevention for low-income and/or senior homeowners.

STRATEGY HS4.B

Maintain and enhance the quality of older homes through programs designed to rehabilitate homes in disrepair or without critical accessibility features, so that our most vulnerable residents can comfortably and safely age in place.

STRATEGY HS4.C

Build the capacity of non-profits to identify and implement displacement and eviction prevention programs for residents most at risk of displacement, including senior citizens.

HOUSING HELP AND RESOURCES

The Housing and Homelessness Response Division website provides a list of helpful resources related to these goals. <https://coloradosprings.gov/housing-help-and-resources>

While the city government does not provide direct support to individuals and families in need, we are thankful for our community partners that provide these direct supports. Community partners and agencies change often and are challenged with their own limitation of resources and are not always able to serve all individuals or families in need, but they do their best to help all individuals and families navigate the many resources in our community.



GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AMI – Area Median Income
 BID – Business Improvement District
 CDC – Community Development Corporation
 HUD – Housing and Urban Development
 PAB – Private Activity Bond
 URA – Urban Renewal Authority

**GLOSSARY OF COMMUNITY
PARTNERS**

Several partners have been named in this Big Idea.
 Here is what they all do.

**PIKES PEAK SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
CENTER**

The Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center offers small business consulting and training that maximizes the economic potential of entrepreneurs. They help existing and new businesses grow and prosper with the goal of helping emerging and existing entrepreneurs gain control of their business operations. They provide free guidance and counseling to help grow and start businesses. While they cannot eliminate risk, they work to minimize it by helping clients write comprehensive business plans, conduct financial forecasts, strategize marketing tactics, apply for funding, and improve operations.
<https://pikespeaksbdc.org/>

PIKES PEAK WORKFORCE CENTER

The Pikes Peak Workforce Center provides a variety of free services to assist registered job seekers, provides skills training to help residents achieve success, and job search assistance to connect to employers.
<https://ppwfc.org/>

RISE SOUTHEAST COLORADO SPRINGS

RISE | Southeast is an initiative to enhance Southeast Colorado Springs from within through resident led change. It is led by resilient, inspired, strong, and engaged residents of 80910 and 80916. In 2016, El Paso County Public Health was the recipient of El Pomar Foundation’s Possibilities grant and El Pomar made a seven-year commitment to help fund RISE | Southeast.
<https://risesoutheast.com>

SCORE

SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) fosters vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education.
<https://www.score.org/southerncolorado>

**SOLID ROCK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION (CDC)**

Solid Rock CDC is dedicated to revitalizing Southeast Colorado Springs, transforming it into a premier destination for living, business development, diverse culture, and attractions. They do this through innovative community collaboration, housing advocacy and development, small business support, facilitation of healthy community connections, and being policy advocates within the community and State.
<https://www.solidrockcdc.com>

THRIVE NETWORK

The Thrive Network eliminates economic barriers by providing people with tools to activate and launch their own success, primarily through entrepreneurship. They teach people to see their problems as economic opportunities and provide a framework to launch small businesses to address those needs.
<https://thethrivenetworks.org>



Right: Panorama Park grand opening



CITY AND COMMUNITY VISION FOR MOBILITY

The Southeast Strong area is uniquely located at the crossroads of major regional commercial and industrial centers such as the Colorado Springs Airport and the Drennan Industrial Center.

Major thoroughfares provide access to, from, and through each of the area's six neighborhoods. Locally, residents desire transportation options that balance efficiency and availability of options. A comprehensive transit network connects residents to the many land uses and to key destinations such as medical services, job centers, and food and entertainment options. South Academy Boulevard, Hancock Expressway, and South Circle Drive have been transformed into multimodal transit streets, and a network of local buses and bike and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure offer safe connections between commercial centers and residential areas.

Based on the findings in the Southeast Community Plan: Healthy People and Places Assessment (Appendix A) and stakeholder comments, this Big Idea supports the expansion of safe, reliable access within the area, multimodal transportation options without impeding traffic flow, and maintenance of existing infrastructure. This undertaking is supported by City-initiated plans including ConnectCOS, adopted by City Council in 2023, and the 2050 Regional Transit Plan & Specialized Transportation Plan that is expected to be completed in 2025.

The 2050 Regional Transit Plan & Specialized Transportation Plan, adopted in 2025, provides guidance for Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) when considering changes in service, frequencies, new projects, and growth of the system.

TOP MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION GOALS-PRIORITIES

MOBILITY GOAL T1

Enhance public transit accessibility and coverage.

STRATEGY T1.A

Increase ridership levels to make transit more competitive as a preferred mode of travel with enhanced transit corridors and Bus Rapid Transit.

STRATEGY T1.B

Use the Zero Fare for Better Air initiative as a model to seek additional funding for free fare summer programs and continue the free rides with Metro Mobility paratransit services.

MOBILITY GOAL T2

Improve safety and usability for pedestrians and cyclists.

STRATEGY T2.A

Develop and maintain safe bike lanes and sidewalks, ensuring connectivity between key transit stops and local destinations.

STRATEGY T2.B

Upgrade crosswalks and lighting near transit stops to enhance walkability and safety for pedestrians, especially during early and late hours.

MOBILITY GOAL T3

Promote sustainable first/last-mile transit solutions.

STRATEGY T3.A

Expand partnerships and coverage with scooters and bike-sharing programs to the Southeast, ensuring integration with public transit hubs.

STRATEGY T3.B

Enhance wayfinding and signage to guide users to transit and alternative mobility routes.

STREET TYPES

The various street types in the Southeast Strong planning area influence how residents travel through and across neighborhoods. Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRA), the City's General Fund budget, and ballot item 2C help to address physical infrastructure ailments such as potholes or broken and missing sidewalks. In addition to physical deterioration, the design of roadways may discourage multimodal transportation uses by creating uncomfortable bicycle or pedestrian experiences. PlanCOS and ConnectCOS outline a complete multimodal transportation network that provides mobility choices to all residents. This complete network offers residents the ability to choose how they access jobs, education, residential, commercial, and entertainment destinations. Based on ConnectCOS, residents who use the multi-modal transportation network generally opt for one of the following modes of travel:

- Drive alone,
- Carpool,
- Work from home; therefore, no transportation,
- Walk,
- Utilize a taxi or rideshare service,
- Motorcycle or other,
- Public Transportation, and
- Bike.

CRITICAL CORRIDORS

The Southeast Strong planning area sits at the intersection of several regional thoroughfares. These thoroughfares transport thousands of vehicles daily to link residential neighborhoods to commercial centers. They were often constructed in a transportation vision that prioritized single-occupancy vehicles. Several of these thoroughfares, such as the MLK Bypass/Fountain Boulevard, have disconnected communities and pushed residents farther away from economic opportunity.

POWERS BOULEVARD

ACTION 1 - Work with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on future Powers Boulevard improvements to ensure that projects include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that provide connectivity across and adjacent to Powers Boulevard.

MLK BYPASS/FOUNTAIN BOULEVARD

ACTION 1 - Study and implement improved and new protected bicycle infrastructure from South Union Boulevard to Circle Drive. Protected bicycle infrastructure could include a physical separation from vehicle traffic or a multi-use sidewalk adjacent to the corridor.



CONNECTED CORRIDORS

Many of the commercial corridors within the Southeast Strong planning area are situated on major arterials, such as South Academy Boulevard. These major arterials reflect decades of planning for single-occupancy vehicles without adequate infrastructure to support other modes of transportation such as walking and biking. Economic vibrancy and community pride rely on the efficiency and overall user experience of these roads. The vision of this Big Idea recognizes the existing dependence on single-occupancy vehicle travel while planning for a more connected, multimodal transportation corridor.

Connected corridors are classified as principal arterials in the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan, found in ConnectCOS.

SOUTH UNION BOULEVARD/HANCOCK EXPRESSWAY

ACTION 1 – Conduct a transportation corridor study to determine safety, traffic operations, multi-modal enhancements, and functionality of the roadway along Hancock Expy from Union Boulevard to Chelton Road.

ACTION 2 – Enhance bike infrastructure from Monterey Road to the Sand Creek trail crossing.

ACTION 3 – Implement lane reallocation for bike lanes between Chelton Road and Powers Boulevard.

ACTION 4 – Study the feasibility of converting the Chelton intersection to a roundabout intersection.

ACTION 5 – Complete connection of Hancock Expressway from Clarendon Drive to Chelton Road.

ACTION 6 – Install 10-foot shared use path along the southside of Hancock Expressway from the Sand Creek trail crossing to the 10-foot shared use path on Academy Boulevard.

SOUTH ACADEMY BOULEVARD

ACTION 1 – Continue the enhancements included in the Academy Boulevard Improvements Project.

ACTION 2 – Enhance and implement pedestrian facilities, including additional crossings to close long, inconvenient gaps between signalized intersections, and 10-foot share use path.

ACTION 3 – Complete Enhanced Transit Feasibility Study and implement recommendations.

NEIGHBORHOOD LINKS

Neighborhood links are the roads that connect and serve local needs. These roads are often one or two lanes in each direction that connect residential neighborhoods to the larger thoroughfares and corridors. Neighborhood links are an opportunity to build on the City's existing multi-modal infrastructure without effecting efficiency on heavier-trafficked roads. Neighborhood links in the Southeast Strong planning area include:

- Aeroplaza Drive;
- Astrozon Boulevard;
- Capulin Drive;
- Carmel Drive;
- Chelton Road;
- Delta Drive;
- Janitell Road;
- Jet Wing Drive;
- Monterey Road;
- Murray Boulevard, and
- Verde Drive.

Neighborhood links are classified as minor arterials in the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan, found in ConnectCOS.

BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL T4

Study and implement lane reallocation projects to improve safety.

STRATEGY T4.A

To advance the implementation of the City's Bike Master Plan continue planned projects:

- Chelton Road from Mallard Drive to Hancock Expressway.
- Murray Boulevard from Platte Avenue and Chelton Road.

SAFER INTERSECTIONS GOAL T5

Study and implement safer intersections.

STRATEGY T5.A

Implement identifying signal modifications and traffic control modifications such as roundabouts.

NON-MOTORIZED SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Infrastructure upgrades in the Southeast Strong area are intended to address safety concerns and user comfort. Installing safety improvements including controlled mid-block pedestrian crossings, filling in missing sidewalk connections, and addressing excessive speeding on streets should be considered.

ROAD SAFETY GOAL T6

Create and implement strategies for slowing vehicles speeds on roads in the immediate vicinity of schools, healthcare centers, libraries, commercial areas, and parks and other recreational centers.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY GOAL T7

Implement a connected, functional, comfortable, and safe pedestrian network.

STRATEGY T6-T7.A

Implement sidewalk improvements and fill in sidewalk gaps along South Academy Boulevard, Fountain Boulevard, South Circle Drive, and Hancock Expressway using PPRTA, grant, or developer funding as opportunities arise.

STRATEGY T6-T7.B

Evaluate new crossing locations along major arterials such as South Academy Boulevard, Fountain Boulevard, and Hancock Expressway to close long, inconvenient gaps between signalized intersections.

STRATEGY T6-T7.C

Install missing sidewalk connections particularly to access area parks and trails, adjacent to high-trafficked routes, and to connect neighborhoods and businesses to transit stops. (*Partners – City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, and Public Works*)

STRATEGY T6-T7.D

Determine new segments of shared use paths (e.g. 10-foot sidewalks) to provide trail-to-trail connections, trail-to-park connections, and park-to-park connections using PPRTA funding or other funding opportunities as they arise.

CROSSING SAFETY GOAL T8

Explore the feasibility of and implement additional high-visibility and controlled bicycle and pedestrian crossings that traverse significant obstacles such as highways, creeks, or railroads.

REDUCE CRASHES GOAL T9

Implement design ideas that promote overall pedestrian safety and comfort. Study and implement ways to reduce pedestrian-related crashes.



STRATEGY T8-T9.A

Use signal timing strategies and detection technologies to implement safety enhancements at signalized intersections.

STRATEGY T8-T9.B

Implement pedestrian infrastructure enhancements such as wider sidewalks, curb bulb-outs, pedestrian refuge islands, and pedestrian activated crossing controls such as Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) and pedestrian signals.

STRATEGY T8-T9.C

Collaborate with residents of the planning area to prioritize completing missing links and improve quality of sidewalks in the immediate vicinity of schools, healthcare centers, libraries, commercial areas, and parks and other recreational centers.

BIKE PLANNING GOAL T10

Implement and upgrade the City's Bike Master Plan for bikeway infrastructure.

STRATEGY T10.A

Create bicycle facilities that are designed to prioritize safety and comfort.

TRANSIT

The City's transit system and the supporting multi-modal infrastructure allows someone to navigate through the area safely and conveniently without a vehicle.

TRANSIT GOAL T11

Implement enhancements to the existing transit system identified in the 2050 Regional Transit Plan & Specialized Transportation Plan to improve user experience.

STRATEGY T11.A

Enhancements should focus on increasing the minimum frequency on all routes at all times of day to 30-minutes and increasing the span of service to include longer weekday and weekend operating hours.

STRATEGY T11.B

Study and implement the recommendations of the enhanced transit study for the South Academy Boulevard corridor.

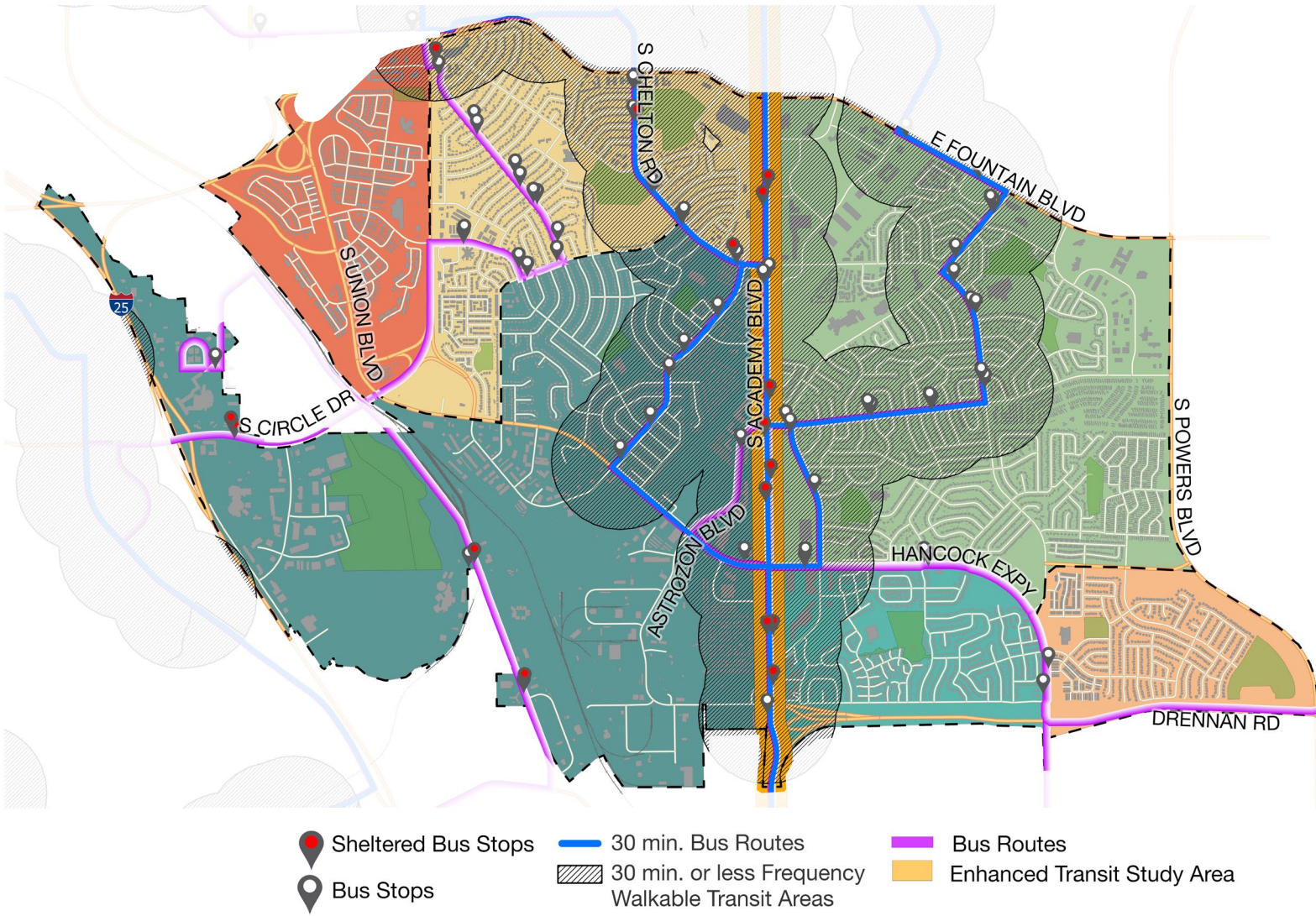
STRATEGY T11.C

Implement infrastructure improvements at bus stops including bus shelters, seating, sidewalk connections, landscaping where appropriate, and micro-mobility stations.

STRATEGY T11.D

Work with local partners to include beautification at bus stops through public art.

MAP: TRANSIT WITHIN SOUTHEAST STRONG PLAN AREA





CITY AND COMMUNITY VISION FOR HEALTH

The Southeast Strong area envisions a vibrant community where residents and visitors feel welcome to enjoy spacious parks and trails and walkable neighborhoods. This vision prioritizes access to essential resources such as affordable healthcare, nutritious food, and safe well-maintained public spaces, ensuring that residents have the opportunity to a healthy quality of life.

City programs exist to address environmental challenges through innovative solutions like expanding tree canopies, transforming brownfield sites, and integrating more landscaping to mitigate blight. By cultivating partnerships, this Big Idea aims to promote mental and physical wellness and create spaces that reflect the beauty and resilience of the Southeast Strong area residents.

This shared vision also prioritizes safety, accessibility, and connectivity by enhancing lighting, improving trail systems, and supporting sustainable mobility options. The Plan envisions building a community that uplifts, protects, and celebrates cultural diversity - a foundation for a healthier and more inclusive future.

PLANCOS COMMUNITY HUB - A location that serves as an accessible community focal point and gathering place with retail uses, resources and services, and is designed and oriented to meet the needs of a particular neighborhood or subarea of the city.

TOP HEALTH GOALS -PRIORITIES

HEALTH GOAL H1

Encourage the formation of comprehensive community hubs prioritizing area parks and connectivity to trail design planning with safety, accessibility, and connectivity.

STRATEGY H1.A

Collaborate with community organizations, the Youth Advisory Council, City Public Works, and the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department to update the basketball courts in Van Diest Park.

STRATEGY H1.B

Evaluate the Van Diest Park for shade, trees, shade structures, walking loops, and signage to improve connectivity with adjacent educational facilities.

HEALTH GOAL H2

Promote health, walkability, and safe pedestrian environments in the area neighborhoods.

STRATEGY H2.A

Collaborate and continue progress toward complete sidewalks working with City Public Works Department focusing first on connectivity to transit, parks, trails, and area amenities.

STRATEGY H2.B

Promote walking in the Southeast Strong area by partnering with community groups whose programming is for health education and exercise, such as with RISE and Deerfield Hills Community Center community walks.

URBAN FOREST GOAL H3

Support the USDA-approved 'Colorado Springs - Urban Forest Improvements' grant that was awarded in 2023 for the Southeast Strong area.

STRATEGY H3.A

Using the USDA grant as inspiration, develop a grant program for appropriate vegetation cover, such as a tree voucher program, focusing on the west side of the planning area, and along the west side of Astrozon Boulevard as recommended in the Southeast Community Plan Healthy People and Places Assessment.

LOW-IMPACT GOAL H4

Promote and preserve well-maintained landscaping along streets and medians to enhance beauty and improve the overall streetscape.

STRATEGY H4.A

Encourage new development to utilize the Landscape Code incentives to support more environmentally friendly development and landscape practice:

- Encourage use of light colored hardscaping, covered parking, and cool or vegetated roofs.
- Discourage variances within private developments that seek reductions in landscaping.

STRATEGY H4.B

Partner with community and environmental groups to host regular "clean-up" events along City trails and creeks and in City parks. Panorama Park needs extra support for clean ups due to heavy use.



Sand Creek looking south to Hancock Expy and Cheyenne Mountain



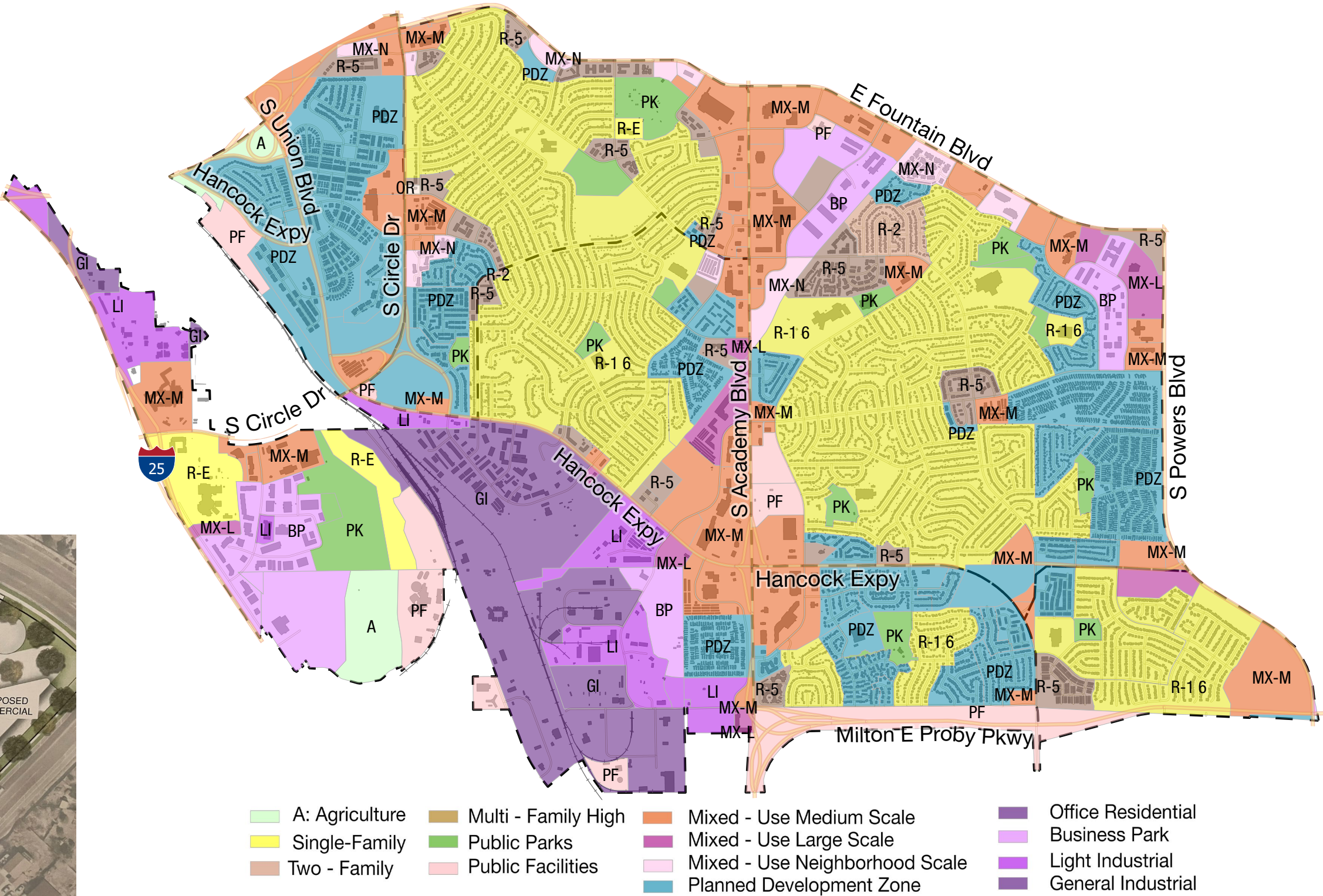
Partner with City Economic Development to develop incentives for large retail and grocery stores to open in the area to support job growth.

While continuing to support existing local small businesses, attract major retailers to strengthen the local economy through incentives like tax credits, streamlined permitting, and zoning code adjustments.

Leverage public-private partnerships to attract grocery retailers to underserved areas utilizing mixed-use zoning district.

Utilize innovative funding mechanisms to support developments that include grocery sales, incorporating creative cost-sharing incentives and exploring models such as community-owned grocery cooperatives.

MAP: ZONING MAP FOR THE AREA SHOWING MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICTS LONG S. ACADEMY BLVD., E FOUNTAIN BLVD, S CIRCLE DR, AND HANCOCK EXPY MAJOR CORRIDORS.



Left: Site plan drawing of Chelton Crossing proposed redevelopment, for more information visit <https://www.solidrockcdc.com/about-cit>



HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLACES

The Healthy People and Places Assessment includes metrics related to individual morbidity and mortality. Morbidity refers to diseases, disability, or poor health, while mortality refers to a measure of death in a population. While measures to support resident well-being of the Southeast Strong area can be found throughout the plan, this section specifically focuses on the availability of facilities within the area as well as programming.

WELL-BEING GOAL H7

Address mental health and promote self-care as essential services.

STRATEGY H7.A

Widely broadcast the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County Health Pikes Peak Rising public health and mental health resources to the Southeast Strong community.



Panorama Park bike trail

PARKS, TRAILS, LANDSCAPE, AND OPEN SPACES

The Southeast Strong area has opportunities for residents to capitalize on a greater outdoor experience. The recommendations in this section address opportunities for a higher quality of user experience for both infrastructure and amenities.

The 2026 Park System Master Plan will guide citywide enhancements of parks, trail systems, open spaces, community centers, recreational opportunities and more.

Grant funding should be actively pursued. For example, the Trust for Public Lands funding from the US Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) resulted in upgrading the irrigation systems at City owned Evergreen Cemetery and Valley Hi golf course located near the planning area - upgrades to irrigation systems support landscape redesigns and address water conservation.

HEALTH AND PARKS GOAL H8

Support parks and trail improvements in the area working with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and the Office of Accessibility.

STRATEGY H8.A

Continue the evaluation of existing city parks within the area to determine if amenities are underutilized and the potential for upgraded designs improving accessibility and safety.

STRATEGY H8.B

Continue to perform maintenance and improvements to the Sand Creek Trail connections in the area including:

- From Airport Road to Platte Avenue providing regional connectivity;
- Connections to Homestead Trail north of Airport Road;

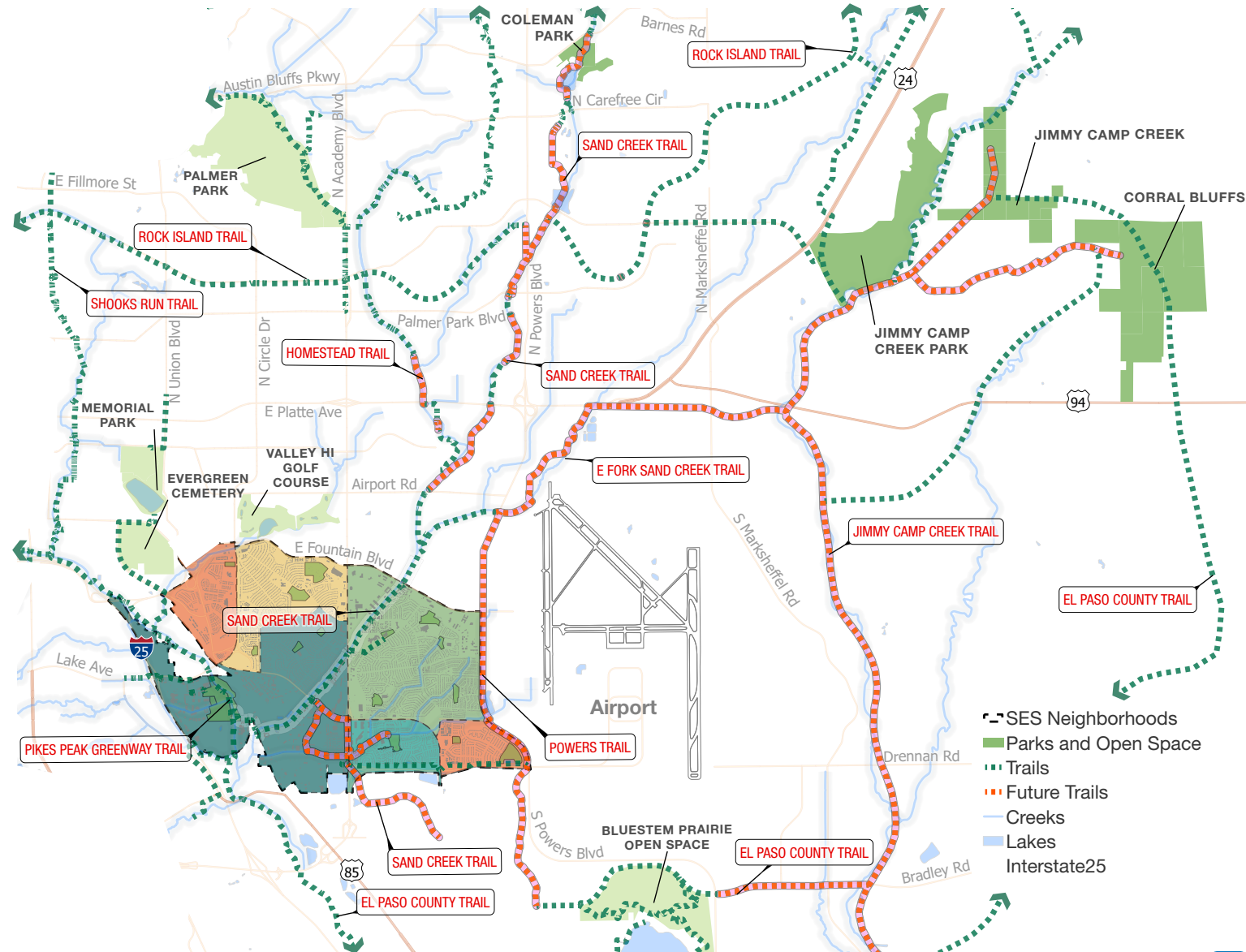
- Locations between Palmer Park Boulevard and Barnes Road;
- Future access to Coleman Park; and
- Continuation of the East Fork Sand Creek Trail east of Powers Boulevard to Space Village Ave and eastward, specifically at the dead end where connectivity opportunities are needed.

STRATEGY H8.C

Identify connections immediately outside of this planning area to support more regional connectivity and multi-modal transportation options, including:

- Future connectivity to Jimmy Camp Creek and Corral Bluffs;
- Build out of the Powers Trail, planned along Powers Boulevard from Airport Road into County.

MAP: CURRENT AND FUTURE TRAILS AROUND THE SOUTHEAST STRONG PLAN AREA



The Sand Creek Trail runs through the Southeast Strong Plan Area. Planned trails traverse the Area to connect users to other neighborhoods and regions.



STRATEGY H8.D

Work with Traffic Engineering to improve safety and connectivity to the trail system from sidewalks and bike lanes.

STRATEGY H8.E

Seek funding for improved lighting, visibility, and security cameras on Sand Creek Trail. Focus safety efforts around schools, residential areas, the SE YMCA, and adjacent community hubs on or near the trail. Use the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) grant received from the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, and SB22-01 – Crime Prevention Through Safer Streets, as a model for such funding.

LIVE BETTER GOAL H9

Enhance the Southeast Strong area by creating safer, more attractive public spaces through natural landscaping, pollution reduction, and beautification efforts, while supporting small businesses with improved curb appeal and cleanups.

STRATEGY H9.A

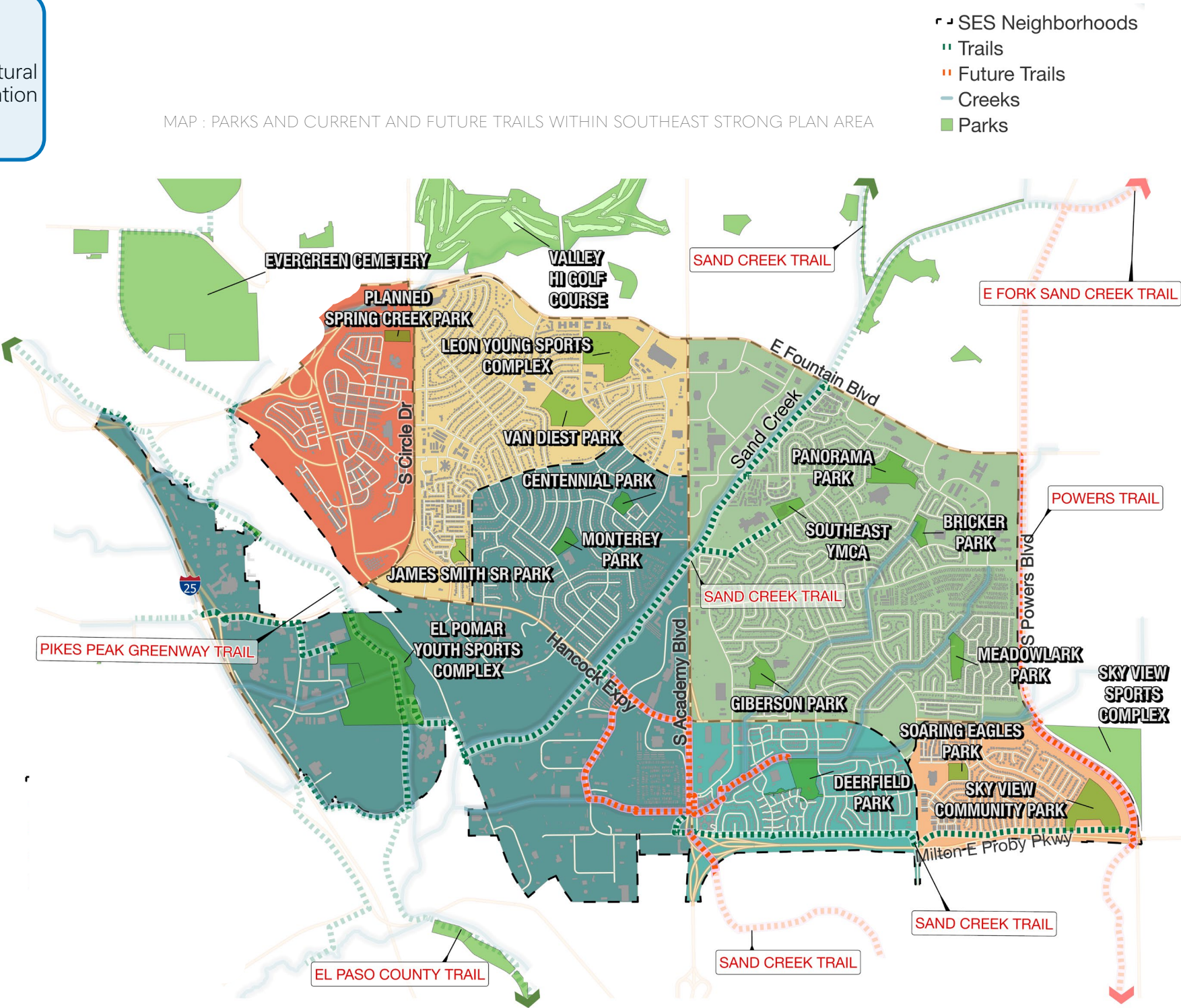
Support a more pedestrian-friendly experience by removing or requiring removal of overgrown vegetation interfering with sidewalks through Neighborhood Services efforts.

STRATEGY H9.B

Partner with Colorado Springs Utilities and Sand Creek Library to provide educational information programs that provide guidance on best landscaping practices and incentives for homeowners.



MAP : PARKS AND CURRENT AND FUTURE TRAILS WITHIN SOUTHEAST STRONG PLAN AREA



The Sand Creek Trail is part of a larger trail network connecting to downtown. Complete Creeks activate waterway corridors as safe and convenient multi-modal transportation for bicyclists and pedestrians.



CITY AND COMMUNITY VISION FOR SAFETY

Prioritizing well-maintained streets, improved lighting and pedestrian safety, fosters safer environments for youth, seniors, and families. Parks and public spaces will be vibrant, drug-free, and welcoming to all, supported by targeted efforts to provide resources for those in need. Leveraging innovation and technology creates a neighborhood that is secure, inclusive, and a place of pride for everyone.

A safe Southeast Strong area is one where residents and visitors feel safe to carry about their day-to-day activities. To discourage crime activity, the development and redevelopment of a site should incorporate measures that prevent the potential for unsafe situations and criminal activity.

CPTED, or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, is a theory that can be utilized by designers of the built environment such as architects, landscape architects, city planners, and law enforcement that encourages smarter design to reduce crime and to create a sense of safety. This concept focuses on how the physical environment impacts our day-to-day activities with the goal of ensuring safe interaction with the development around us in part through positive human behavior. CPTED is a tool to be considered in a site's design using five strategies, which include:

- Natural Access Control – focuses on access points to a property.
- Territoriality – establishes safe boundaries for a property and welcomes users.
- Natural Observation – property users can safely

- observe the property, such as through property lighting.
- Legitimate Activity Support – expands on the “Eyes on the Street” theory which incorporates users as monitors of the environment.
- Image and Maintenance – encourages property maintenance, showing an area is active with users and safe from hazards.

TOP SAFETY GOALS -PRIORITIES

SAFETY GOAL S1

Enhance public infrastructure for safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, and include transit stops, crosswalks, parks and trails, and multi-modal routes in the effort.

STRATEGY S1.A

Improve road maintenance and safety by prioritizing speed reduction, clearly marked and illuminated crosswalks, and flashing lights near schools and high-traffic pedestrian areas.

STRATEGY S1.B

Evaluate street lighting infrastructure to implement smart lighting systems at streets, intersections, trails, and parking lots to improve nighttime visibility and reduce safety risks.

SAFETY GOAL S2

Foster a safer and more inclusive community environment in partnership with community-driven and public resources.

STRATEGY S2.A

Expand the Neighborhood Watch Program, youth mentorship, and crime prevention efforts in collaboration with the Police Department and non-governmental private agencies like Hey Neighbor formerly known as CONO.

STRATEGY S2.B

Address public space safety concerns by enhancing police presence, enforcing drug-free zones in parks, and addressing homelessness with targeted cleanups and resources.

STRATEGY S2.C

Promote emergency alert apps and use town halls to refine safety measures and celebrate successful initiatives to encourage participation.

STRATEGY S2.D

Provide resources to assist residents, renters, and businesses on the importance and effectiveness of protective measures such as locks, alarms, and security cameras.

TRAIL SAFETY GOAL S3

Promote health, walkability, and safe pedestrian environments in the area neighborhoods.

STRATEGY S3.A

Ensure there are clear sightlines and visibility in public spaces, reducing potential hiding spots for criminal activity in both public and private places focusing on Sand Creek Trail.

- Use of uniform lighting standards for illumination of parking lots, urban trails, and building entrances adjacent to trails.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

SAFETY GOAL S4

Use signage, landscaping, and art features to define ownership of public and private land to deter crime.

STRATEGY S4.A

- In commercial areas, such as Mission Trace Shopping Center, use underutilized private space as public gathering space to increase a sense of safety.
- Site design may define these areas through landscaping, grade changes, or non-opaque walls and fences.

STRATEGY S4.B

Create opacity limits on outdoor fencing, walls, and other visual barriers.

- Fencing, railing walls, or other built barriers that divide outdoor areas should be discouraged from being constructed in a manner that results in a complete visual barrier.
- Landscaping buffers should be designed to not create a visual barrier or “hiding” spaces.

STRATEGY S4.C

Encourage property owners to keep the area well-maintained to show that property is cared for and watched over. This may include maintaining landscaping, ensuring that lighting is functioning, and supporting programs for property owners to help identify opportunities for improvement as it applies to safety.

STRATEGY S4.D

Through the development review process, ensure there are clear sightlines and visibility in public spaces, reducing potential hiding spots for criminal activity in both public and private places.

SOUTHEAST STRONG

SOUTHEAST STRONG COMMUNITY STRATEGY



CREATE SPECIAL PLACES & COMMUNITY HUBS



COMMUNITY VISION FOR PLACE

The Southeast Strong area will become a regional destination for cultural celebration and tourism. Vibrant neighborhoods, as envisioned in PlanCOS, will thrive through reinvestment in walkable, healthy, and magnetic activity centers. Community hubs will serve as critical resources, addressing mental health, physical health, economic development, and fostering community unity.

These spaces will take various forms, including parks, community centers, and private event or cultural centers. They will provide residents with opportunities to host events, exercise, study, and socialize. Hospitality hubs will include accommodations, dining options, and attractions showcasing the cultural contributions of local creatives for visitors to experience.

Inclusive spaces, designed with the principles of "universal design," will ensure environments are accessible and usable by people of all abilities, ages, and circumstances, fostering inclusivity and full participation.

COMMUNITY HUBS

Community hubs and third spaces, such as local coffee shops, are emerging in the area through public-private partnerships. PlanCOS calls for collaboration among the community, service providers, and stakeholders to plan small business-supportive community hubs in the Southeast.

Despite these developments, residents often travel outside their neighborhoods to access unique spaces, entertainment, and cultural venues. The identified community hubs in the area have a rich history of grassroots initiatives, yet additional development is needed. This includes further build-out, thoughtful design, connections to parks and trails, and partnerships with adjacent and compatible properties to fully realize the vision.

Churches and schools remain foundational to the concept of community hubs, playing a vital role in fostering community connection.

- 1 Chelton Crossing
- 2 SE Armed Services YMCA
- 3 Deerfield Community Center
- 4 Mission Trace Center
- 5 Sand Creek Library
- 6 Family Success Center and Van Diest Park
- 7 Silver Key Center
- 8 Panorama Park





TOP SPECIAL PLACES GOALS -COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY GOAL P1

Celebrate and promote southeast’s cultural and economic assets.

STRATEGY P1.A

Market Southeast as a cultural destination by highlighting local music, food, and events, and develop a cohesive campaign to showcase its diversity.

STRATEGY P1.B

Support small businesses and entrepreneurship through partnerships, temporary business incubation spaces, and community-focused economic programs.

COMMUNITY GOAL P2

Revitalize key areas into thriving community hubs, nodes, and corridors and create and sustain temporary and permanent community gathering spaces.

STRATEGY P2.A

Prioritize and support the Solid Rock CDC and Southeast Strong identified Community Hub at Chelton Crossing with additional funding support options furthering the vision for community space, food security, and STEAM education.

COMMUNITY GOAL P-3

Advocate for the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department Deerfield Hills Community Center as a community hub with inclusive programming for all.

STRATEGY P3.A

Support future development plans to expand facilities and capacity and use the Hillside Community Center as a model, focusing on inclusivity, accessibility, mental health, fitness, and creative arts in partnership with local organizations.

REGIONAL HUBS AND TOURISM

The Southeast area has a rich culture that can be used to entice regional guests to each of the neighborhoods. Regional hubs are specific places that tourists may visit to enjoy all that the community has to offer.

STORY TELLING GOAL P4

Partner with City Departments to highlight the culture of the Southeast Strong area to create a small business-supportive economically prosperous community.

STRATEGY P4.A

Partner with Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum on hosting pop-up exhibits featuring public art and storytelling events in local venues, such as the Sand Creek Library to further the 2020 Public Arts Master Plan.

STRATEGY P4.B

Support expanding community events by partnering with Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and with area non-profits.

COMMUNITY LOCAL SPACES

SAFE SPACES GOAL P5

Expand and create inclusive spaces for community engagement.

STRATEGY P5.A

Partner with City Departments and agencies to create activity in parking lots, on sidewalks, and other public places through expanded seating options, creative lighting, public art installations, and other interactive streetscaping elements and evaluate for reduced costs for permitting.

SAFE SPACES GOAL P6

Provide safe spaces for residents of all ages and abilities.

STRATEGY P6.A

Identify and utilize resources, including but not limited to, existing grant funding, non-profits, or public facilities available for those within the Southeast Strong area and collaborate with community agencies to determine gaps and opportunities.

STRATEGY P6.B

Remove barriers to safe, comfortable spaces, such as at transportation hubs and include multiple language signage at those locations.

STRATEGY P6.C

Speak with caretakers on gaps in childcare to determine locations and programming that support safe spaces for children before and after school.

STRATEGY P6.D

Work with senior citizens in the area to understand the gaps in access to socialization and integrate perspectives into discussions on locations and design of gathering spaces.

TEEN SAFE SPACES GOAL P7

Increase after school youth and teen programming, available activities, and outdoor spaces.

STRATEGY P7.A

Expand the Sand Creek Library’s teen room and associated programs, homework resources, maker space, and volunteer opportunities.

STRATEGY P7.B

Mobilize the Youth Advisory Council, developed to assist with the Panorama Park design, and provide additional opportunities for teens to be involved in civic engagement.

STRATEGY P7.C

Develop more STEAM programs similar to the Solid Rock CDC and SEMTech partnership, to foster the quickly growing need for tech-literate students by expanding partnerships with cybersecurity educators.

STRATEGY P7.D

Support teens by supporting families through the Pikes Peak United Way Family Success Center’s partners:

- Assistance League of Colorado Springs
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado
- CASA of the Pikes Peak Region
- Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
- Care & Share Food Bank of Southern Colorado
- Community of Caring Foundation / The Aspen Mine Center
- Court Care for the Pikes Peak Region
- CPCD – Early Childhood Education Program
- CPCD – Two-Generation Career Pathways Program
- Crossfire Ministries, INC.
- Dream Centers of Colorado Springs
- Serenity Recovery Connection
- Forge Evolution
- Fostering Hope Foundation
- Greccio Housing Unlimited, INC.
- Homeward Pikes Peak
- Hope & Home
- Junior Achievement of Southern Colorado
- Lutheran Family Services
- Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center
- Partners in Housing
- Peak Education
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado
- Safe Passage
- Silver Key Senior Services
- TESSA
- The Place
- The Resource Exchange
- Tri-Lakes Cares



CREATE SPECIAL PLACES & COMMUNITY HUBS



SE Hub: Chelton Crossing at Chelton Rd and Jet Wing Dr



SE Hub: The Family Success Center and Van Diest Park at S Chelton Rd and Verde Dr



SE Hub: Deerfield Park and Community Center at Deerfield Hills Rd



SE Hub: Panorama Park at Fenton Rd



COMMUNITY VISION FOR CULTURE

The six Southeast Strong area neighborhoods strive to be destinations for a cultural experience in Southern Colorado. Communities that take pride in their culture and heritage feature strong networks where people can connect by walking with their neighbors, gathering in accessible public spaces, and communicating about shared values and identity. To accomplish this Big Idea and assist with furthering the 2020 City Council-adopted Public Arts Master Plan, the history and depth of Southeast Strong area should be promoted through opportunities such as community-led public art projects that promote community pride and identification of public and private spaces fostering this goal.

CULTURE THROUGHOUT

In this Community Strategy, the heritage of the Southeast Strong area is intended to be highlighted and prioritized in all goals and strategies. The extremely successful redevelopment of Panorama Park in 2022 is a testament to the collaborative work of City Departments, grant sponsors, and community agencies, namely Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, RISE Southeast Colorado Springs, and the Trust for Public Land. For many of these opportunities, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) has desires to continue their partnership with Colorado Springs and continue to enhance the Southeast.

TOP CULTURE GOALS -COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

CULTURE GOAL C1

Preserve the diverse cultural history in the southeast and promote as a cultural destination with storytelling, shared memory, and community-building opportunities.

STRATEGY C1.A

Collaboratively include City partnerships with local and area specific non-profits.

CULTURE GOAL C2

Prioritize creating a permanent cultural event center, museum, and additional third places, such as coffee shops, promoting cultural awareness, tourism, and social unity.

STRATEGY C2.A

Actively seek opportunities and funding for the development and zoning of a year-round farmer's market/craft center, veteran's park, children's museum, western heritage/ranching museum, Native American center, Hispanic center, and/ or a buffalo soldier museum to honor diverse histories and traditions.

STRATEGY C2.B

Establish a long-term temporary use permit process through the city's land use review department to elevate community hubs to support events and programming including festivals, farmers markets and educational events celebrating diverse cultural experiences.

CULTURE GOAL C3

Promote health, walkability, and safe pedestrian environments in the area neighborhoods.

STRATEGY C3.A

Partner with community advocates whose programming is for education and exercise, such as COS Walkability promoting walkability and health as a culture and support the expansion of "Walking Parades" and "Non-driver" events. Continue to leverage Walkability Day as Proclaimed by the City of Colorado Springs.

STRATEGY C3.B

Collaborate and continue progress toward complete sidewalks working with City Public Works Department focusing first on connectivity to transit, parks, trails, and area amenities.

CULTURE GOAL C4

Recognize culture and history through public art, park design, and city improvements (such as sidewalks and benches) and provide identification for unnamed spaces to create a sense of place for community members.

STRATEGY C4.A

Work with Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum and other related agencies to encourage storytelling and preserve historical elements of Southeast Strong area culture and structures, such as the tile art mural at Panorama Park.

STRATEGY C4.B

Support diverse cultural history through inclusive arts and cultural programming at Deerfield Hills Community Center and Sand Creek Library that are accessible to all ages and abilities including to preferred language populations.

STRATEGY C4.C

Translate city documents into multiple languages, ensuring cultural relevance so that all groups within the community can participate and feel represented.

CULINARY CULTURE GOAL C5

Support the development of culinary centers that include pop-up restaurants, cooking classes, culinary experiences, and other culinary retail products.

STRATEGY C5.A

Include communicating food-related uses that are permitted in the zoning code through community partners, such as Food to Power, to highlight potential opportunities.

STRATEGY C5.B

Allow affordable temporary use permits for food truck parks and food halls in compatible locations such as in underutilized parking lots.

PUBLIC ART GOAL C6

Public art supports the expression of the values of individuals and, collectively, a community. The Southeast Strong area offers recommendations for supporting public art as one approach for improving street safety, providing tourism, and combating social isolation.

STRATEGY C6.A

Support the Gateway Signage Program to define neighborhoods with input from individual residents, neighborhood groups, local students, and other partner agencies on design. Encourage colors, symbolism, and concepts that are meaningful to the respective neighborhood.

STRATEGY C6.B

Encourage the inclusion of public art in each new development project based on the new opportunities for meeting architectural design requirements. Engage artists early in the project design process to achieve integration between art and architecture.

STRATEGY C6.C

Collaborate with area community members and the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department, and Traffic Engineering Division to include art in public spaces such as sidewalks, street medians, parks, and community centers.

STRATEGY C6.D

Encourage art installations around the expanded Kelker Substation wall and on South Academy Boulevard transit corridor and consider art along other major roadways reconstruction projects in scopes of work.



HEALTH & FOODS ACCESS

A key component to a healthy lifestyle is access to healthy or nutrient-dense foods. The recommendations in this section are intended to encourage a wide variety of grocery options in the Southeast that may help to and support availability of high-quality food options. Area non-profits and faith-based organizations are critical partners in the Southeast area supporting access to food.

TOP HEALTH GOALS -COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

FOOD SECURITY GOAL F1

Support small businesses, farmers markets, food pantries, cottage industry residential businesses to promote healthy food options over fast-food outlets.

STRATEGY F1.A

Partner with local organizations to support permitting food pantries, mobile markets, and community fridges. Support and improve the existing network resources for residents in navigating where they can find low to no cost fresh foods.

STRATEGY F1.B

Support and partner with non-profits and faith-based organizations managing food pantries and mobile markets. Advocate for Solid Rock CDC's Community Food Center, the Family Success Center, Care and Share, and other non-profits by helping identify funding resources.

STRATEGY F1.C

Advertise new urban garden options that are permitted through the City of Colorado Springs including food cultivation to encourage selfreliance, production, and consumption of nutrient-dense food - promoting and preserving generational harvest and culinary knowledge, mental health, and reducing carbon emissions.

STRATEGY F1.D

Support the development of additional opportunities and partnerships between City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department, Family Success Center, Senior Center, Deerfield Hills Community Center, School District 2, and higher education institutions to integrate garden and ecology programs for youth in the area.

WELL-BEING GOAL F2

Expand access to affordable healthcare, including Medicaid-accepting clinics. Partner with nonprofits to establish direct primary care facilities where there are gaps. Address mental health and promote self-care as essential services.

STRATEGY F2.A

Widely broadcast the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County Health Pikes Peak Rising public health and mental health resources to the Southeast Strong community.

STRATEGY F2.B

Partner with Mountain Metro to offer transportation services to healthcare locations, particularly from areas that lack healthcare facilities.

STRATEGY F2.C

Partner with Peak Vista and other social and well-being services that are available in the Southeast Strong area.

STRATEGY F2.D

Partner with community and environmental groups to host regular "clean-up" events along City trails and creeks and in City parks. Panorama Park.



COMMUNITY

- **RISE SE** Connects people to resources, places, opportunities, and potential. Stay updated with RISE and join local events <https://www.risesoutheast.org/>
- In 2024, the City of Colorado Springs Public Works Department and CONO established the **Neighborhood Signage Program** to support conveying information, offer directions, and enhance aesthetics of a neighborhood. <https://www.cscono.org/neighborhoodsigns>.
- PPRTA funding allows for adapting the needs of the community for transportation projects, such as sidewalk and trail enhancements, bridge maintenance, and on-street bicycle infrastructure improvements.
- The City of Colorado Springs' **2C Road Improvement** is a voter-approved sales tax, serving as the main source for rebuilding and improving the condition of our existing roadway infrastructure in Colorado Springs. To see what roads have been paved since 2016 and what is proposed into 2027, visit <https://coloradosprings.gov/2c>.
- Community centers that are often used for hosting events such as camps hosted by the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, community organization meetings, and City-hosted public land use meetings. **Deerfield Hills Community Center** is located in the Southeast Strong area. <https://coloradosprings.gov/deerfield>
- **SCORE Southern Colorado** helps small businesses with mentoring, workshops, and resources. <https://www.score.org/southerncolorado>
- **Workforce** or affordable housing is subject to restrictions in the form of long-term rent limits, or, in the case of for-sale housing, initial sale to a low- to moderate-income household.
- Affordable housing or housing affordability is any housing that does not require more than 30% of household income to secure.
- Attainable housing is housing that is affordable to moderate income households. For information on **affordable housing, home repair, and renters rights**. <https://coloradosprings.gov/get-help-housing-and-homelessness-response>
- **The Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority (CSURA)** promotes projects that cure blight, provide public benefits, create jobs and public art and offer all levels of housing while raising the standard of development in Colorado Springs. These projects are achievable through the coordinated partnerships of private and public entities, civic leaders, financial institutions, and the use of tax increment financing. The objective of CSURA is to facilitate development of balanced, sustainable environments where people live, work, and come together as a community.
- **CSURA** provides financial support to fund blight studies (condition studies) in conjunction with developers. Additionally, the building owners and area businesses can apply for façade improvement planning and funding through URA. <https://www.csura.org/>
- One of PlanCOS' several key strategies is to "complete, update, and implement public art plans and to consider arts and culture in other city plans." **The Public Art Master Plan**, hopes to support the accomplishment of this strategy.
- The **Thrive Networks** empowers residents to start their own small businesses by teaching those in under resourced communities. <https://thethrivenetworks.org>

RESOURCES

- **Care and Share's** website provides information on partner food pantries, mobile markets, and neighborhood markets. You can find these resources on a map in your location. <https://careandshare.org/findfood/>
- **Solid Rock CDC** has a community food center and provides a free farmer's markets in the summer and monthly drive-through food distribution programs. <https://www.solidrockcdc.com/community-food-center>
- Community and civic organizations are good resources to refer to for assistance with neighborhood clean-ups. **CONO** and other neighborhood organizations provide resources for neighborhood cleanups, including roll-off dumpsters. <https://www.cscono.org/>
- **The Public Art Commission** is a City Council-appointed advisory board that evaluates, advocates, and facilitates public art for the City of Colorado Springs.
- **The Daily Dose 719** is an award-winning platform aiming to give a voice to marginalized community of Colorado Springs, CO. From docuseries to podcasts the stories of the Southeast area are produced, shared, and celebrated. <https://www.dailydose719.com/home>
- **The Colorado Equity Compass** navigator has stories and resources on the Southeast area of the city. <https://coequitycompass.netlify.app/partner-communities/southeast-colorado-springs/>
- The **City of Colorado Springs Small Business Development** website provides resources and tools such as COS Business Navigator, COS OpenForBiz Business Roadmap, and Permit Partner to name a few. <https://coloradosprings.gov/smallbiz>
- **ConnectCOS** established goals of creating a transportation system that is safe, equitable, sustainable, reliable, accessible, and connected.
- Appendix A of ConnectCOS includes a project list which includes many projects for completion around Colorado Springs, including Southeast Neighborhood Safety and Active Transportation Projects.
- **The Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority** (PPRTA) successfully passed a ballot initiative in November 2022 to support a one-cent sales tax increase to support transportation capital improvements for a period of 10 years.
- **The Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center** provides training, consulting, and information for small businesses. <https://pikespeaksbdc.org>
- You can report **Code Enforcement** complaints and potholes on the GoCOS! app or City website <https://coloradosprings.gov/gocos>
- The "eyes on the street" theory suggests that the presence of people in public spaces can help prevent crime and create safe environments.
- **COS Walks and Walkability Days** RISE SE and Lelia Gibson-Green lgibsongreen12@gmail.com
- CPTED is one of four Crime Prevention Programs in the CSPD Crime Prevention Unit which also includes **Neighborhood Watch**, community presentations, and reporting crimes and concerns.
- **Pikes Peak Rising:** The City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County Public Health have a free resource for public health and mental health. This powerful tool is on the City's website at <https://coloradosprings.gov/PikesPeakRising>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT takeaways

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The numbers of attendees at meetings and lower survey responses, especially Spanish language, made it clear that traditional outreach would not be sufficient. One measure of success from this public engagement process is the fact that RISE Southeast and School District 2 promoted the public meeting and survey and the attendance numbers were considered successful from the communities perspective.

"Promote the Southeast as a Cultural Destination"

"Create Cultural Spaces & Develop Community Hubs"

"Uplift and Mobilize Existing Community Organizations"

"Increase Access to Healthy Foods"

"Expand Safe Walkable Neighborhoods for All"

"Preserve Affordable Housing and Programs"

"Workforce Development and Small Business Support"

"Attract Big Box Grocery & Primary Employers"

"Upgrade Parks and Trails"

REFLECT AND CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSE CULTURE

Celebrating Diversity:

- Host diverse cultural festivals and events in parks and pavilions.
- Propose creating cultural spaces like a permanent building for a year-round farmer's market/craft center, veteran's park, children's museum, western heritage/ranching museum, Native American center, Hispanic center, and a buffalo soldier museum to honor diverse histories and traditions.
- Use art and murals to represent cultural heritage. Introduce entrance/neighborhood signs celebrating diversity.
- Develop a cultural landmark or sculpture marking the Southeast area.
- Promote storytelling and community building at events.
- Translate city documents into multiple languages, ensuring cultural relevance.
- Expand communication channels (social media, fliers, radio) for cultural engagement.
- Partner with nonprofits to maintain a community calendar of events.

Identity Building:

- Introduce imagery, decals, and flags representing the Southeast's diverse culture.
- Showcase Southeast's underrepresented culinary diversity as a cultural asset.
- Promote and celebrate new businesses and initiatives.

UPGRADE HOW WE MOVE

Public Transit Enhancements:

- Maintain and expand the existing bus system. Introduce additional covered and shaded bus stops near major employers (e.g., Amazon).
- Adjust fare costs for EBT users and add closer bus stop locations.
- Improve walkability, crosswalks, and lighting near stops for safety.
- Establish partnerships for scooters and bike lanes for first/last-mile transit.
- Add a second transit center in the area for better connectivity.

Infrastructure & Accessibility:

- Improve sidewalk repair and trail connectivity.

- Add safe bike lanes and curbs to enhance usability. Promote airport transit with specific Southeast stops.
- Create better signage and wayfinding for transit routes.

SUPPORT OUR SAFETY

Community-Centered Safety:

- Strengthen trust between police and neighborhoods.
- Implement culturally sensitive approaches to crime prevention.
- Encourage community-driven safety programs and neighborhood watch alternatives.
- Enhance lighting standards, especially in parking lots and streets.
- Address homelessness with targeted cleanup efforts and services.
- Youth & Senior Safety:
- Develop youth crime prevention programs and mentorship initiatives.
- Provide seniors with programs to stay informed about neighborhood safety.
- Improve crosswalk safety near schools with flashing lights.

Technology & Innovation:

- Utilize technology (e.g., emergency apps, security cameras) for public safety.
- Offer discounts on smart security devices like Ring cameras.

GROW AND SUPPORT OUR HOUSING

Affordable & Diverse Housing Options:

- Promote more starter homes and diversify affordable housing options.
- Address concerns with over-concentration of tiny homes.
- Encourage development in underutilized areas (e.g., behind King Soopers, Mission Trace).
- Align housing initiatives with the principle of residents working and living in the same area.
- Community Revitalization:
- Develop neglected spaces into community hubs or parks.
- Ensure equitable housing that doesn't stigmatize affordability.

GROW AND SUPPORT OUR BUSINESSES, AND ENTREPRENEURS

Support for Businesses:

- Focus on Southeast businesses with equitable city exposure.
- Create a Southeast business directory and mentorship opportunities.
- Offer resources like access to loans, grants, and support for minority businesses.
- Enhance small business curb appeal with cleanups and beautification efforts.

Workforce Development:

- Provide job opportunities and internships for students.
- Partner with trade schools, auto shops, and local businesses for career readiness.
- Promote financial literacy and incentivize hiring local talent.

Zoning and Incentives:

- Limit fast-food outlets to make room for small businesses.
- Attract large employers offering competitive salaries.
- Address disparities caused by zoning laws and land ownership issues.

CREATE SPECIAL PLACES & COMMUNITY HUBS

Revitalizing Key Areas:

- Develop Chelton Crossing and Mission Trace as community centers or pop-up business hubs.
- Activate underutilized parks with inclusive designs and accessible parking.
- Support temporary leases for diverse businesses and events in these areas.

Creating New Spaces:

- Transform land behind King Soopers into a park or community space.
- Build more inclusive community centers similar to Hillside's model.

Highlighting Assets:

- Promote Southeast's music hubs, unique food spots, and special events to the wider city.
- Market the area as an attractive destination for its cultural and culinary diversity.

INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The analysis of existing conditions, supporting materials, assessments, and statistical and demographic profiles of the area informed the development of this Community Strategy, and listed below. The area's profile data, primarily sourced from the U.S. Census, is detailed in both the Southeast Strong and El Paso County Health Assessments.

PLANS, STUDIES, & ASSESSMENTS

- [Academy Blvd. Corridor Great Streets Plan - 2011](#)
- [South Academy Economic Action Plan - 2014](#)
- [Parks Master Plan - 2014-2025](#)
- [Hancock Expy and S Academy Blvd Planning and Environment Linkage Study -2016](#)
- RISE Action Plan & Transforming Safety - 2017
- [ULI Healthy Places Report & Quad: Access to Social Services Report - 2018](#)
- [COS Bikes! - master plan - 2018](#)
- [PlanCOS & Community Investment Trust Study & SE Impact Fund Report - 2019](#)
- [El Pomar - Because of RISE Action Plan - 2020](#)
- [Academy Blvd Corridor Great Streets Progress and Measures - 2021](#)
- [Southeast Community Plan Healthy People & Places Assessment - 2021/2023](#)
- [RISE SE Strategic Plan - 2024](#)
- [Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan - 2025](#)

*This is not an extensive list and is meant to highlight the continued evidence for the need for additional investment in the southeast and a process to monitor progress.

NOTABLE ACTION

- Community Investment Trust - grant award to Solid Rock CDC - 2022
- USFS grant for SE areas - \$9 million - 2022
- Panorama Park redesign and grants - 2022
- RISE SE - long term funding El Pomar -2024
- Circle Bridge replacement - 2024
- S Academy Blvd Improvements - ongoing

ADDITIONAL PARTNER RESEARCH

- Air Pollution in Southeast Colorado Springs - Colorado College 2022
- Southeast Colorado Springs Food Security Research - Colorado College 2022
- Policy Recommendations to Alleviate the Urban Heat Island Effect and Improve Green Space in Southeast Colorado Springs - Colorado College -2022
- Southeast Colorado Springs: Mitigating the Urban Heat Island (SE Colorado Springs) - CU Denver 2021

*Documents can be found on the Southeast Strong website - coloradosprings.gov/SEcommunityplan

DEMOGRAPHICS - 2020 CENSUS BLOCK GROUPS

Population 36,098 people

Hispanic – 13,231

White non-Hispanic – 14,597

Black non-Hispanic – 5,052

Housing units – 13,123

Owned (housing) – 6,382

Rented (housing) – 5,840

THE SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT 2021-2023

The Southeast Community Plan: Healthy People and Places Assessment, a contracted report created Kimley Horn originally created in 2021 and updated in 2023, analyzed the Southeast Strong planning area and associated health inequities within Colorado Springs to demonstrate if it surpassed or fell behind other areas of the City. As stated in the Assessment, "the well-being and socioeconomic health of the study area lag behind those of the city as a whole; however, the distribution of health impacts related to the built environment is generally even between the community and the City, apart from a few areas that have either much higher or much lower equity. The Assessment focuses on "Healthy People" and "Healthy Access", including analysis of the socioeconomic breakdown of the Plan area, access to and quality of food, availability and access to parks, condition of infrastructure, and life expectancy. More specifically, the primary findings of the report, largely related to the built environment, included the following –

- Bicycle and pedestrian networks are fairly well-connected, but do not feel safe.
- Grocery store access is not evenly distributed throughout the Plan area.
- South Academy has a high concentration of fast food.
- Users find trail connections to be difficult to access to the Area's parks.
- The urban heat island effect is higher in the Plan area when compared to the rest of Colorado Springs due to the lack of vegetation.

A primary goal of this plan is to offer tools to those within the Southeast Strong Plan area to collaborate with City Departments and associated community agencies to provide potential solutions for what was identified in the assessment. The assessment is referenced throughout this Plan.

EL PASO COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023

Southeast Colorado Springs faces significant challenges related to poverty and health inequities. This region has a history of disinvestment, limited civic representation, and poor transportation nodes and links all have some contribution to higher poverty rates and lower life expectancy compared to other parts of the city. Residents also struggle with access to healthy food options, as highlighted in the 2018 Urban Land Institute report, which noted a higher percentage of minority households, lower median incomes, and elevated vacancy rates in businesses and residences. Additionally, the assessment revealed further disparities, including uneven grocery store access, a prevalence of fast-food outlets, and limited safe access to parks, exacerbating the region's socioeconomic struggles.

The **RISE Coalition** aims to foster resident-led change in southeast Colorado Springs, envisioning a vibrant community where everyone can thrive. By engaging local leaders, RISE enhances five key areas: cultural, social, built, human, and financial capital. Their initiatives have secured millions in funding for local projects, including the Southeast Women, Infants and Children Clinic, which improves access to services for residents lacking transportation. Notably, RISE collaborated with the City of Colorado Spring and several organizations to renovate Panorama Park, marking the largest park renovation in the city's history. Officially opened in August 2022, the park features playgrounds, an event lawn, a bike park, climbing boulders, fitness stations, a splash pad, and community art.

Solid Rock remains committed to serving the most under-served communities in southeast Colorado Springs, particularly those experiencing poverty. Their approach emphasizes strategic and collaborative investments in community transformation, aiming to support and empower local residents.

SOUTHEAST STRONG

