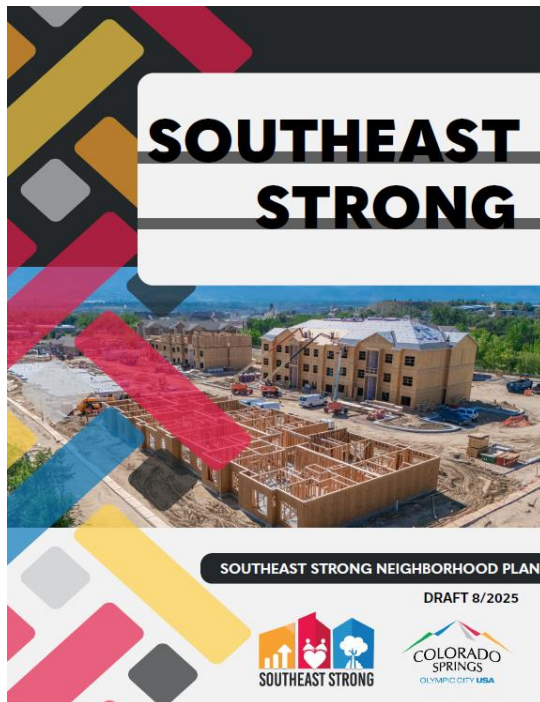




Quick Facts

Publicly Initiated

City Planning Department

Stakeholder Steering Committee

Technical Support Team, City Departments

Economic Development

Colorado Springs Urban Renewal

Housing and Homelessness Response

Public Works

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services

Colorado Springs Police Department

Colorado Springs Utilities

Address / Location

Roughly south of Fountain Blvd and east of Interstate 25; Southeast Colorado Springs

Site Area

Six Neighborhoods

Applicable Code

Unified Development Code (UDC)

Council District

4

Project Summary

The *Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan* (Plan) is the first neighborhood and community planning project proposed under the PlanCOS Vibrant Neighborhoods key initiative for a Neighborhood Planning Program. It outlines priorities, goals, and strategies related to mobility, economic revitalization, and housing, along with other determinants identified through a locally informed public input process. The Plan is tactical and advisory and will help guide City and community initiatives and the efficient use of public and community-based resources. The Plan reflects a city-community partnership and reinforces public and private investment where new development is trending in the area ensuring strategic and comprehensive growth coordination.

The planning area is geographically situated between Interstate 25 and Powers Blvd. with a northern boundary of Fountain Blvd and the southern boundary being the city limits to the south along Milton E Proby Pkwy. The area includes six PlanCOS neighborhoods: Spring Creek, Pikes Peak Park North, Pikes Peak Park South, Southborough, Deerfield Hills, and Soaring Eagle. A Map of the Plan area can be viewed here:

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

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

Prior Land-Use History and Applicable Actions

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

History and Summary

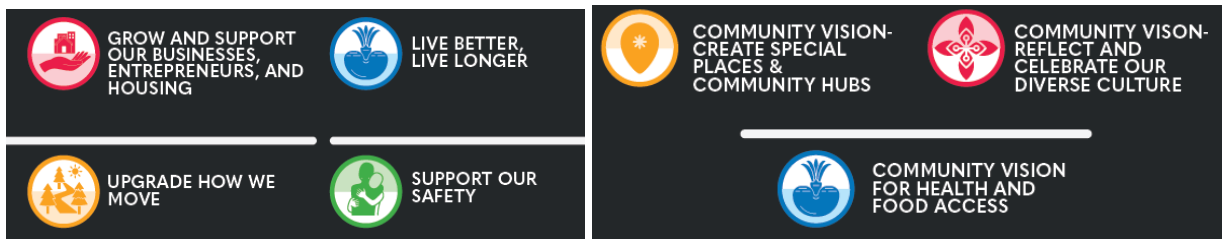
A presentation to City Council in March 2022 by the Planning Department proposed re-initiating a systematic neighborhood planning program consistent with the recommendations of PlanCOS. The Neighborhood Planning Program is a key initiative of PlanCOS, which recognizes that “effective and viable small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

The Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan is the first project proposed under this Neighborhood Planning Program. The Plan’s goals and priorities leverage strategic growth principles and support livability in alignment with PlanCOS goals. To accomplish these principles the Plan is partnered with the community’s vision for the area, a Community Strategy which was created in concert with the Neighborhood Plan. Robust implementation of this Neighborhood Plan will focus on coordinated economic revitalization through infrastructure improvements, enhanced transit and walkability, support for public safety initiatives, economic development and job growth, and redevelopment that meets contemporary standards. The Community Strategy will highlight the area’s cultural and economic assets, community hubs and community partnerships, and food and healthcare access. These topics were identified as areas in need of additional support by the residents and Plan’s Steering Committee.

The 2023 Southeast Healthy People and Places Assessment and the 2024 El Paso County Needs 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 and challenges within the built environment, and the study noted that residents struggle with access to food options. Additionally, the area lacks comprehensive planning, both privately and publicly initiated.

The identity of the Southeast Strong planning area is characterized by the history and culture of both the people who live and work there and the built environment. Reflecting and celebrating the areas of diverse culture and strong legacy pride provides focus on the southeast as a destination of culture and economy.

The Southeast Strong Plan was informally presented to City Council in January of 2025, comments were received and analyzed, and adjustments were made to refine the focus on City-led actions and shared community partnership goals. Staff find that the Plan is in alignment with the City’s Strategic Plan and promotes “safe, economically prosperous, culturally rich, and welcoming neighborhoods”. This alignment includes implementing land use policies that support infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of properties within the City’s existing developed areas.



The Plan is organized around Big Ideas, which serve as overarching concepts and outcomes, presented as chapters. Each chapter covers common planning topics and outlines City and community goals and strategies. These sections have been written and reviewed by City departments, partner agencies, the Plan's Steering Committee, and community organizations. The following provides a general overview of each chapter in the Southeast Strong Plan and Community Strategy:

Economic Development Goals:

- Promotion of the area as a thriving business ecosystem and cultural destination
- Support redevelopment and address commercial vacancies and blight
- Preserve existing jobs and create new employment opportunities
- Support education, workforce development, and trade programs
- Upgrade commercial and apartment landscaping and streetscapes

Housing Goals:

- Preserve existing housing and neighborhood stability
- Support new affordable and attainable housing
- Increase access to homeownership opportunities

Mobility Goals:

- Increase transit accessibility, coverage, and reliability
- Improve intersection safety and pedestrian crossings
- Complete sidewalk, bicycle, and pedestrian networks

Safety Goals:

- Support neighborhood cleanups and beautification efforts
- Improve lighting, visibility, and security programming
- Support CSPD Neighborhood Watch and community partnerships
- Promote Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Health and Food Security Goals:

- Attract grocery stores and expand food access
- Support food pantries and community food programs
- Create safe, walkable, and connected neighborhoods
- Upgrade parks with shade, lighting, and recreational amenities

Community Hub Goals:

- Promote mixed-use hubs with community resources, services, and housing
- Celebrate and promote Southeast cultural and economic assets, places, and events
- Seek permanent funding and expansion of Deerfield Hills Community Center
- Support gathering spaces, youth programming, and community events

The implementation section of the Plan explains how and by whom it will be used, calls for action and implementation planning, sets up progress and measures reporting, and provides for a five-year review and update. Robust implementation planning in coordination with an economic revitalization strategy is key to the success of this Plan and will be ongoing to include strategic City agency collaboration, alignment with existing public and community initiatives, and operational and inventory analyses.

Link to the draft Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan on the City website: <https://coloradosprings.gov/SEcommunityplan>

Applicable Code

The Southeast Strong neighborhood plan is a subsidiary plan of PlanCOS, the City’s comprehensive Plan and comprehensive plans are governed by Section 7.5.706: Comprehensive Planning of the Unified Development Code (UDC). In addition, the proposed Plan was evaluated for conformance with the general “Purpose” of the Unified Development Code found in Section 7.1.103, which is to:

- A. Promote health, safety, and general welfare of the public;
- B. Protect private property from adjacent nuisances such as incompatible uses and noise;
- C. Implement the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan;
- D. Establish the orderly subdivision of land;
- E. Ensure the logical growth of the City’s physical elements;
- F. Encourage adequate multi-modal transportation facilities;
- G. Promote opportunities for affordable and attainable housing throughout the City; and
- H. Facilitate adequate provision of utilities, schools, parks, and other public infrastructure services.
- I. Enhance the quality, diversity, and safety of neighborhoods by encouraging pride and investment.

The Plan was also evaluated using the UDC’s Legislative Declaration found in Section 7.5.706.A which reads: “The City Council hereby finds, determines and declares that it is in the public interest that there be a Comprehensive Plan to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to improve the physical environment of the City as a setting for human activities; to evaluate the social and economic effects of land development; to formulate, determine, and implement community values, policies, standards and objectives; to consider the effect on community financial capabilities, public, and private investments; and to consider the effect on the environment when making land development decisions.”

Stakeholder Involvement

Public Engagement

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

Review Process

Southeast Strong Plan Steering Committee
City Technical Support Team

Public Engagement

Throughout the Plan creation, a variety of opportunities for public input were provided. The City issued a press release in both English and Spanish announcing the draft plan and publicized the opportunities for public input; additional announcements promoted the public hearing. The survey was published on the City’s Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan project website in both languages. The public meeting was considered successfully attended by the area residents

and stakeholder community with over 70 attendees. Feedback collected through these efforts informed the Neighborhood Plan and the supporting Community Strategy.

Participating in City Departments and Agencies / Technical Support Team

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

Compliance with PlanCOS

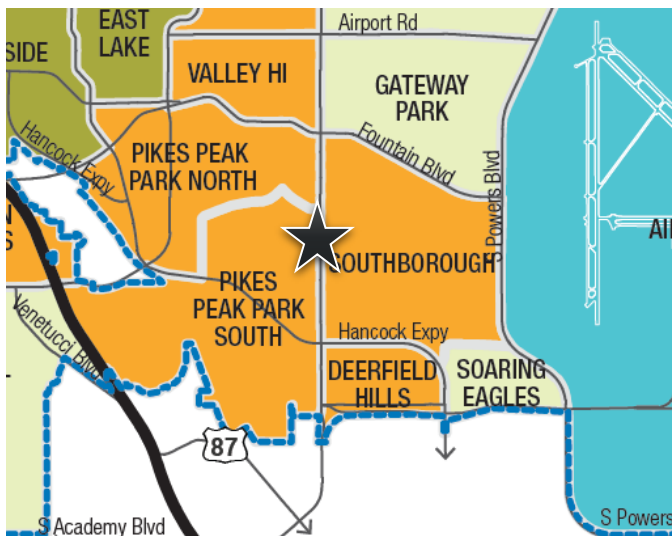
PlanCOS Vision



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

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

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



Predominant Typology

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

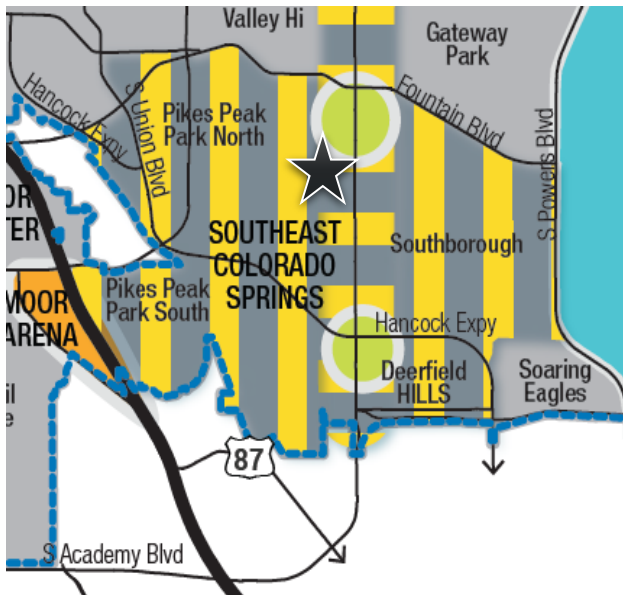
Vibrant Neighborhoods

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

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

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

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



Predominant Typology

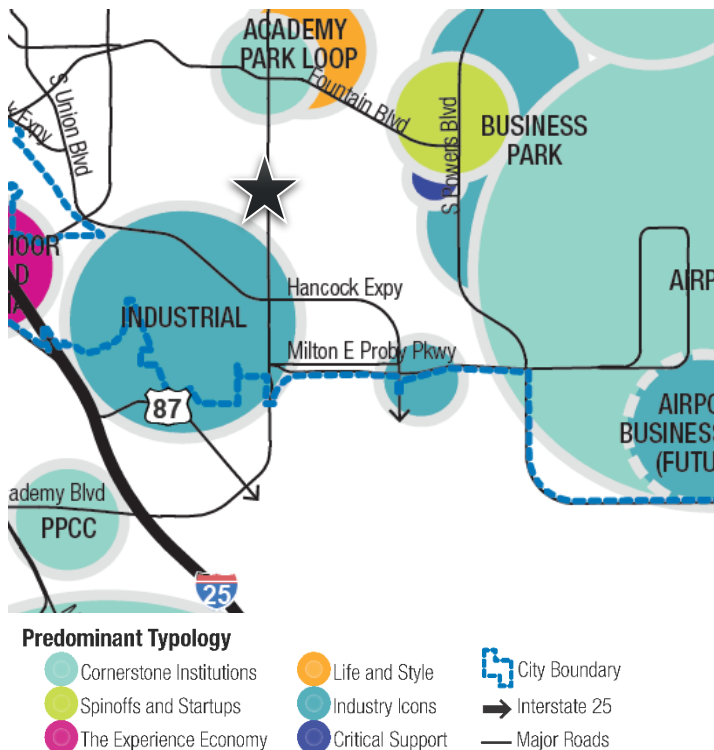
- Neighborhood Centers
- Community Activity Centers
- Entertainment and Commercial Centers
- Regional Employment and Activity Centers
- Downtown
- Mature/Redeveloping Corridors
- New/Developing Corridors
- Reinvestment Area and Community Hub

Unique Places

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

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

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

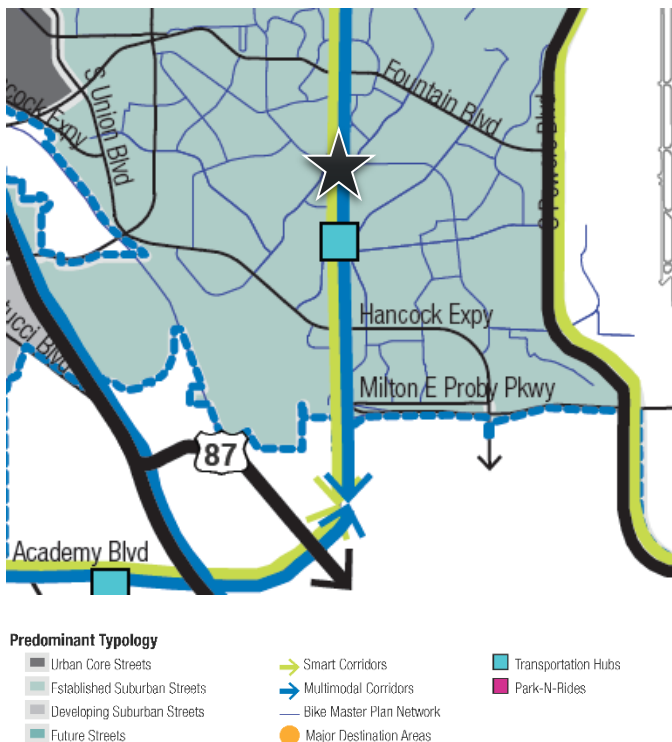


Thriving Economy

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

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

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

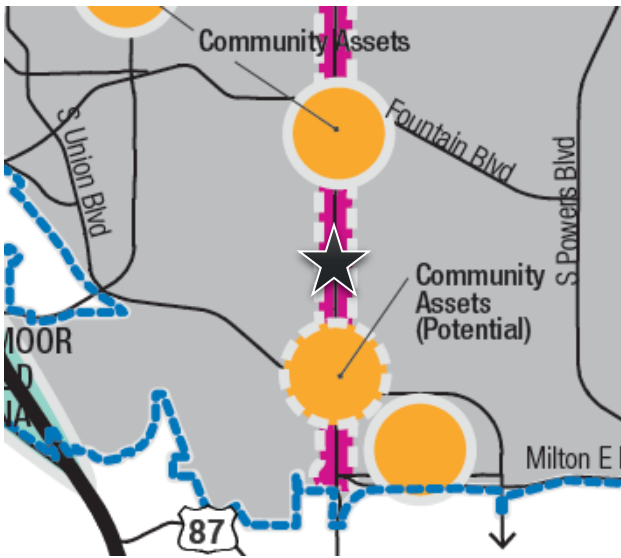


Strong Connections

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

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

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



Predominant Typology

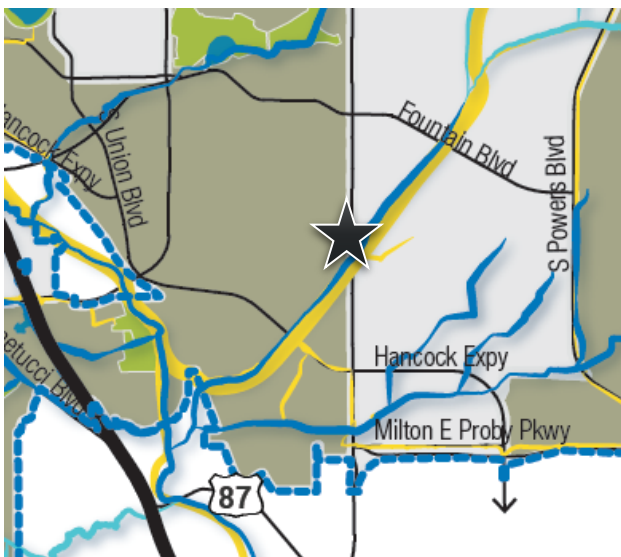
- Defining Institutions
- Historic Districts
- Creative Districts and Corridors
- Cultural and Tourist Attractions
- Community Assets
- Pop-Up Culture

Renowned Culture

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

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

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



Predominant Typology

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

Majestic Landscapes

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

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

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

Statement of Compliance

NPLN-25-0001 – Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan

After evaluation of the Southeast Strong Plan and the Community Strategy together known as the Southeast Strong Neighborhood Plan, Staff finds that the Plan is consistent with the Purpose of the Zoning Code as well as the Code's legislative declaration and supports PlanCOS implementation.