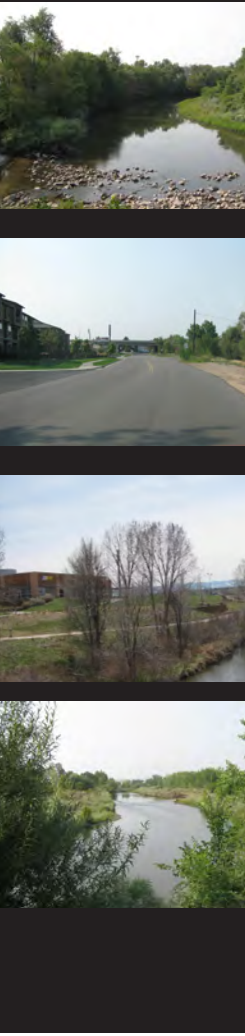


South Platte River Corridor Vision

ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
COLORADO'S FIRST



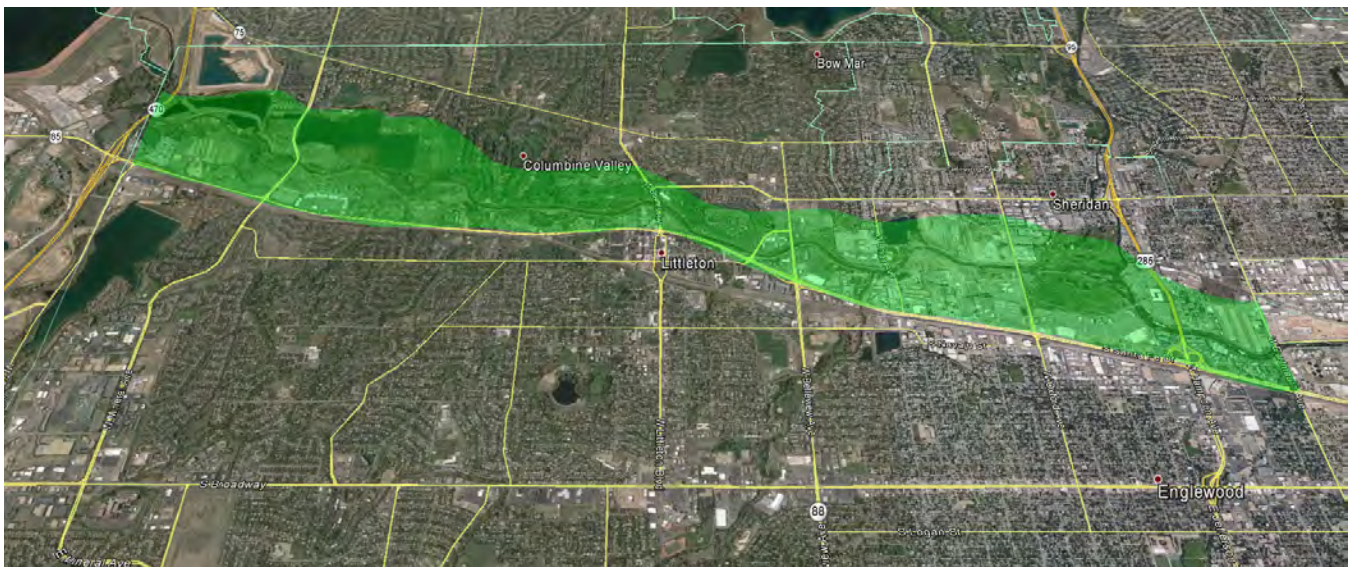
DECEMBER, 2013

SOUTH PLATTE WORKING GROUP

stream
landscape architecture • design

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 City of Englewood
 City of Littleton
 Arapahoe County Open Space and Trails Advisory Board
 City of Sheridan
 South Metro Land Conservancy
 South Suburban Park and Recreation District
 South Suburban Park Foundation
 Trust for Public Land

Partner and Stakeholder Agencies

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Introduction

This project was undertaken to develop a vision plan for the South Platte River corridor through Arapahoe County, from Dartmouth Avenue to C-470. Sponsored by the South Platte Working Group (SPWG), this vision will serve to focus the activities of the Group as it moves into its second major chapter of improving the South Platte River corridor. In its first assembly of the SPWG in 2005, the group focused on land acquisition and preservation. While a number of improvement projects were identified and completed, the focus on timely acquisition of land was paramount. Re-formed in 2012, the second incarnation of the group focused on undertaking improvement projects throughout the corridor that helped it to achieve its goals, which are:

- To enhance the South Platte River corridor as a recreational resource for the entire region;
- To restore and revitalize the River and its habitat, while maintaining its role as a flood conveyance;
- To encourage and improve opportunities for education and understanding of South Platte River health and its tributaries;
- To connect the communities to the River through more consistent land use, economic development and coordinated policies.

The Group was initially reconvened and galvanized by design work, initiated by the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, which focused on restoring more natural function and balance to the River in the South Platte Park area, and renovating channel drop structures that would provide enhanced water-based recreational opportunities between Oxford and Union Avenues. While encouraging progress on the Urban Drainage projects, the group realized the need to have a more comprehensive picture of what the South Platte River corridor should aspire to in the future—a vision—that would help the diverse membership to identify and prioritize projects that would move it forward in a deliberate and thoughtful way. And the idea for the South Platte River Corridor Vision was born.

This Vision was created by an inclusive process. The original intent of the visioning process was to conduct a charrette that would pull together the ideas and proposals of a broad cross section of stakeholders. The results of this visioning session would be pulled together and organized as the working vision for the SPWG.

Project Scope and Sequence

1. This project began in the Spring of 2013, with the hiring of the Stream Design consultant team through an RFP process.
2. Research of conditions, data collection, outreach to stakeholders and potential participants, interviews, and a bicycle tour of the corridor for the South Platte Working Group were performed by the consultant team throughout the late Spring / early Summer of 2013
3. Data was analyzed, issues and opportunities were identified, and finally, graphics and presentations for the charrette were prepared in late Summer of 2013.
4. The charrette took place on September 12, 2013. Following a presentation by the consultant team which laid out a wide range of issues, opportunities, and recommendations, the charrette invitees and South Platte Working Group members integrated their perspectives and recommendations to create the body of the Vision.
5. Recommendations were consolidated, synthesized, and given context by the consultant team for the Working Group and others to consider.
6. The Working Group reviewed the document and provided comments and additional insight.

Document Overview

This South Platte River Corridor Vision document is essentially a record of the charrette process described above. The three major tasks of the process (preparation for the charrette; conducting and documenting the charrette; and summarizing and distilling the results into a plan for action) are represented by the three main sections of the report:

Section B: Issues and Analysis: This section presents the background information and data research and analysis that was assembled and/or performed by the consultant team in preparation for the charrette. It was obtained through site visits, interviews and meetings with government agency staff and stakeholders, and from GIS information provided by Arapahoe County. An analysis and synthesis of this data was presented by the consultant team as part of a powerpoint briefing on the corridor for the charrette attendees. This part of the document should be considered as the consultant team's professional opinion of the key issues and opportunities relevant to the visioning process for the corridor, and not as part of the charrette-generated vision.

Section C: Vision Framework: This section of the report is a documentation of the ideas developed by the attendees during the charrette, including those generated and presented by the four small break-out groups, as well as the views, opinions, and recommendations shared during full group discussion. This collection of recommendations comprises the South Platte River Corridor Vision. Each recommendation is geographically indexed to illustrative, aerial photo-based maps of the corridor, and is accompanied by a more detailed description in the text following the maps. It should be noted that in order to add more breadth to the vision, the recommendations developed by the attendees during the charrette have been supplemented by recommendations developed by the consultant team which address issues and opportunities that were not specifically discussed during the charrette.

Section D: Next Steps: This section identifies specific recommendations from the Vision Framework which, in the opinion of the consultant team, should be acted upon in the near term. These include potential projects and potential follow-on studies that could be implemented relatively quickly, and which appear to have broad support among South Platte Working Group members.

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issues and Opportunities Introduction

This section documents the issues and opportunities analysis of the corridor which served as the basis for the charrette powerpoint presentation delivered by the consultant team. This information was obtained through site visits, research of existing studies and documents, GIS information, and interviews and meetings with SPWG members and key stakeholders. The eight original "key themes" presented in the charrette presentation have been consolidated for brevity to the following four themes:

1. Water, Habitat, and Natural Areas
2. Trail and Multi-Modal Connectivity
3. Recreation, Civil Uses, Education, Culture and Identity
4. Land Use and Economic Development

Each of these themes is presented separately and includes:

- An Overview
- A Map and Key List of Geo-referenced Issues and Opportunities
- Explanation of Issues and Opportunities

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

WATER RESOURCES, HABITAT & NATURAL AREAS

Overview of Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

The natural habitat and water resources of the South Platte corridor vary greatly in quality. From the diverse and well-protected wetlands and riparian areas south of Mineral Avenue, to the riprap lined channel and industrial corridor of Oxford to Union reach, the state of nature within the corridor defies a simple description. What can be said is that the corridor is in a steady transition toward more and higher quality natural areas adjacent to the River. How swiftly this transition continues rests upon the current discussions between Urban Drainage and the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding how the channelized river sections downstream of Reynolds Landing may be modified to improve habitat and plant diversity. It has become evident that a healthy and diverse river must be the anchor upon which the ecological health of the corridor rests. Successfully resolving the Army Corps' concerns about channel stability with the local communities' desires to have a more healthy and natural river will be the key to assuring that the South Platte River continues to become an ever more valuable natural resource for the citizens of Arapahoe County.

The following issues and opportunities represent the observations of the consultant team, based on input from the South Platte Working Group members, and team research.



Low quality vegetative habitat along the South Platte River



A more diverse stretch of vegetation along the South Platte River

Map Key of Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas Issues & Opportunities

Corridor-Wide Issues and Opportunities

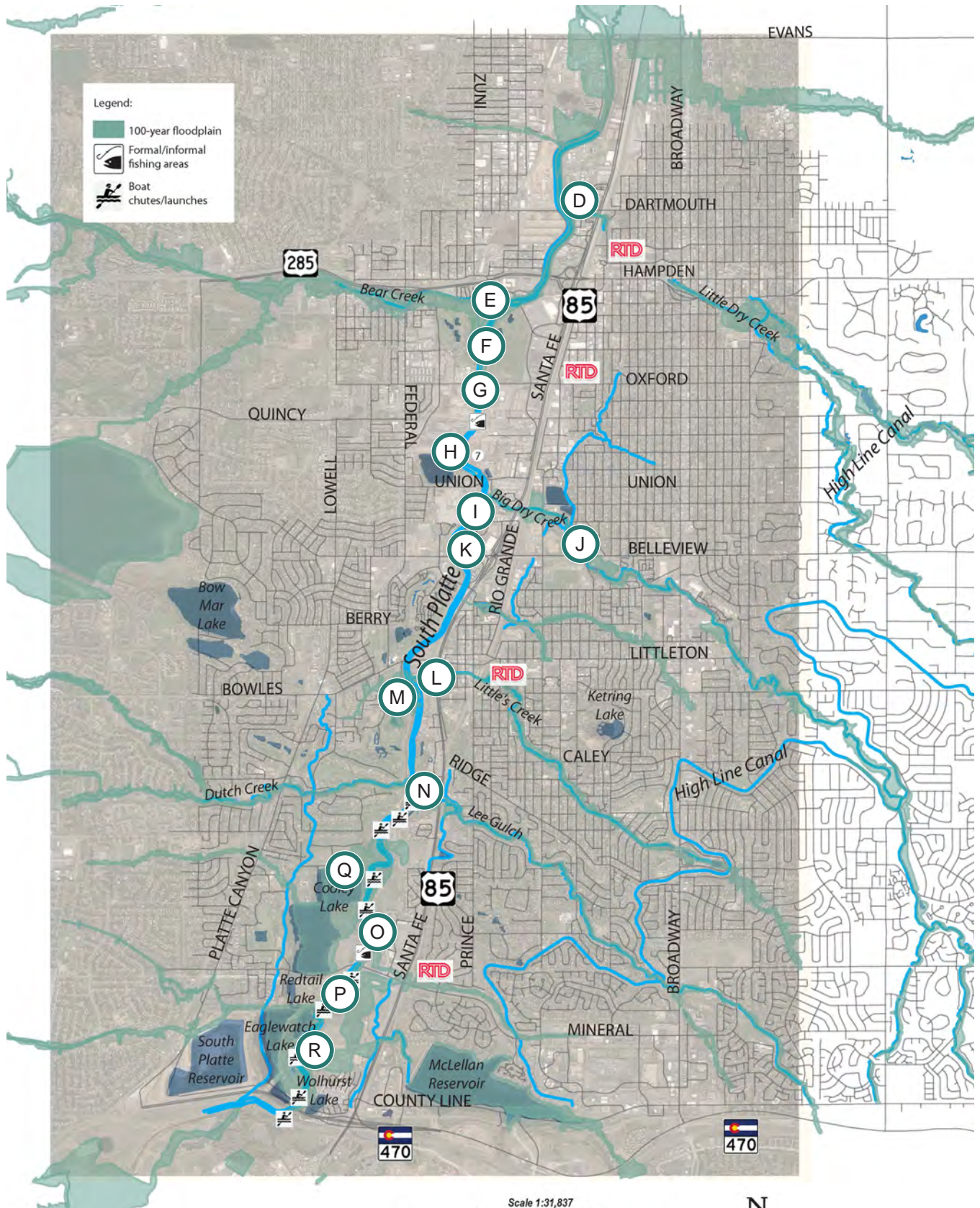
- A. Shallow Flows in River and Poor Quality Aquatic Habitat
- B. Water Quality Treatment Opportunities
- C. Low Quality Vegetative Habitat

Map Key to Site Specific Issues and Opportunities

(See Map on Opposite Page)

- D Little Dry Creek Trail and Corridor Enhancement Potential
- E South Platte/Bear Creek Confluence Habitat and Trail Enhancement Potential
- F Golf Course Corridor Riparian Habitat Improvements
- G Oxford-Union Channel and Habitat Improvement Project
- H Centennial Park/Oxbow Pond Nature Study Opportunity
- I Fire Training Facility Water Quality Protection Measures
- J Big Dry Creek Channel and Trail Potential Enhancements
- K "Oxbow Pond" (at Lowe's) Habitat Improvements
- L Little's Creek Habitat Improvement Opportunities
- M Watson Lake Potential Habitat Improvements--(Aquatic and Vegetative)
- N Lee Gulch Pond Habitat Improvement Opportunities
- O South Platte Park Channel and Habitat Improvement Area
- P Over-Concentration of Fishing and Boating in South Platte Park
- Q Cooley Lake Edge at Tuck Property
- R Ensor Property Floodplain Buffer Zone

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
 WATER RESOURCES, HABITAT & NATURAL AREAS



Map 1. South Platte Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

Explanation of Issues & Opportunities

A. Shallow Flows in River and Poor Quality Aquatic Habitat:

The original US Army Corps of Engineers design for the post-1965 flood channel is too wide for average base flows and does not support the diversity of habitat possible in a narrower and deeper channel (see Image 1). Urban Drainage's initiative to narrow the channel and enhance aquatic and vegetative habitat in strategic areas should be encouraged and expanded to improve the entire River corridor.



Image 1. Example of wide shallow flows along the South Platte River

B. Water Quality Treatment Opportunities: Where possible and where space is available, the water quality of runoff from adjacent properties and tributaries to the South Platte could be enhanced through infiltration, settlement of suspended solids, and biological uptake of nutrients and pollutants by wetlands. An analysis of untreated (or under-treated) runoff should be performed to identify key problem areas and opportunities to protect the aquatic resources of the corridor.



Image 2. Low quality vegetative habitat along the corridor

C. Low Quality Vegetative Habitat: Habitat quality along the corridor is variable, with the vegetation of many reaches dominated by invasive species, or monocultures of willows and cottonwoods (see Image 2). Good quality habitat is difficult or impossible to sustain in areas with extensive exposed riprap bank protection. A thorough analysis of habitat, including wetlands, riparian area and upland fringes should be conducted to develop a prioritized list of projects that will improve the South Platte as a wildlife corridor, and as a diverse and rich natural area. One consideration for the improvement of habitat in the corridor is to revisit the current US Army Corps of Engineers maintenance practice of removing all shrubs, trees or dense vegetation in the reaches downstream of South Platte Park.



Image 3. Existing Little Dry Creek Trail and corridor

D. Little Dry Creek Trail and Corridor Enhancement Potential:

The existing Little Dry Creek corridor lacks habitat diversity and value (see Image 3). As part of a general drainageway improvement project, the corridor could be reconstructed from Santa Fe to Platte River Drive to create a more natural, diverse channel, with wetlands, riparian edge, trees, and passive water quality treatment improvements, to make this a valuable multi-use tributary to the South Platte River corridor. The Creek's proximity to and visibility from Dartmouth Avenue, and the potential to make this corridor a more important connection between the South Platte River and the Englewood City Center, make these improvements a high visibility, high return investment in the corridor.



Image 4. South Platte / Bear Creek confluence

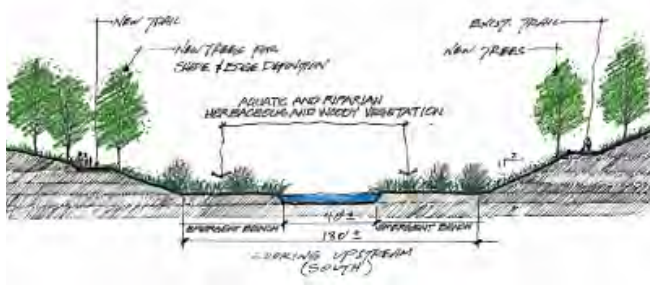


Image 5. Channel cross-section illustrating proposed improvements, Image Source: Union-Oxford South Platte River Rehabilitation & Recreation Improvements by McLaughlin Whitewater Design Group, March 2013.



Image 6. Oxbow pond at Centennial Park



Image 7. Fire training facility

E. South Platte/Bear Creek Confluence Habitat and Trail Enhancement Potential: The confluence is currently lacking in habitat diversity, and is a mostly inaccessible resource (see Image 4). Channel banks along the River Point at Sheridan shopping area are very steep and heavily vegetated in willows and invasive trees. There is the potential to open up the banks to sensitively developed recreational use such as bird watching and hiking, while increasing the diversity and quality of habitat. There is also an important opportunity to better integrate the confluence area with the River Point development, which could allow a greater number of people to enjoy and appreciate the many varied resources that the South Platte River corridor has to offer.

F. Golf Course Corridor Riparian Habitat Improvements: This section of the River has a fairly high habitat value, with abundant bird life and vegetative cover. However, the quality of the vegetation could be significantly improved, especially along the riparian benches between the Greenway Trail and the River. Strategic weed control and habitat improvement and revegetation could make this segment of the Greenway a higher quality and more beautiful habitat area.

G. Oxford-Union Channel and Habitat Improvement Project: Plans for this area include reconfiguration of the channel, including the creation of riffles and pools for recreation and aquatic habitat, new planting benches close to the water, and burial of the existing riprap (see Image 5). This work will be done as part of drop structure and channel improvements. Proposed revegetation measures include planting of wetland and riparian areas. Refer to the Urban Drainage and Flood Control Master Plan for this area.

H. Centennial Park/Oxbow Pond Nature Study Opportunity: This remnant oxbow from the pre-channelized South Platte already provides habitat for numerous herons, turtles, fish, and other wildlife (see Image 6). However, concrete slabs line many of the pond banks, and it appears to have some water quality issues due to water stagnation. This area has great potential to become a habitat and educational resource for the corridor. Although part of the City of Englewood's Centennial Park, this pond is a world apart and provides great opportunity to become immersed in a "natural" environment. Potential improvements include bank reconstruction with water access points, boardwalks, trails, shade shelter (outdoor classroom), habitat enhancement, and water aeration.

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

WATER RESOURCES, HABITAT & NATURAL AREAS

I. Fire Training Facility Water Quality Protection

Measures: The fire training facility, just south of the confluence of Big Dry Creek and the South Platte, is an important opportunity for habitat and water quality protection (see Image 7). While there are numerous recreation-oriented opportunities related to this facility that are discussed elsewhere in this document, from a water resource protection perspective, either relocation of the fire training facility or re-configuration of the site with the fire tower moved further from the River would ensure against the inadvertent release of potential water pollutants associated with fire training activities. In addition, the opening up of this completely fenced property, which currently restricts the habitat corridor at the mouth of the Big Dry Creek confluence, would provide more free movement of wildlife from the Big Dry Creek corridor into the South Platte environment.

J. Big Dry Creek Channel and Trail Potential

Enhancements: From a wildlife and habitat perspective, the integrity of the Big Dry Creek channel corridor is compromised significantly by the narrow underpasses under Santa Fe Drive and the railroad, and by the relatively poor quality of the Creek's bank vegetation through this area. With the planned improvements to the Murray Open Space on the south side of the Creek, vegetation improvements to the north bank adjacent to the open space would create a more contiguous, well vegetated habitat corridor conducive to wildlife.

K. "Oxbow Pond" (at Lowe's) Habitat Improvements:

South Suburban Parks and Recreation plans to improve the oxbow pond just west of the Lowe's parking lot, adjacent to the South Platte. Although this is a relatively small parcel, restoration of this area combined with potential habitat improvements at the fire training center to the north, and the Murray Open Space to the east, will contribute to a significant improvement in the habitat value of this segment of the South Platte River corridor. Some revisions may need to be made to South Suburban's concept plan for this area if reconfiguration (or relocation) of the fire training facility can be accomplished, because new opportunities will likely arise that will affect this area.

L. Little's Creek Habitat Improvement Opportunities:

Little's Creek through the Dish Network property has the potential to be a truly vibrant and active creek corridor. This channel can become much more exciting (see Image 8) with the additional of more drop structure and waterfalls, riffles and pools, and edges that are accessible to visitors, especially



Image 8. Little's Creek channel



Image 9. Watson Lake

children. Such improvements will allow visitors greater access to the creek bank and into the water itself. This work should be done as part of redevelopment of the call center to a more commercially-oriented and civic use. This is one of the best opportunities for children to be able to utilize the South Platte River corridor, as well as a great opportunity to integrate urban and river environments.

M. Watson Lake Habitat Improvements: Watson Lake is an under-utilized natural and recreational resource (see Image 9). This small lake is highly accessible to parking areas at the Dish Network site, which if redeveloped, will provide close-in access for people with disabilities to Watson Lake and this segment of the South Platte River corridor. Aquatic habitat and pond edge revegetation improvements can make this a good fishing pond.



Image 10. River Project at South Platte Park

more pools and riffle sequences. The project also involves revegetation with a diverse planting palette to create more plant diversity. One phase of the multi-phase project has been completed thus far. This project should be supported to complete the improvements identified within the two mile study area (see Image 10).

P. Concentration of Fishing and Boating in South Platte Park: Boating, tubing, and fishing activities are concentrated in the South Platte Park reach of the South Platte. This area is scenic, accessible and has the cleanest water of the corridor as well as the most diverse adjacent habitat, making it highly attractive to users. Managers of South Platte Park have identified over-use as a concern. Solutions include restricting activity, which is problematic, especially with regard to boating and tubing, and the enhancement of other reaches of the corridor to provide other attractive use areas as alternatives to South Platte Park.



Image 11. Ensor property floodplain channel

Q. Cooley Lake Edge at Tuck Property: Based on reports from Columbine Valley representatives, development of the Tuck Property north of Cooley Lake is imminent. Cooley Lake has been designated by the South Platte Management Plan as protected wildlife habitat, with most or all recreational access, use, and other human impacts prohibited. Therefore, the development of the southern edge of the Tuck property just north of Cooley Lake will need to be done sensitively and in concert with the objectives of the South Platte Park Management Plan in order to protect this important natural resource.

N. Lee Gulch Pond Habitat Improvement Opportunities: The small pond between Lee Gulch and the South Platte is currently overgrown, unattractive, and generally inaccessible to users. Yet with improvements to the pond edges, vegetation, and water quality, this oxbow pond could become a good habitat and recreational resource for the corridor. Water quality in the pond is currently poor, and would need to be improved by upstream sedimentation ponds and/or aeration devices in the pond. Overlooks and interpretive elements could make this a great opportunity for nature study for school groups, especially with the nearby Lee Gulch trailhead parking lot providing good vehicular and bus access.

R. Ensor Property Floodplain Buffer Zone: The Ensor property is perhaps the corridor's greatest opportunity to successfully implement of model of land development that protects the River corridor while embracing it as a resource that adds value and richness to the entire development parcel (see Image 11). Paramount to the plan must be the protection of the floodplain zone with open space and compatible recreational amenities, followed by open space corridors and fingers that extend the value and benefits of the South Platte corridor throughout the site to the eastern edge of the property at Santa Fe Drive, connecting and reinforcing natural corridors that are currently defined by natural and man-made waterways throughout the property.

O. South Platte Park Channel and Habitat Improvement Area: This on-going project restores natural function to the River by narrowing the base flow channel, and creating

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TRAIL & MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY

Overview of Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

Due to its location at the core of the once-mostly industrial corridor that followed the River, the South Platte River corridor has at once severe bike and pedestrian connectivity challenges, and at the same time, exceptional opportunities to take advantage of multi-modal transit. Challenges include trail access to the east that is severely impeded by Santa Fe Drive and the rail corridor that parallels it, and access to the west, which is complicated by a series of residential and industrial neighborhoods flanking the corridor that are significantly lacking in trail corridors and bike and pedestrian-friendly on-street routes. On the flip side, the light rail stations along the Santa Fe Rail corridor not only provide opportunities to connect the South Platte with regional transportation, but are creating the kind of transportation and residential nodes that, if connected to the Greenway, will provide a wealth of River corridor users and advocates. Resolving these connectivity challenges makes up the bulk of the specific recommendations below.



Razor wire-topped fence along a trail at Centennial Park



Lack of connectivity at South Platte Parkway

Map Key of Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity Issues & Opportunities

Corridor-Wide Issues and Opportunities

- A. Santa Fe Corridor Crossing Challenges
- B. RTD Light Rail Station Connection Opportunities
- C. Lack of Trail Connections to Neighborhoods West of River

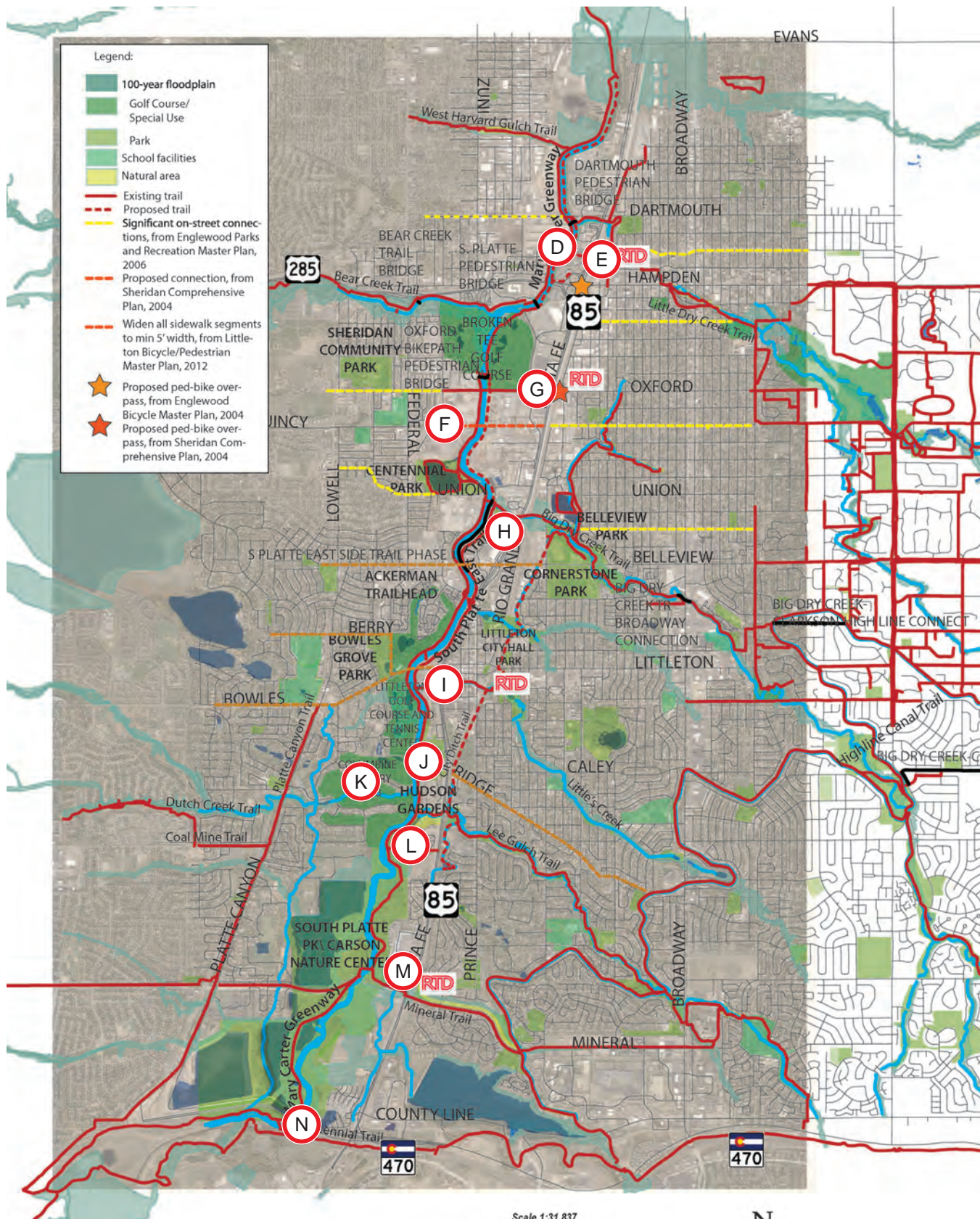
Map Key to Site Specific Issues and Opportunities

(See Map on Opposite Page)

- D** "Land-locked" Area between Dartmouth and Hampden West of the Santa Fe Drive
- E** Planned Floyd Avenue Underpass and Bridge
- F** Poor Trail Connection to Neighborhoods West of Oxford-Union
- G** Unsafe Bike/Pedestrian Connection from the East of Santa Fe at Oxford Avenue.
- H** Good Vehicular Trailhead Access from Santa Fe at Murray Open Space
- I** Upgrades Needed at Little's Creek Connection to Littleton Light Rail
- J** Hudson Gardens' Lack of Integration with Greenway.
- K** Columbine Valley: Few Connections from South Platte to West
- L** Improved/Signalized Access at Breckenridge Brewery/ Reynolds Landing
- M** Lack of Visual Connection from Aspen Grove/RTD Lot to Greenway
- N** Potential Future Connection to East at Existing Underpass between Mineral and C-470

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TRAIL & MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY



Map 2. South Platte Trail & Multi-modal Connectivity

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TRAIL & MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY

Explanation of Issues & Opportunities

A. Santa Fe Corridor Crossing Challenges: This eight to ten lane arterial highway and the adjacent freight rail and light rail lines run parallel to the South Platte River through the entire study area, greatly restricting access to the South Platte corridor. Trail users from the east of Santa Fe are limited to travel along drainage and trail corridors which pass under the highway and rail lines, and to signalized crossings at major arterial intersections. Advocates for the corridor need to constantly monitor land use and transportation issues and opportunities along Santa Fe Drive and advocate for strong, safe bike and pedestrian connections across this challenging transportation artery.

B. RTD Light Rail Station Connection Opportunities: The light rail stations east of Santa Fe are significant city-shaping elements that should be connected to the River corridor by safe, direct and pleasant bike and pedestrian routes if at all possible (see Image 12). The synergy between these important nodes and the South Platte corridor provides huge benefits in terms of usership, quality of life, economic development potential, and alternate modes of transportation. Specific challenges and opportunities related to individual stations are identified in the Site Specific Issues and Opportunities section below.

C. Lack of Connections to Neighborhoods West of River:

Throughout the corridor there is a dearth of connections to the neighborhoods west of the River. Bear Creek, which parallels Hampden Avenue/Hwy 285 in the northern part of the study area, is the only trail connection along a drainageway corridor that connects to the South Platte River corridor from the west between Dartmouth Avenue and C-470. While the Mineral and Bowles Avenue trails are also good grade-separated connections to the west, connectivity to the River from this side of the corridor is still lacking. Adding further to the challenges of connections to the west are land use and local roadway patterns that do not create a good network of on-street connections to the Greenway. As a result many of the alternatives for creating safe, continuous trails to the west require land acquisition, easements, and expensive bridges or underpasses at crossings of major arterials. These connections, however expensive, are critical to opening up the resources (and alternative modes of transportation) of the South Platte River corridor to neighborhoods which often are already under-served by parks, trails, and open space facilities.



Image 12. Littleton RTD Light Rail Station



Image 13. View of Englewood City Center across Santa Fe Drive



Image 14. Riverton Apartments at the South Platte

D. Land-locked Area between Dartmouth and Hampden West of the Santa Fe Corridor: The area defined by Santa Fe Drive, the South Platte River, Dartmouth Avenue, and Hampden Avenue has significant connectivity challenges. Sandwiched between the difficult barriers of Santa Fe and the River, this area is only several hundred yards away from light rail and the Englewood City Center, but has very limited access either by bike or on foot. It overlooks the River but



Image 15. Street crossing at Oxford and Santa Fe



Image 16. Murray Open Space Entrance at Santa Fe

has no sidewalks or safe route to get onto the Greenway (see Images 13 and 14). The Little Dry Creek Trail, just south of Dartmouth, does provide a safe route across Santa Fe, and, after an at-grade crossing of South Platte River Drive, connects to a pedestrian bridge that accesses the Mary Carter Greenway Trail on the west side of the River.

Connectivity needs for this area include the following:

- A grade-separated bike and pedestrian crossing of Santa Fe serving the southern part of this area, to allow apartment dwellers, etc., to access light rail;
- A north-south pedestrian and bike way along the east side of the River;
- An underpass for the Little Dry Creek Trail at South Platte River Drive.

E. Planned Floyd Avenue Underpass and Bridge: To remedy the connectivity issues identified above for the Dartmouth to Hampden area, the City of Englewood has a long range plan for a multi-mode roadway, underpass and bridge along the Floyd Avenue alignment. This new roadway would extend Floyd Avenue from the Englewood City Center to the west, going under the rail lines and Santa Fe Drive,

and over the South Platte River. This connector would alleviate the connectivity problems from this area to the light rail and Englewood City Center, and to neighborhoods and districts to the west. (Projected time frame for completion of this project is 20 to 30 years). Special attention must be made to the pedestrian and bike trail component of the underpass to make this a bright, safe and pleasant crossing experience for cyclists and pedestrians.

F. Poor Trail Connections to Neighborhoods West of Oxford-Union: This segment of the River corridor has no easy connections to the west. Sidewalks west of the River at Oxford are narrow and unsatisfactory for bike traffic, and on-street bike travel is unsafe on Oxford due to the many hundreds of trucks servicing Oxford Recycling and the other industrial uses in this reach. Union Avenue has somewhat better bike and pedestrian options, but still has challenges: Bike access to the west is somewhat circuitous, looping north around an existing ballfield before heading west along the south edge of Centennial Park. Cyclists are forced onto the street at South Decatur Street, which is designated as a bike route, but does not have visible bike lanes or safety improvements. Riders can cross Federal Boulevard at the signalized intersection at Union and Federal, and continue along on-street routes into the neighborhoods to the west.

G. Unsafe Bike/Pedestrian Connection from the East of Santa Fe at Oxford Avenue: The journey along Oxford Avenue from the east side of the Santa Fe rail corridor to the South Platte Greenway is one of the most unsafe and unpleasant of any along the corridor (see Image 15). It is an important connection for light rail and Greenway access. While the crossing of the eight lanes of Santa Fe traffic is signalized, cyclists and pedestrians heading from the east to the Greenway must negotiate numerous unsignalized and unstriped on-ramps and shopping access drives with very little protection from vehicular traffic. This is not a route that anyone would want to bring their young children or elderly grandparents through. It should also be noted that there are not any sidewalks along the south side of Oxford between Santa Fe Drive and the River, so anyone wishing to get to the River from the commercial establishment along the south side of Oxford must cross Oxford at a mid-block location, unless they happen to be near the River Point Parkway intersection pedestrian crossing.

H. Good Vehicular Trailhead Access from Santa Fe at Murray Open Space: The new Murray Open Space parcel is important to the overall access and connectivity of the River

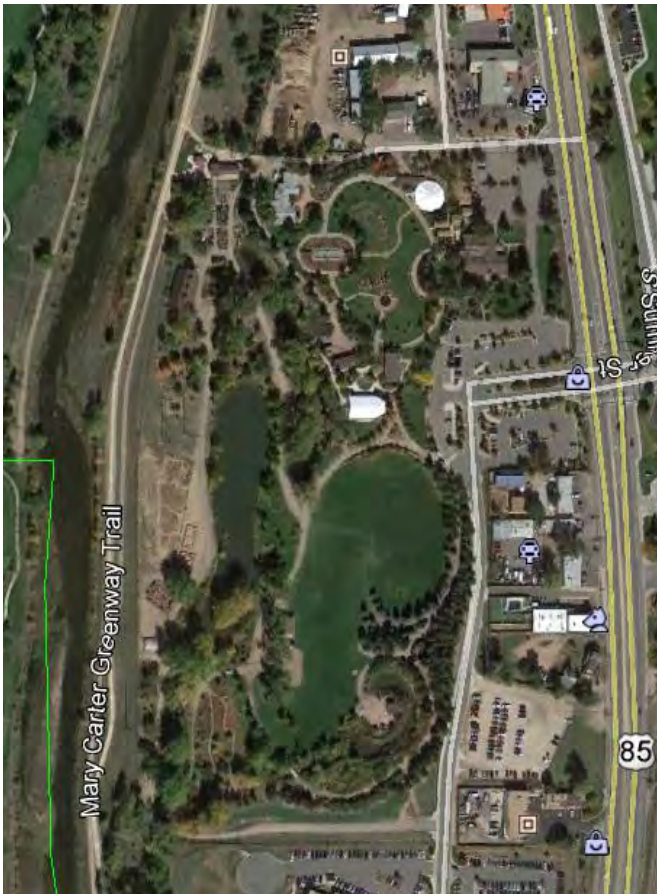


Image 17. Hudson Gardens Aerial

corridor due to its direct access from southbound South Santa Fe (see Image 16). This property provides one of the few trailheads directly off of Santa Fe, which may make it a very popular trailhead destination for those driving and parking to start their South Platte River Trail experience. The current master plan for this open space park includes parking for ten cars.

I. Upgrades Needed at Little's Creek Connection to Littleton Light Rail: This important connection along Little's Creek is currently in place, but is not up to normal trail design standards. Improved creek crossings, larger turn radii, and other physical improvements need to be made to make this a safer trail route.

J. Hudson Gardens' Lack of Integration with Greenway: Hudson Gardens has evolved from a gated facility with controlled entry points to a more open public garden, that is always open to the public (see Image 17). As a result, connectivity between the Garden's parking and main entry areas on the east side do not function well as entry points for visitors wanting to combine Garden visits with Greenway access; The connections through the Gardens are indirect,



Image 18. Aspen Grove shopping center



Image 19. Underpass between Mineral and C-470

and the interior pathways are not designed for multi-modal users. The Garden's west edge along the Greenway also still functions more like a separate and gated facility, permitting little interaction between the Greenway and the Gardens. Hudson Gardens would like to make the facility more integrated with the Greenway to increase public visitation as well as to broaden the experiences of Greenway users. There is currently a master plan in development for the Gardens, which should inform the next steps for integration with the Greenway.

K. Columbine Valley: Few Connections from South Platte to West. Columbine Valley and its neighboring developments to the south create a continuous private property edge to the west side of the Greenway between Bowles Avenue and Mineral Avenue with no public Greenway access or thoroughfare. This is another Greenway edge condition that limits the locations where potential visitors to the River corridor can access the Greenway from neighborhoods to the west.

L. Improved and Signalized Access at Breckenridge Brewery/Reynolds Landing: The access road that serves Reynolds Landing, and soon, the new Breckenridge Brewery facility, will have a traffic signal at Santa Fe once

development of the Brewery is complete. This will make Reynolds Landing much more accessible and will likely boost its visibility as a convenient trailhead for the Greenway.

M. Lack of Visual Connection from Aspen Grove/RTD

Lot to Greenway: Visitors to the Aspen Grove shopping center and the Mineral Avenue light rail parking lot may not easily understand the close proximity of the Greenway and the Carson Nature Center (see Image 18). Extension of Greenway monumentation and identity signage into this area would encourage users of the parking area and shopping center to expand their visits and explore what the Greenway has to offer.

N. Potential Future Connection to East at Existing

Underpass between Mineral and C-470: Development plans for the Ensor Property should take advantage of existing trail corridors, especially the existing drainageway and underpass between Mineral and C-470 (see Image 19).

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

RECREATION, CIVIC USES, EDUCATION, CULTURE & IDENTITY

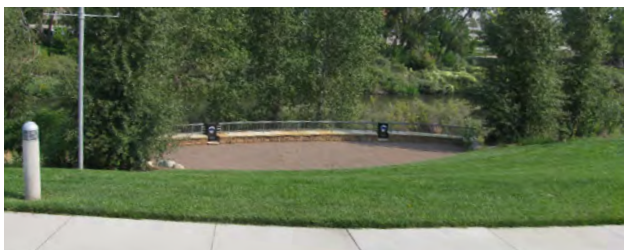
Overview of Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

The South Platte River corridor offers unique neighborhood-scale as well as regional recreational opportunities, from the highly popular Mary Carter Greenway to South Platte Park, where attendance has increased markedly over the past several years. The challenge that we face is how to improve and enhance these resources while preserving such key assets for the enjoyment of future generations. Awareness of the carrying capacity of these well-loved attractions, and conscious efforts to distribute and guide recreational use more evenly along the corridor, will help to ensure that the jewels of our system are not simply “loved to death.”

And, while the South Platte corridor is a wonderful green spine, that green is not evenly distributed along the communities through which the River flows; there are significant gaps in this “Emerald necklace,” in the areas north of Union Boulevard, for example. Addressing this equity balance will help to ensure that all communities can realize the benefits of having this wonderful recreational and civic resource in their midst, and that it serves as a welcoming gateway. Providing venues for civic uses, and encouraging businesses to better engage the River as places for people to gather and enjoy, can help the River corridor become a front door, and enhance the revenue and tax base of its communities.

Finally, the River’s natural and cultural history is perhaps not yet fully tapped to provide a rich educational and interpretive experience for visitors, and a strong and recognizable identity. From the early gravel mines to rail transport, to a current hub of recycling activity, there are opportunities to raise awareness of this rich history through incorporation of unique and local public art, and incorporation of indigenous recycled materials in plazas, railings and bridges. To strengthen identity, incorporation of some consistent elements throughout – not simply signage, but in materials and design details – would heighten visitors’ awareness of the River corridor experience.

The following issues and opportunities represent the observations of the consultant team, based on input from the South Platte Working Group members, and team research.



Opportunities exist to create small gathering spaces along the River corridor.

Map Key of Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity Issues & Opportunities

Corridor-Wide Issues and Opportunities

- A. Gaps exist in the “Emerald Necklace,” especially north of Union Boulevard
- B. A more diverse range of recreational experiences that incorporates both traditional parks and active recreation and natural areas could supplement existing single use areas.
- C. Opportunities exist to create small civic gathering spaces.
- D. Opportunities exist to partner with private property owners to encourage creation of patios, plazas and other gathering spaces.
- E. Interpretive elements are in place in selected locations, but opportunities exist for a richer and more interactive interpretive program that emphasizes the cultural heritage of the corridor (agriculture, gravel mining, industry) as well as natural features.
- F. Public art is not presently a significant element of the Greenway; funding partners could support a pilot public art program.
- G. A diverse range of image and identity elements are present, and do not clearly define the Greenway. Also, the elements are not always consistently present, especially at confluences and trailheads, which may not clearly indicate the Greenway’s presence to visitors.

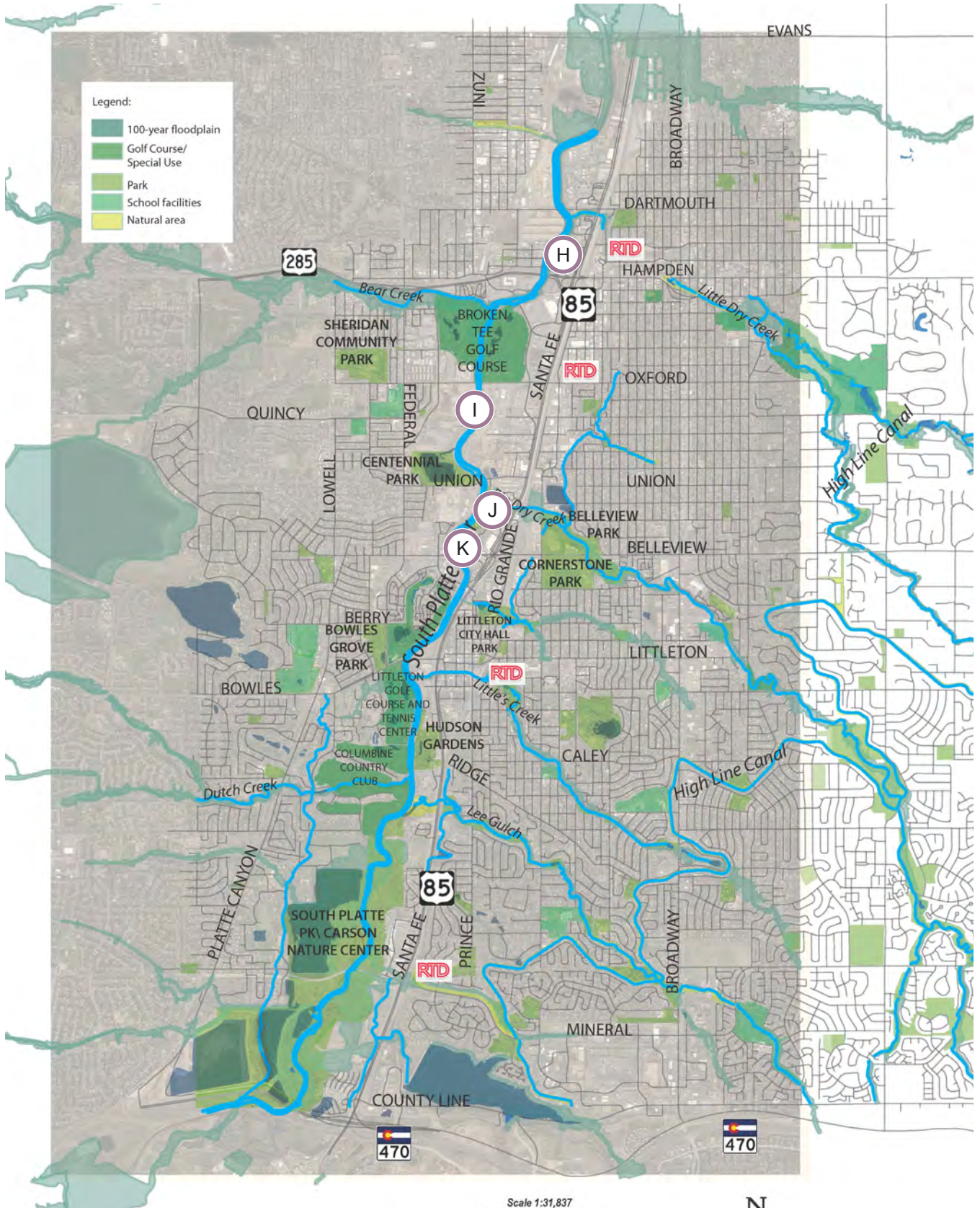
Map Key to Site Specific Issues and Opportunities

(See Map on Opposite Page)

The improvements listed below are primarily focused on strategic acquisitions or partnerships aimed at enhanced river access or neighborhood scale park improvements.

- H** Enhanced Green Edge and River Access Points at Riverton at the Platte/South Platte River Drive.
- I** Thickened Green Edge/River Access From Oxford to Union, Unique Public Art.
- J** Implementation of Murray Open Space/Oxbow Improvements, Potential Collaboration with Fire Training Facility.
- K** Potential Acquisition of Vacant Parcel Adjacent to Walgreens for Recreational Use.

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
 RECREATION, CIVIC USES, EDUCATION, CULTURE & IDENTITY



Map 3. South Platte Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

RECREATION, CIVIC USES, EDUCATION, CULTURE & IDENTITY

Explanation of Issues & Opportunities

A. Gaps exist in the “Emerald Necklace,” especially north of Union Boulevard: As illustrated in Map 3, Centennial Park and Sheridan Community Park represent the only two large public multi-use parks north of Union Boulevard. Actively seeking opportunities for strategic acquisitions, as has been accomplished with the Murray Open Space, Oxbow and Lee Gulch properties, would begin to redress this balance north of Union, and provide neighborhood-scale places for residents to enjoy (see Images 20 and 21). In addition, creating designated “green street” connections would allow Sheridan and Englewood residents safe on street connections to the River corridor.

B. A more diverse range of recreational experiences that incorporate both traditional parks and active recreation and natural areas could supplement existing single use areas: Three golf courses – Broken Tee, Littleton Golf Course, and the Columbine Country Club – represent the bulk of the green space along the River corridor (see Image 22). These are wonderful amenities for those who play golf, and a visual oasis for users of the Greenway, but they are for the most part single use facilities. As discussed by charrette participants, it may be prudent to consider a long-term “repurposing” of a portion of these facilities – perhaps transitioning from 18 holes to nine and converting the balance to a multi-purpose park and open space that would accommodate a broader range of users.

In the short term, an alternative and complementary strategy might be to work with both private property owners and public works managers to carve out areas along the River corridor to provide a thicker “green edge” that could accommodate pocket parks, terraced river access points, and water quality and habitat improvements. Again, the Murray Open Space, Lee Gulch and Oxbow acquisitions serve as a useful precedent.

C. Opportunities exist to create small civic gathering spaces. A consistent theme emerging from background research with City staff, and from the charrette, was a desire for small civic spaces that could accommodate small gatherings. Examples ranged from small amphitheatres in both Sheridan and Littleton, to small plazas that could function as a “wide spot along the Greenway” to provide venues for small markets, musical performances, art fairs or the like.

E. Opportunities exist to partner with private property owners to encourage creation of patios, plazas and



Image 20. Lee Gulch Master Plan, Image Source: Murray, Oxbow Point & Lee Gulch Overlook - Open Space Properties: Final Master Plan by South Suburban Park & Recreation, December 4, 2012.

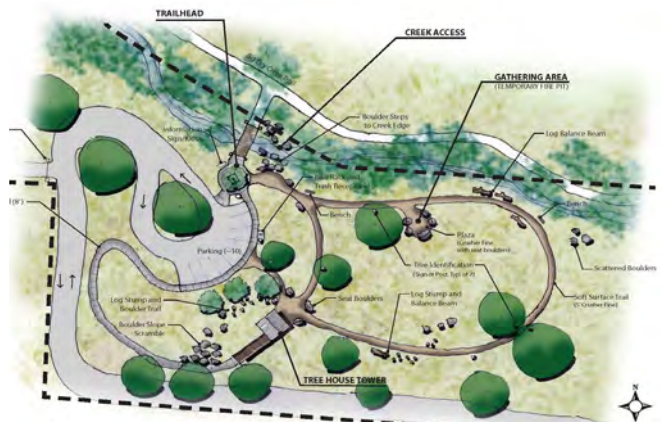


Image 21. Murray Open Space Master Plan, Image Source: Murray, Oxbow Point & Lee Gulch Overlook - Open Space Properties: Final Master Plan by South Suburban Park & Recreation, December 4, 2012.



Image 22. Littleton Golf Course

other gathering spaces: Similarly, opportunities exist to partner with property owners to facilitate their creation of patios, plazas and overlooks that take better advantage of the River. For example, the developer of Riverside Downs has expressed a desire to do this, but current development regulations and the review process have



Image 23. Interpretive signage at Bear Creek Confluence



Image 24. Industrial corridor between Oxford and Union

presented obstacles. Adjusting the process where feasible to encourage more river-oriented development could be a win-win situation: more sales for business owners, more tax revenue for municipalities, and more opportunities for the public to enjoy the River.

E. Interpretive elements are in place in selected locations (see Image 23), but opportunities exist for a richer and more interactive interpretive program that emphasizes the cultural heritage of the corridor (agriculture, gravel mining, industry) as well as natural features: Creating an interpretive master plan and installing some initial features could be a “quick win” for the South Platte Working Group and its member cities. Charrette participants were very supportive of this idea, and especially supportive of an interpretive strategy that went well beyond traditional interpretive exhibits and signage. Creative public art, perhaps fabricated from recycled products manufactured along the Greenway, or murals incorporating these elements, or even interactive sculptures, could convey the stories of the corridor’s history in a more interesting manner than signage, and as stated by charrette participants, should enhance the corridor, not be a source of visual clutter.

F. Public art is not presently a significant element of the Greenway; funding partners could support a pilot public art program: Public art and interpretation go hand in hand, and should complement each other in telling the corridor’s story. A possible approach, rather than preparing a separate public art plan, would be to prepare a joint public art and interpretive plan that developed important themes for interpretation and used them to guide the commissioning of art pieces. This would help to avoid art pieces that, while visually appealing, may not be well-connected to the River’s story or narrative. This may also provide a vehicle for tapping alternative funding sources. Organizations such as Arapahoe Community College may be valuable partners in this effort.

G. A diverse range of image and identity elements are present, and do not clearly define the Greenway: Also, the elements are not always consistently present, especially at confluences and trailheads, which may not clearly indicate the Greenway’s presence to visitors. Establishing a strong South Platte corridor identity or “brand” is critical, both in raising visitors’ awareness that they are now on a greenway that is part of a vast regional trail and park system, and in future marketing of the River corridor to employers that may be relocating and seeking a benefit for their employees. In Milwaukee, for example, the Hank Aaron State Trail is often mentioned as a “selling point” for emerging “incubator” businesses; the proximity of the Platte Greenway to the TAXI development in Denver’s River North neighborhood has also been cited as a part of its attractiveness.

As with public art and interpretation, however, charrette participants did not wish to see an identity strategy that was reliant on signage. Rather, participants supported “building the brand” through consistent attention to design details (materials, paving, railings, bridges) and high quality execution.

H. Enhanced Green Edge and River Access Points at Riverton at the Platte/South Platte River Drive: At present, this area is a classic example of the River functioning as the “back door” rather than the front door. Creating a terraced green edge that provides river access could make this area so much more of an amenity for residents of the Riverton development and provide much-needed public space.

I. Thickened Green Edge/River Access From Oxford to Union, Unique Public Art: The stretch from Oxford to Union is the most heavily industrial area along the River corridor (see Image 24). In addition to the water-based recreation and trail improvements called for in the Oxford-Union South Platte

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

RECREATION, CIVIC USES, EDUCATION, CULTURE & IDENTITY

River Rehabilitation and Recreation Improvements Concept Plan, it is also recommended that abutting property owners be approached about the feasibility of creating a thicker terraced green edge that would further separate trail users from the heavy equipment in use on their properties; such an edge might also provide for points of river access, overlooks, or wildlife viewing areas. These discussions should also consider general landscape improvements along the property edge near the River. Participants at the charrette were also highly receptive to creative public art and interpretive elements that would celebrate the area's sustainable industrial activity and incorporate materials and elements produced in this reach.

J. Implementation of Murray Open Space/Oxbow Improvements, Potential Collaboration with Fire Training Facility:

Funding has been secured to implement the open space park and river access improvements proposed for this area. Charrette participants discussed the possibility of partnering with the ownership group of the fire training facility site to perhaps secure a small portion of the site to both complement the new open space improvements, and provide additional separation between recreational activities and the fire training building. Without an alternative site or funding to construct a replacement facility, it is unlikely that this facility could be completely relocated in the near future, but some City staff representing one of the owners was open to discussion about potential use of a small portion of the property.

K. Potential Acquisition of Vacant Parcel Adjacent to Walgreens for Recreational Use: As illustrated on the Land Use Map, there are a small number of river-adjacent vacant parcels that could be acquired (see Image 25). One such parcel is located immediately south of Walgreens and north of Belleview Avenue on the west side of the River. Potentially acquiring this parcel could help to preserve compatible uses along this stretch of the River.



Image 25. Vacant property north of Dish Network property

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

RECREATION, CIVIC USES, EDUCATION, CULTURE & IDENTITY

Overview of Land Use & Economic Development

Land uses and development patterns vary widely along the 7.5 miles of the South Platte River corridor. From Dartmouth to Hampden, the river edge includes a mix of small light industrial and repair businesses, with pockets of single- and multifamily residential. From Hampden to Oxford, River Point is predominantly retail, and from Oxford to just south of Belleview, we see the most heavily industrial section of the River. As it winds its way through the City of Littleton, the River exhibits its “greenest” edge, with numerous recreational uses punctuated by single family residential and retail. There are some small vacant parcels, and a very large one, the Ensor and Santa Fe Park property.

Such land uses and development patterns are typical for river-adjacent communities. For many years, rivers, including the South Platte, were seen as transportation corridors; railways usually located within them. Because of these transportation corridors, and because land was comparatively inexpensive, industrial uses also located there.

Our community's views of the value of rivers have since evolved, and now they are seen as amenities and desirable locations for retail business and residential locations. We see this changing view along the South Platte, and we expect that further evolution will occur over time. The challenge is to encourage more “riverly” and river-oriented development, and to create a planning, regulatory and development environment that encourages this to proceed in an orderly fashion.

The following issues and opportunities represent the observations of the consultant team, based on input from the South Platte Working Group members, and team research. It should be emphasized that this is not a land use plan, as such would be far outside the scope and mission of the South Platte Working Group. However, it is important for this plan to document members' comments on the types of uses that they would like to encourage, both in the short and long term.



The fire training facility south of Union Avenue is one of several publicly owned properties which could be reprogrammed or redeveloped.

Map of Key Land Use & Economic Development Issues & Opportunities

Corridor-Wide Issues and Opportunities

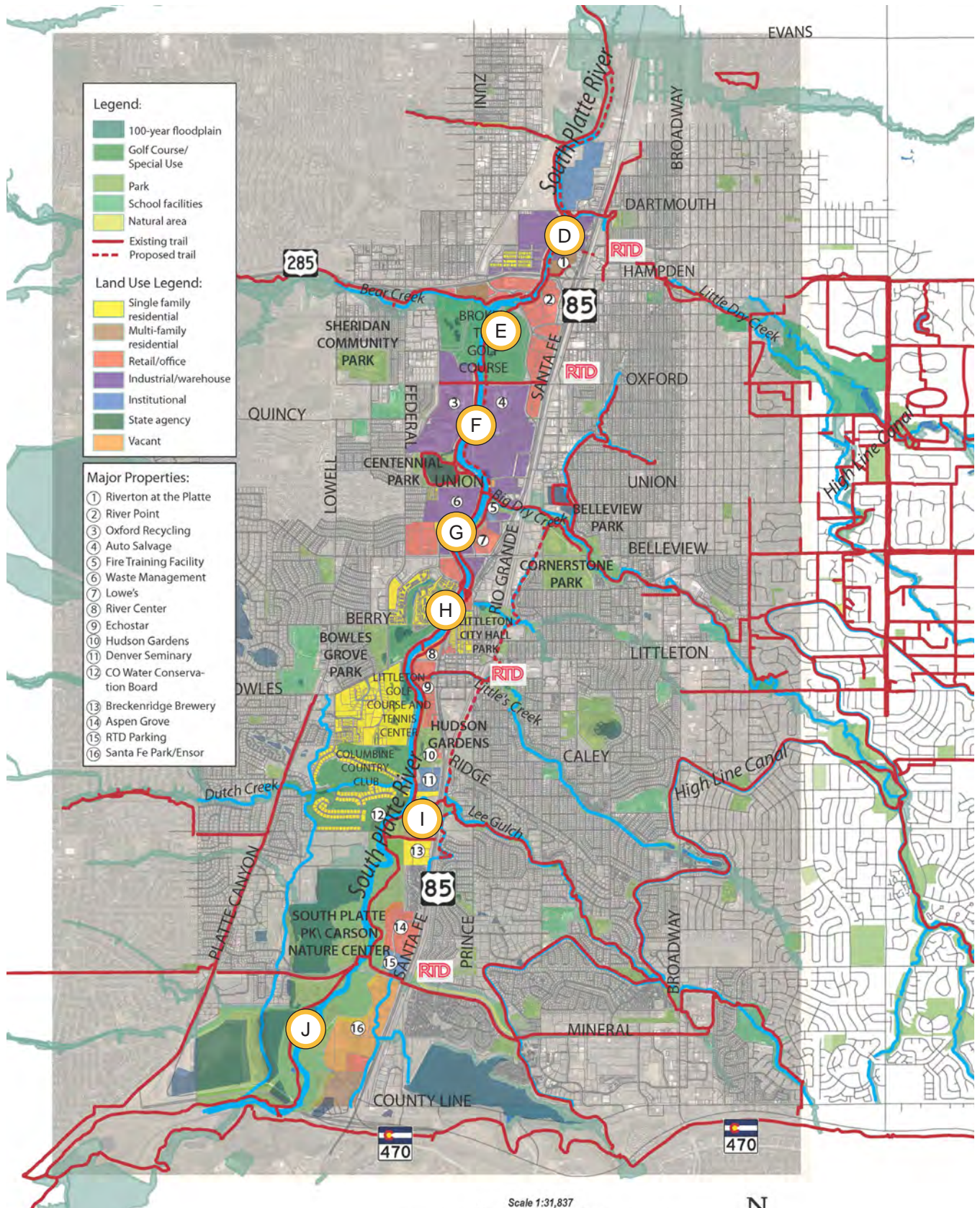
- A. Opportunities exist to better leverage existing river-adjacent development.
- B. Opportunities exist to orient potential “opportunity sites” to the River and encourage compatible land uses, through a variety of tools (acquisition, easements, overlay zones).
- C. Opportunities exist to better partner with existing industrial uses to enhance visual and recreational experience of adjacent users.

Map Key to Site Specific Issues and Opportunities

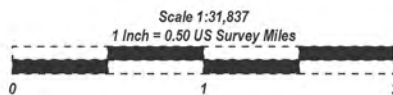
(See Map on Opposite Page)

- D** Dartmouth to Hampden.
- E** Hampden to Oxford.
- F** Oxford to Union: Sustainable Industry.
- G** Union to Belleview.
- H** Belleview to Bowles.
- I** Bowles to Mineral.
- J** Mineral to C-470.

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
 LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Map 4. South Platte Land Use & Economic Development



Explanation of Issues & Opportunities

A. Opportunities exist to better leverage existing river-adjacent development. As noted above, certain reaches of the River have begun to transform, principally in the direction of more retail uses. Recent examples include the River Point complex in Sheridan, and Riverside Downs and the Aspen Grove complex in Littleton (see image 26). In some cases, the developments have not maximized their access to the River, or considered how the types of retail tenants that they have recruited could better leverage their locations. In the case of Riverside Downs, the developer would have liked to improve access to and use of the River, but development regulations and the lengthy process have worked against it. Providing incentives for, and removing obstacles to, existing businesses to leverage their river access, could be another “quick win” for municipalities.



Image 26. Riverside Downs

B. Opportunities exist to orient potential “opportunity sites” to the River and encourage compatible land uses, through a variety of tools (acquisition, easements, overlay zones). As illustrated in the Land Use Map, there are a number of river-adjacent properties that are currently vacant, or where the owner is actively seeking a buyer (see image 27). These might be opportunities for strategic acquisitions for recreation, or for active collaboration with a developer to encourage a mix of compatible uses. In addition to outright acquisition, there are other tools, such as easements, special districts, and overlay zones, that should be considered by planning staff in the affected municipalities. Though perhaps beyond the immediate mission of the South Platte Working Group itself, members should encourage and help facilitate their respective planning staff to create ongoing focus groups with business owners to discuss tools and incentives to create more compatible river-oriented development.

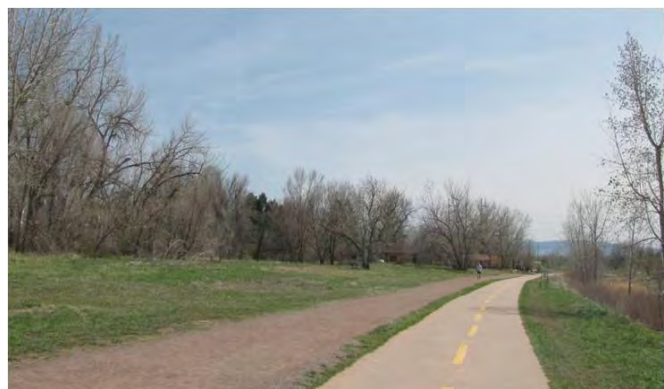


Image 27. Vacant property near Hudson Gardens

C. Opportunities exist to better partner with existing industrial uses to enhance visual and recreational experience of adjacent users. The most industrial stretches of the River are not the most visually appealing, but they provide needed products and services, tax revenue, and jobs (see image 28). The recycling industries, in particular, are also providing highly sustainable services and could be a marketing draw to recruit additional “eco-businesses” and green jobs. And importantly, they are located near the River because of transportation requirements that make their businesses cost effective. The car crushing plants, for example, depend on the adjacent rail; Oxford Recycling relies on approximately 1,000 truck trips per day, and given the weight of their product,



Image 28. Fence with concertina wire at Oxford Recycling

cannot afford to locate outside of a 10-12 mile radius of their customers. So while it might be appealing to think that these operations might transition to more river-compatible uses over time, in the short term the goal is to partner collaboratively with these businesses to make the area more visually appealing and safer for recreationists, while also helping to safeguard the heavy equipment and storage areas that could prove dangerous for trespassers.

D. Dartmouth to Hampden. This area currently includes a mix of uses, ranging from light industrial and repair facilities and single family and multifamily housing. The area west of Santa Fe in particular, juxtaposes many small repair shops with the recently developed Riverton at the Platte Apartments. Opportunities exist to create a vision plan that might emphasize more mixed use, TOD-oriented (given proximity to the light rail station at Englewood's City Center) development in this zone, and that integrates it more effectively with the River. Should existing business owners be able and amenable to relocate to other sites, incentives might be provided to enable them to do so.

E. Hampden to Oxford. This area primarily encompasses the relatively new River Point development, as well as a mobile home park south of Hampden, near the Bear Creek confluence. Presently, River Point is not well connected to the River, and there are a number of pad sites as yet unrented. Opportunities exist to work with the developer leasing these sites to encourage tenants who might benefit from a river presence, such as kayak and canoe rentals, restaurants, outerwear and gear stores (for example, similar to REI) and the like. This could benefit the developer and local economy, while encouraging more river-oriented activities.

Creative programming of the amphitheater (called for in the River Point PUD), for example, river-themed concerts and festivals, could also complement a focus on recruiting retailers who benefit from a river presence.

F. Oxford to Union: Sustainable Industry. This stretch contains significant heavy industry, on sites with relatively large footprints. As discussed above, these businesses remain here due to their dependence on the cost effective transportation afforded by the railroad and truck. While the size of these sites would, over the long term, accommodate significant mixed-use development, over the short term, partnerships should be cultivated with these business owners. Opportunities exist to make the river edge both more visually attractive, as well as safer for users, by creating greater separation between these heavy industrial users and

recreationists. Reasonably small actions, such as acquiring a river edge easement, terracing the edge, and installing murals and public art, could be a "quick win" that benefits the recreational community and the business owner.

Opportunities also exist to leverage the sustainable nature of these recyclers, including Oxford Recycling, Western Metals, and Waste Management immediately to the south, to attract other eco-industrial businesses to the area. Plans might be developed for an eco-industrial park that might support incubator businesses that focus on sustainable products or practices.

G. Union to Belleview. As illustrated on the Land Use Map, there are a small number of river-adjacent vacant parcels that could be acquired. Two such parcels are located immediately south of the fire training facility and between the Lowe's property and the River. Potentially acquiring these parcels and collaborating with the fire training facility could help to create a continuous open space park edge from Big Dry Creek to Belleview. Alternatively, developers might be sought for these sites that support river-oriented retail.

H. Belleview to Bowles. There is a similar vacant parcel north of the Dish Network facility that is in close proximity to downtown Littleton and Littleton City Hall. Potentially acquiring this property would afford an opportunity to create a green "front door" and civic space for the City, combined with mixed use development. Opportunity also exists to create a plan for redevelopment of the Dish Network Call Center property at corner of Bowles and Santa Fe to create a high density, river-oriented, "civic" multi-use development. Existing river-adjacent businesses, such as Lucille's, could be redesigned or re-oriented to embrace the River with windows and views, patios, and decks. Permitting and regulatory obstacles to encouraging this type of river-oriented design should be evaluated and modified where feasible, and "carrots," such as assistance with permitting, might be provided.

I. Bowles to Mineral. Hudson Gardens is a major asset for the River corridor, open to the public and available for special events. Its connectivity to the River could be greatly strengthened, however, and the river experience much better integrated with the garden experience. Opportunities exist to purchase or otherwise plan for businesses east of Hudson Gardens along South Vineland Street, to encourage activities that either support Hudson Gardens directly, or can become an extension of the Gardens themselves.

The relocation of the Breckenridge Brewery to this area offers a wonderful and immediate opportunity to work with the

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

developer to “test drive” incentives that encourage use of the river edge (see image 29). Similarly, creating an area plan for the other uses in this vicinity – such as the mobile home park, industrial uses, and medical office complex – would offer a blueprint for more compatible development.

Finally, the southern end of this reach includes the Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center, which presently does not connect well to the River. As with River Point to the north, a partnership might be formed with the developer to encourage leasing of tenants that might benefit from a presence along the River. Additionally, the RTD parking lot to the immediate south, while heavily used on weekdays, receives much less use on the weekends. Partnering with RTD and the Aspen Grove developer to support river-themed weekend events, could represent a win-win that benefits the River and increases commercial activity. These events would need to be planned and scheduled in coordination with South Platte Park staff to prevent over use of the nature center and South Platte Park.

J. Mineral to C-470. The major opportunity in this reach is the Ensor and Santa Fe Park site, which also has a large footprint. A partnership might be formed with the developer to offer incentives for river-friendly mixed use development that takes advantage of the transit stop at Mineral, and that also protects some portion of the site as a buffer to South Platte Park.

A second opportunity exists if and when the Wolhurst Mobile Home Park transitions. Creating an area plan that encompasses this and the Ensor property would help to encourage compatible development and ensure that easements are preserved for habitat and trail corridor connections.



Image 29. Breckenridge Brewery aerial, Image Source: Todd Usry, Breckenridge Breweries

SECTION B ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to the Vision Plan Summary

The Vision Plan Summary is a distillation of the recommendations developed by the four small groups in the charrette. While it primarily includes recommended improvements and actions proposed by the charrette team participants, the Vision Plan Summary has been supplemented by recommendations developed by the consultant team from insight gained during the charrette research process. (For clarity, the consultant team recommendations have been specifically identified as such throughout the plan.) All of the recommendations generated by the charrette groups, including map mark-ups and supplemental notes, have been incorporated into this draft of the document. The Vision Plan Summary consists of two main components:

1. **Vision Plan Summary Map:** An aerial photo-based plan with diagrammatic representations of proposed improvements, and colored reference number/symbols corresponding to the “Key to Recommended Improvements”, a concise list of site-specific recommended improvements.
2. **Detailed Explanation of Recommended Improvements:** More in-depth descriptions of each proposed improvement, providing more detail and background, including general intent and caveats.

Organization

The Vision Plan Summary is prefaced by corridor-wide recommendations that have been developed by the charrette groups and the consultant team. The bulk of the recommendations, however, are site-specific, and have been organized geographically according to the seven corridor reaches that were used to organize the charrette powerpoint presentation (see map on opposite page).

The Corridor-Wide and the Site-Specific recommendations are each divided into the following four categories based on improvement types, and are differentiated by different colored map symbols (as indicated below):

- Water and Habitat (Green map symbols)
- Trail and Multi-Modal Connectivity (Red map symbols)
- Recreation, Education and Culture (Purple map symbols)
- Land Use and Economic Development (Yellow map symbols)

Any recommendations which clearly elicited disagreement among the charrette attendees during the course of the group work sessions or the presentations to the larger group have been noted as such in the “Detailed Explanation of Recommended Improvements.”

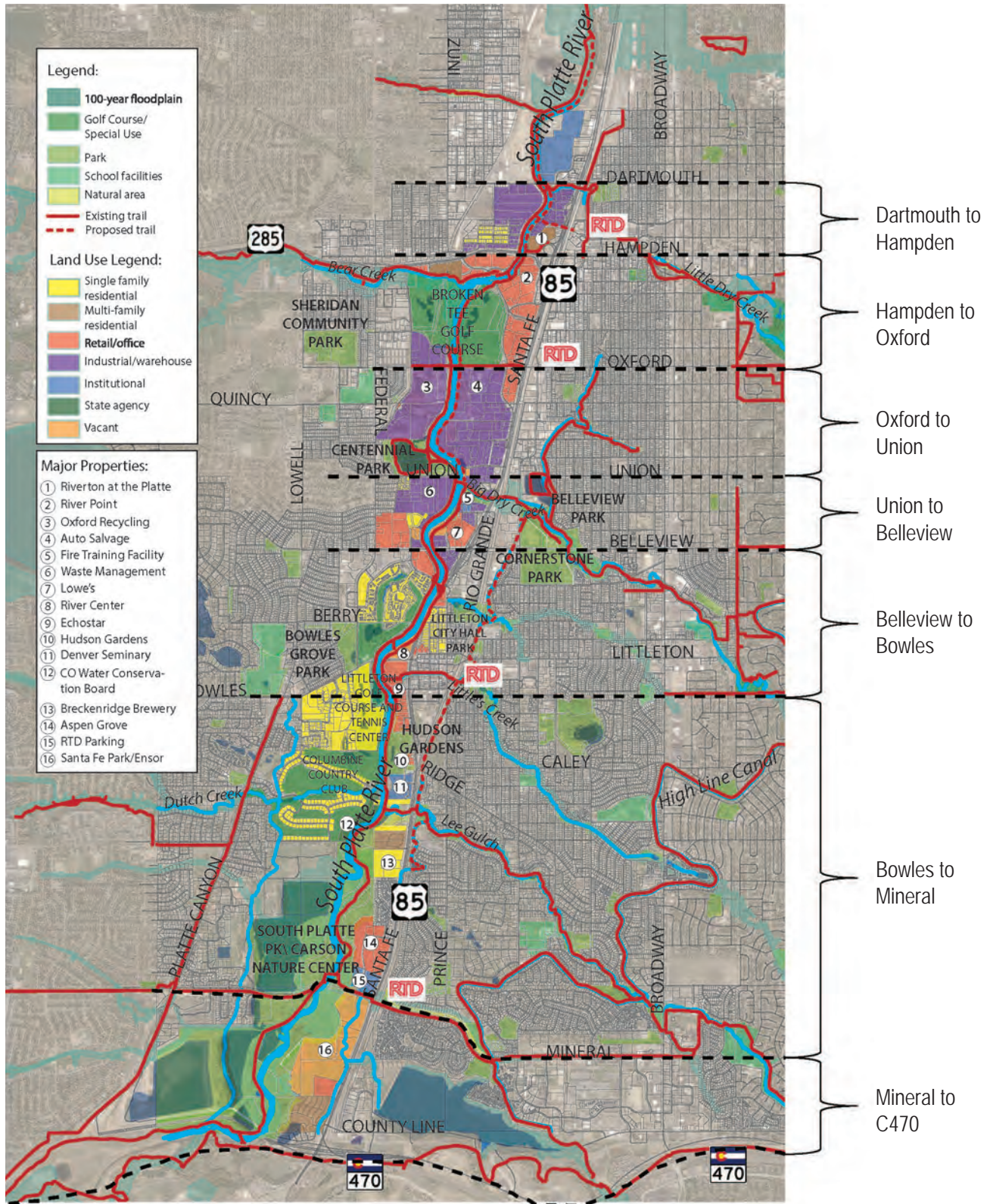


Image 33. South Platte Corridor Reaches

SECTION C VISION FRAMEWORK

GENERAL THEMES OF THE VISION

Corridor-Wide Recommendations

General Improvements

- **Create an internet-based informational network for River corridor resources**
 - Develop an app and mobile website reference for amenities and businesses along the South Platte River to aid users and visitors to find and patronize local businesses, provide educational information, and activity schedules.
 - Post plans and information on website to assist users in better utilizing resources/ businesses along the corridor. Note: Municipalities should show consistent plans and graphics for a uniform corridor-wide web presence.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Resources

- **Seek to improve water quality throughout the corridor:** There are opportunities to address water quality throughout the South Platte corridor. Potential sources of pollutants include runoff from adjacent properties, as well as issues such as e-coli from "horse properties" and septic systems up Bear Creek.
- **Team recommendation:** Identify specific areas and locations where water quality is a concern. Also identify locations where treatments measures could be implemented harmoniously within the corridor to effect a reduction in pollutants entering the South Platte and its tributaries while accomplishing other goals such as improved habitat and environmental education.
- **Emphasize river channel & wildlife restoration improvements:** Includes enhancements to riparian areas and wildlife focused recreation improvements.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- Develop trails on both the east and west sides of the River wherever possible
- Long term goal: Provide separate concrete and gravel trails for bikes and pedestrians
- Look at widening all 8' wide trails to 10' or 12' wide throughout corridor

- **Connect River district trail network to "rail trail"** to be built along east side of Santa Fe and railroad tracks from Big Dry Creek to Yale Avenue.
- **Encourage trail use by all ages:** Identify special needs for kids and elderly.

Recreation, Education, & Culture

- **Consider developing interactive water features:** Find opportunities to develop interactive river edges, spraygrounds, and designated play areas along the River for kids of all ages.
- **Develop an overall fishing management plan.** Work in collaboration with the State (Contact: Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Justin Olson 303-291-7131--District Wildlife Manager) and Trout Unlimited. Establish fishing regulations and controls, and use fishing limits and management tools in to focus fishing activity away from sensitive areas. (There is the potential for the South Platte to become "gold medal waters").
- **Consider a comprehensive public art program along the corridor.** Areas could have their own thematic character, such as a recycling/environmental theme for the Oxford to Union segment.
- **Consider screening and/or berming in all areas with adjacent properties which create a negative (visual or other) impact on the corridor.**
- **Develop River corridor signage & image:**
 - Develop uniform signage and branding for the River/ trail corridor
 - Develop signage for commercial areas/high visibility areas: Including near Aspen Grove, Downtown Littleton, Riverside Downs, River Point (including restaurants, bike shops, restrooms, etc.)
 - **Team recommendation: Develop River corridor identity, and raise awareness and elevate the brand of the River district.** Through the use of a consistent family of signage and identity elements at vehicular bridge crossings, trailheads, parking lots and high visibility areas. Create a sense of a "South Platte River District". "Image" elements could include signage, special lighting, monumentation, sight amenities, structures (i.e. kiosks) and banner poles,

etc. These elements can be uniform throughout the South Platte corridor through Arapahoe County, or they can be tailored to each municipality. However, identity elements for each area, if different, should be developed to work in concert with each other to communicate a unified corridor, and should have similar scale and applications.

Land Use & Economic Development

- **Land use considerations and economic development efforts are supported by three core strategies:**
 - Seek to realize economic value by encouraging nodes of activity and related visitor services at sites where commercial uses can be accommodated without compromising environmental, recreation and aesthetic objectives.
 - Seek to connect the corridor to existing retail, entertainment and recreational uses and integrate new corridor access points at locations that might benefit from visitor use.
 - Embrace many types of adjacent land uses and recognize that the community's historic relationship to the Platte River is part of the history of this River and part of richness of the visitor's experience. The diversity of experience and expression of the community's evolving relationship with the Platte River is to be celebrated, not homogenized.
- **Consider the future of golf courses along the South Platte River.** Three golf courses border the South Platte River through Arapahoe County: Two public (Broken Tee and Littleton Golf Course) and one private (Columbine County Club).
 - Some charrette attendees suggest that these facilities are "single-use" and do not provide recreational opportunities other than golf. Many other attendees assert that these facilities offer a wide range of services for their communities, and should not be considered for redevelopment or alternate uses. It is suggested that there be a periodic re-evaluation of the costs and benefits of these golf courses to make sure that these amenities provide the best overall value and quality of life to local residents.

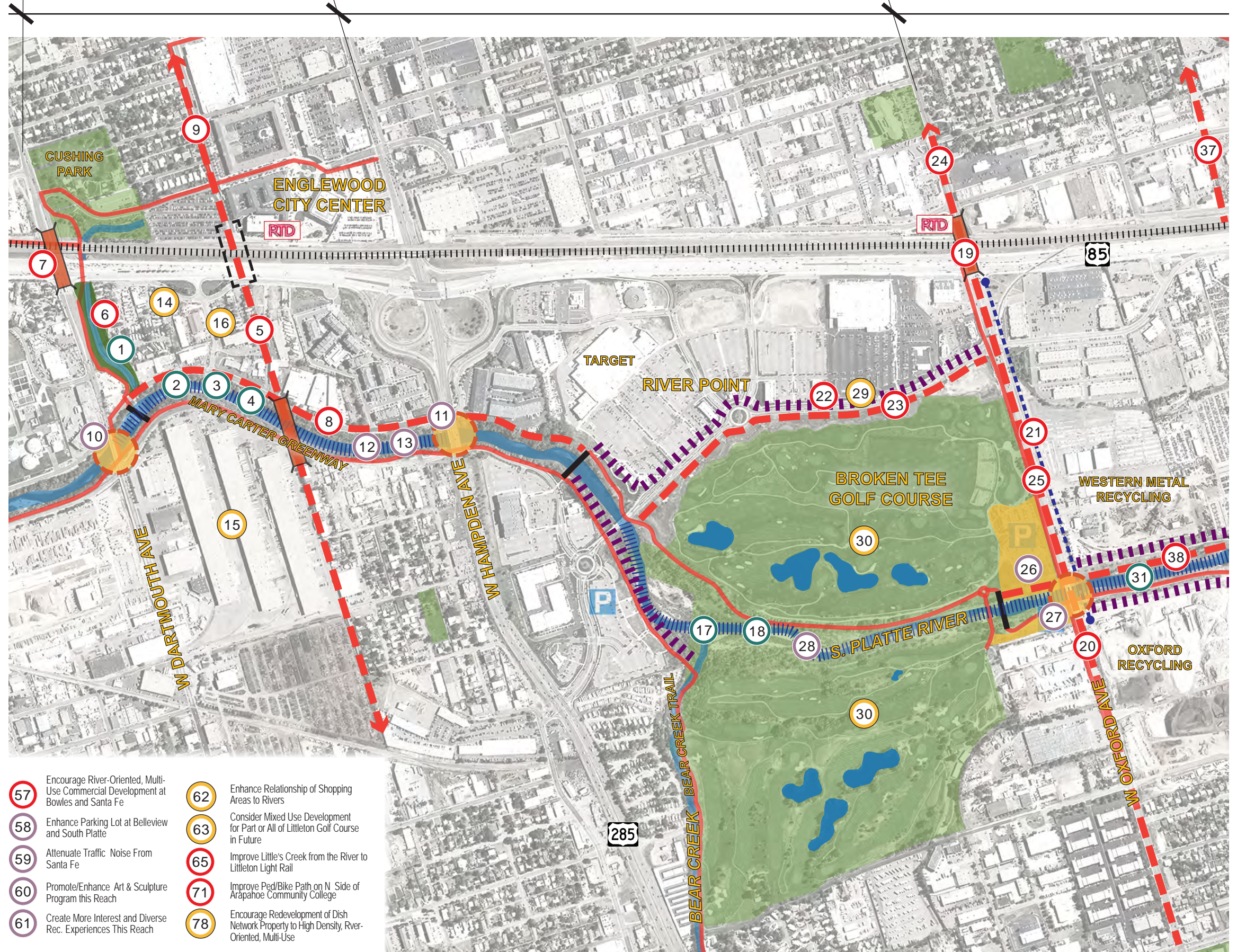
Vision Framework Map Key

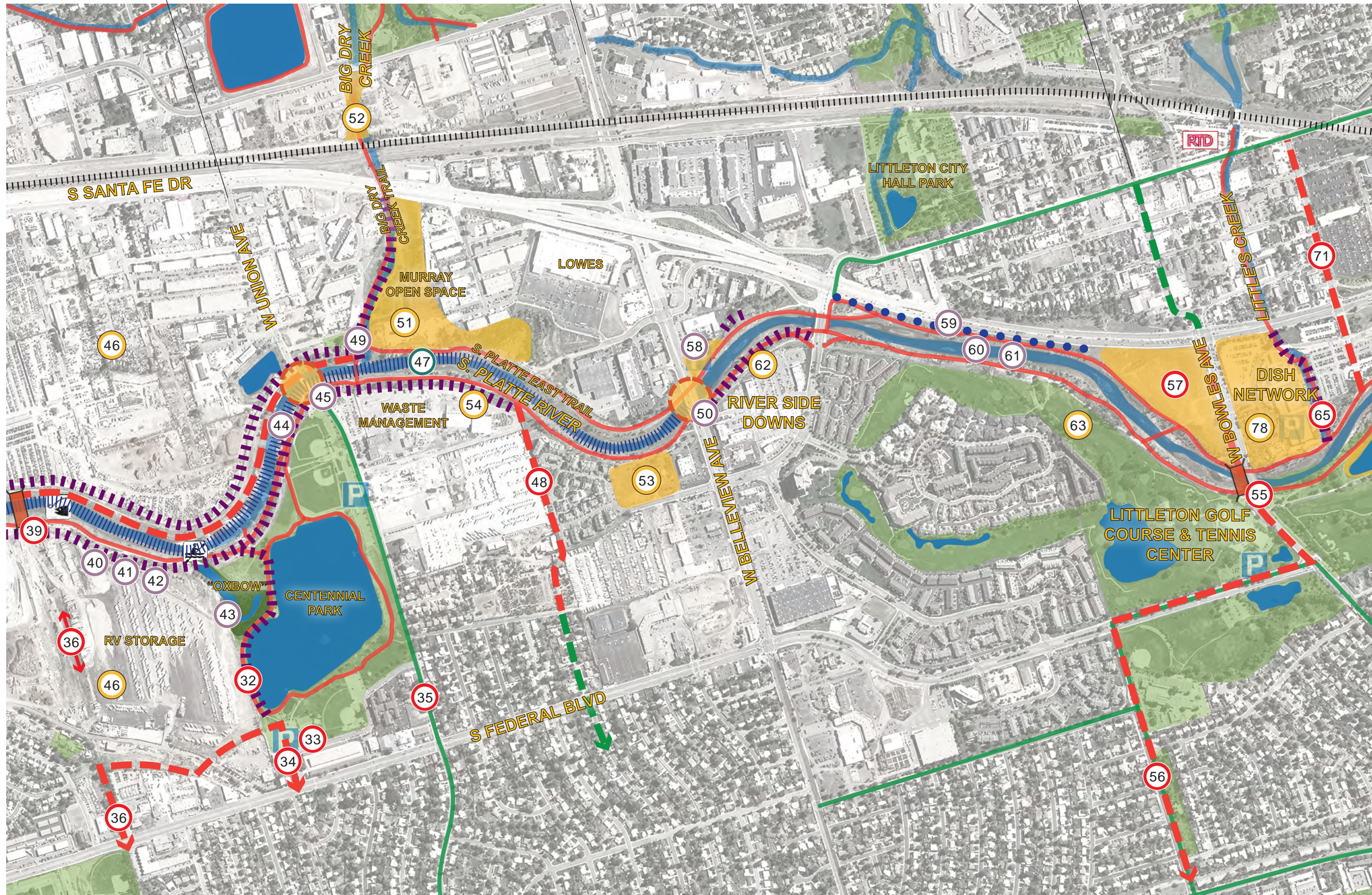
- 1 Improve Little Dry Creek Habitat and Diversity
- 2 Improve Access to River's Edge
- 3 Narrow and Deepen the River's Low-Flow Channel
- 4 Improve Vegetative Habitat in this Reach
- 5 Floyd Avenue Connections
- 6 Little Dry Creek Corridor Improvements
- 7 Ped Bridge Over Santa Fe & Tracks at Dartmouth
- 8 Develop East Side Trail along S Platte River Drive
- 9 Develop On-Street Bike Route from Englewood City Center to East
- 10 Enhance River Bridge w/ Image & Identity at Dartmouth
- 11 Enhance River Bridge w/ Image & Identity at Hampden
- 12 Add Overlooks and Site Amenities
- 13 Take-Out for Tubers and Boaters
- 14 High Density TOD Residential Along W Side of Santa Fe
- 15 Encourage More Retail in Industrial Areas West of River
- 16 Develop TOD Along the Floyd Avenue Extension
- 17 Improve Habitat & Amenities at Bear Creek Confluence
- 18 Improve Habitat & Amenities Through Broken Tee Golf
- 19 Improve Ped/Bike Route at Oxford & Santa Fe
- 20 Improve Trails/Walks Along Oxford between Windemere to Federal Blvd.
- 21 Provide Sidewalk Along the S Side of Oxford Ave.
- 22 Better Connection Between Commercial Uses & the Rec Trail
- 23 Trail Connection Along E Side of the Golf Course
- 24 Develop Bike Route E of Windemere Along Oxford
- 25 Protected Bikeway ("Cycle Track") Along Oxford from Federal to Santa Fe
- 26 Develop Boating / Tubing Improvements E of Oxford
- 27 Improve Parking Lot at Oxford Ave. and the River
- 28 Add Overlooks and Site Amenities
- 29 Orient River Point more to River & Bear Creek
- 30 Consider Mixed Use Redevelopment for Broken Tee Golf Course in Future
- 31 Restore / Enhance Habitat Along Corridor
- 32 Enhance Trail along North Side of Centennial Park
- 33 Develop Centennial Park's W Side Parking Lot into Trailhead
- 34 On-Street Bike Route From Centennial Park to Federal
- 35 Develop Safe Bike Route from SW Centennial Park to W of Federal Blvd.
- 36 Develop Quincy Alignment as a Major Trail from River to West
- 37 Extend the SW Greenbelt Trail
- 38 Develop East Side Trail from Oxford to Big Dry Creek
- 39 Develop New Ped/Bike Bridge Across South Platte at Quincy
- 40 Create a Comprehensive Interpretation Program For the Industrial Corridor
- 41 Add Overlooks and Site Amenities
- 42 Improve / Enhance Edges of Corridor
- 43 Restore Oxbow into Habitat and Educational Area
- 44 Improve Rafting/Boat Chutes and Facilities
- 45 Image & Identity Elements on the Union Avenue Bridge
- 46 Transition Area East & West of River Into High Density Housing
- 47 Create a More Dynamic and Diverse River Corridor This Reach
- 48 Develop Trail Connection Along S Edge of Waste Management
- 49 Trail Improvements at Big Dry Creek/ Greenway Trail Junction
- 50 Image/Identity elements on Bellevue Avenue Bridge
- 51 Maximize Public Benefit of Fire Training Facility Property
- 52 Consider Purchase of Property N of Big Dry Creek Between Santa Fe & Windemere & Improve Creek Corridor
- 53 Develop Trailhead/Programmable Space at Vacant Property N of Walgreens at Bellevue
- 54 Improve Greenway Edge at the Waste Management Facility
- 55 Improve East-West Connectivity for Peds and Bikes on Bowles
- 56 Create Bike & Ped Access From West Neighborhoods
- 57 Encourage River-Oriented, Multi-Use Commercial Development at Bowles and Santa Fe
- 58 Enhance Parking Lot at Bellevue and South Platte
- 59 Attenuate Traffic Noise From Santa Fe
- 60 Promote/Enhance Art & Sculpture Program this Reach
- 61 Create More Interest and Diverse Rec. Experiences This Reach
- 62 Enhance Relationship of Shopping Areas to Rivers
- 63 Consider Mixed Use Development for Part or All of Littleton Golf Course in Future
- 65 Improve Little's Creek from the River to Littleton Light Rail
- 71 Improve Ped/Bike Path on N Side of Arapahoe Community College
- 78 Encourage Redevelopment of Dish Network Property to High Density, River-Oriented, Multi-Use

DARTMOUTH TO HAMPDEN

HAMPDEN TO OXFORD

OXFORD TO UNION





Map Legend

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- On-street Bike Route
- Proposed Trail to Rail
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Light Rail Access
- Parking
- Fishing Areas
- Boat Chutes/Launches
- Open Space/Park
- Lake/Reservoir/Pond
- River/Creek

VISION PLAN IMPROVEMENTS

- Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- On-Street Bike Route
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Pedestrian/Bike Bridge
- Pedestrian/Bike Underpass
- Improve Corridor/Connectivity
- Signage/Visual Continuity
- Buffer Zone
- Habitat Restoration
- Cultural/Recreational Development
- Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas Improvements
- Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity Improvements
- Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity Improvements
- Land Use & Economic Development Improvements

Map 1 - Right Side



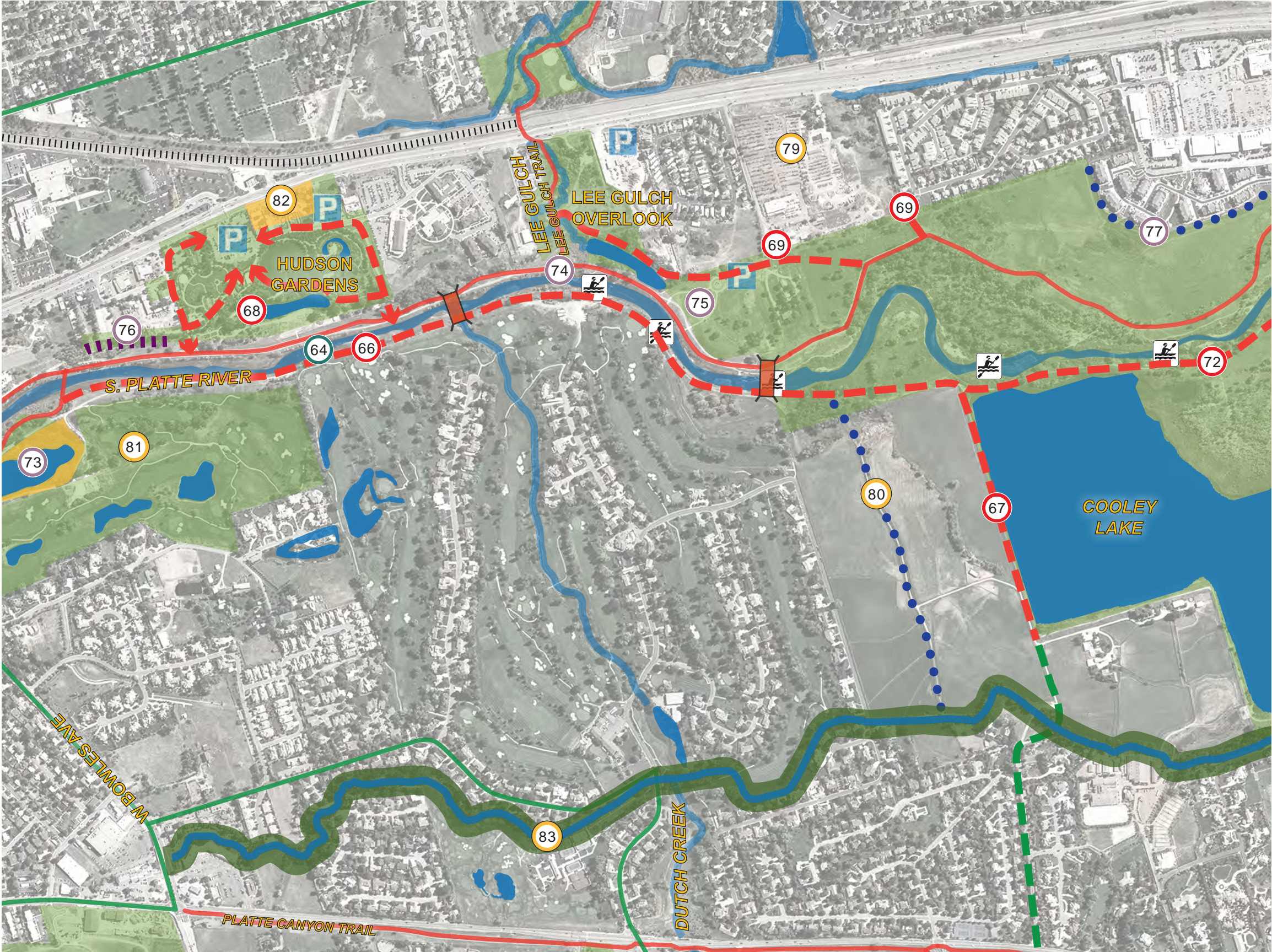
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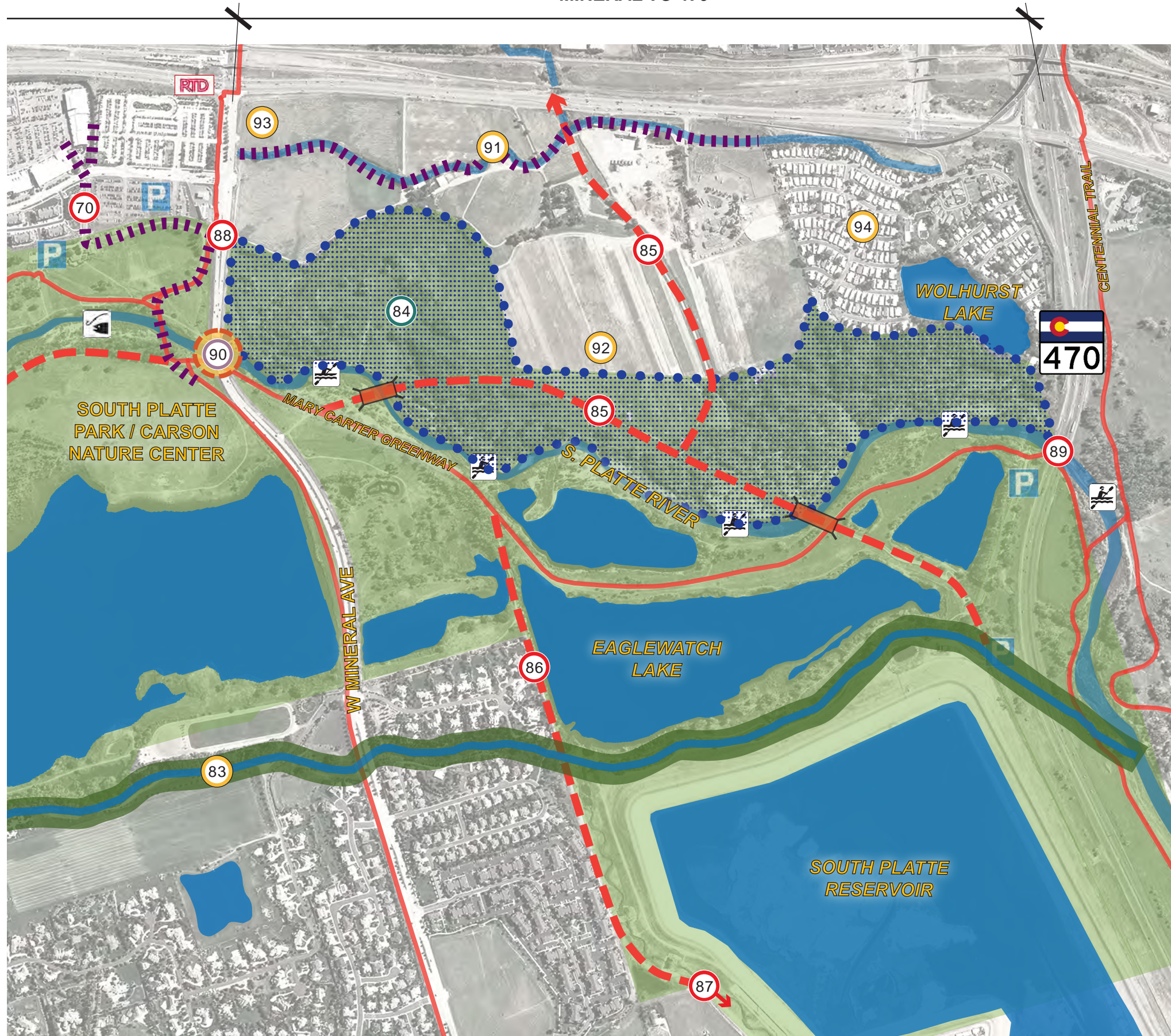
EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- On-street Bike Route
- - - - - Proposed Trail to Rail
- Pedestrian Bridge
- RTD Light Rail Access
- P Parking
- Fishing Areas
- Boat Chutes/Launches
- Open Space/Park
- Lake/Reservoir/Pond
- River/Creek

VISION PLAN IMPROVEMENTS

- - - - - Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- - - - - On-Street Bike Route
- - - - - Sidewalk Improvements
- Pedestrian/Bike Bridge
- Pedestrian/Bike Underpass
- - - - - Improve Corridor/Connectivity
- Signage/Visual Continuity
- ● ● ● Buffer Zone
- Habitat Restoration
- Cultural/Recreational Development
- # Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas Improvements
- # Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity Improvements
- # Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity Improvements
- # Land Use & Economic Development Improvements





Vision Framework Map Key

- | | |
|--|---|
| 64 Continue to Improve the River per the UDFCD Plan | 81 Consider Redevelopment of Littleton Golf Course in Future |
| 66 West Side Trail from S of Dish Network to Reynolds Landing | 82 Purchase Properties east of Hudson Gardens along South Vineland Street |
| 67 Develop Trail Along N Edge of Cooley Lake to West | 83 Coordinate with Denver Water regarding the Nevada Ditch |
| 68 Integrate Hudson Gardens with River Corridor | 84 Flood Plain Buffer Zone Along South Platte for Entire Reach |
| 69 Integrate New Breckenridge Brewery with the Greenway | 85 Trail Connection from River to Neighborhoods E of Santa Fe |
| 70 Create Stronger Connection Between RTD Lot/Aspen Grove and River Corridor | 86 Trail Along the 7-11 Gulch Between the S Edge of Polo Reserve and South Platte Res. |
| 72 Trail Along W Side of River Lee Gulch to Mineral Ave. | 87 Potential Last Chance Ditch Trail To Platte Canyon Trail Rd. |
| 73 Develop Watson Lake Into a More Valuable Recreational Resource | 88 North-South Bike/Ped Connectivity Between the Min. Ave. Light Rail and the NE Ensor Property |
| 74 Enhance Lee Gulch Trailhead & Open Space Area | 89 Improve Underpass at the Greenway Trail and C-470 |
| 75 Enhance Reynolds Landing Into Multi-faceted Open Space | 90 Enhance River Bridges w/ Image & Identity Elements |
| 76 Find appropriate use for 150' Wide Parcel at Hudson Gardens | 91 Open Space and Trail Corridors Along Drainages & Ditches |
| 77 South Platte Park Buffer Enhancements at Condos | 92 Low Impact "Buffer-Type" Land Uses Along Edge of South Platte Park |
| 79 Develop Future Development Vision for Breckenridge Brewery Area | 93 High Density Res. Land Use in the NE Quadrant of Ensor Property |
| 80 Protect/Cooley Lake from Development at Tuck Property | 94 Future Redevelopment of Wolhurst Lake Property Into River-Oriented Multi-Use |

Map 2 - Right Side



Reach 1: Dartmouth to Hampden

Area Overview

This section of the corridor has some new residential development, but is still dominated by industrial uses. It is an exciting area of change that is poised for a transformation into a multi-use corridor that takes advantage of the South Platte, light rail, and the cultural attractions of the Englewood City Center and the River Point shopping mall. Public investment in this area could serve as a catalyst to river-oriented development. The area's main challenges to be addressed are access to the east (pedestrian, bike and vehicular) and better access to the River.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

- 1 **Improve Little Dry Creek habitat and diversity.** Current conditions do not take advantage of the potential of this confluence to not only add habitat value, but to also add significantly to the aesthetics of the area, which will be important as it redevelops.
- 2 **Improve access to South Platte water's edge.** The River in this reach has steep banks and is hard to get to. If access to the river's edge is too difficult, investigate the potential for river overlooks so that visitors/trail users can enjoy the river environment, and feel more connected to the River experientially.
- 3 **Team recommendation: Investigate narrowing and deepening the River's low-flow channel in this reach.** Also consider reconstruction of some of the channel banks to provide better fish habitat, and to provide river access for fisherman.
- 4 **Improve vegetative habitat in this reach.** Increase habitat diversity and remove invasive species such as Siberian Elm. Potential improvements include the creation of wetland benches that can support a wider range of plant material than the current trapezoidal channel cross section accommodates.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 5 **Floyd Avenue connections:** Englewood's long range plan for an underpass below Santa Fe and the RR tracks, with a bridge over the Platte connecting both the sides of the corridor to Englewood City Center should be encouraged. This project would create very important

connections between the River and light rail, commercial, and cultural facilities, while improving safety.

- 6 **Little Dry Creek corridor trail improvements:** Improve the corridor along Dartmouth to provide a better quality trail experience and connection between Cushing Park and the South Platte. These improvements will also reinforce the connection from the Greenway to Englewood City Center and neighborhoods to the east, and may be implementable sooner than the Floyd Avenue connection described above. Integrate the trail and drainage improvements to make the trail less exposed and more of a greenway experience. Construct an underpass at South Platte River Drive to eliminate the at-grade crossing.
- 7 **Vehicular/pedestrian bridge over Santa Fe & train tracks at Dartmouth**
- 8 **Develop east side trail along South Platte River Drive.** Extend the trail from the existing pedestrian bridge at Little Dry Creek to south under Hampden/Hwy 285 to River Point. Consider the development of a "promenade"-type trail along the street edge to provide trail connectivity as well as an amenity for existing developments (Riverton Apartments) and future development in the area between the South Platte River and Santa Fe. Look at the potential to narrow the roadway to provide space for the trail/promenade. An east side trail/promenade could be a catalyst for this area to become a river-oriented multi-use residential district.
- 9 **Develop on-street bike route from Englewood City Center to east.** Alignment on Englewood Parkway is City of Englewood's planned route.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

- 10 **Team recommendation: Install image elements on the bridge over the South Platte at Dartmouth Avenue.** (See recommendations in the "Corridor-Wide Recommendations" section of this document.)
- 11 **Team recommendation: Install image elements on the bridge over the South Platte at Highway 285.** (See recommendations in the "Corridor-Wide Recommendations" section of this document.)
- 12 **Add overlooks and site amenities:** More benches, sitting areas, and overlooks should be added to this area to provide more opportunities for users to enjoy the river environment.

- 13 Team recommendation: Investigate a take-out for tubers and recreational boaters and river users in this reach, with egress to the adjacent streets.

Land Use & Economic Development

- 14 Develop high density TOD-type residential along west side of Santa Fe. This area is currently a hodgepodge of different uses, very few of which are suited to its best use or potential. River-oriented TOD development in this area should be a high priority.
- 15 Encourage more retail in industrial areas west of River. This area is predominantly light industrial and could be an attractive location for businesses that require some industrial infrastructure, but which can still benefit from being on a River corridor to attract visitors and clients to its facilities. (Examples might include craft breweries, kayak and boat retailers, specialty amusement and recreation facilities (climbing gyms, event venues, etc.)
- 16 Develop TOD developments along the proposed Floyd Avenue extension. This corridor between Santa Fe and the areas west of the River will become much more attractive to redevelopment with easy pedestrian, bike and vehicular access to light rail.

Reach 2: Hampden to Oxford

Area Overview

This area has seen major redevelopment in the recent past with the construction of the River Point shopping center, which has contributed to a river-oriented commercial district. Although actual integration of the shopping mall with the South Platte River corridor could be greatly improved, this new development creates a foundation for future development oriented to the River. Some key objectives for this area include: Taking more advantage of the natural resource amenity of the South Platte and Bear Creek confluence, programming and enhancement of the River Point amphitheater, improvement of the bike and pedestrian access to this area from the east and the west, gradual redevelopment of land uses that are not compatible with an active River corridor areas such as trailer parks along Bear Creek, and enhancement of the Greenway resource through Broken Tee Golf Course.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

- 17 Improve habitat and recreational amenities for the South Platte/Bear Creek confluence area. Create a nature-oriented park that allows some sensitive development of the confluence area for nature walks, bird watching, and general nature observation. Open up views to the confluence, thin out the vegetation (especially the sandbar willow thickets) to allow views in and to encourage more vegetative diversity, and perform minor modifications of the channel and overbanks to promote plant diversity, varied and rich wildlife habitat, and water quality treatment. (Research potential funding available from the EPA for projects that improve water quality.)
- 18 Improve habitat and recreational amenities along the South Platte through Broken Tee Golf Course. Revegetate bare areas, consider narrowing the low flow channel, and remove invasive species to create better habitat along this stretch. Create more overlooks and seating areas to allow Greenway users to enjoy the River corridor.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 19 Improve pedestrian/bike connections at the Oxford and Santa Fe intersection: The Oxford and Santa Fe/Railroad intersection is currently a major transportation impediment to this section of the South Platte. The unsafe pedestrian/bike crossing creates a barrier to the Oxford Light Rail Station for those coming or going west of Santa Fe. It is also a barrier for recreational uses and River/Greenway access from the east. Better, safer bike/pedestrian connections are needed at this intersection. This intersection sees an exceptionally high level of truck traffic, and pedestrian and bike safety is further compromised by the "free right turn" lanes for both east and west-bound traffic on Oxford turning onto Santa Fe, which are not a safe. Recommendations for this intersection include a bridge or underpass that gets bikes/pedestrians safely from the east side of Windemere to the west side of Santa Fe.
- 20 Improve existing trails/walks along Oxford between Windemere and Federal Boulevard. Safety upgrades are recommended to provide access commensurate with the Greenway resource that they are feeding into, including well marked and signed intersection crossings at property entrances, barriers or railings between the

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walk/trail and the roadway that will allow safer use of these routes by families with children and others en route to the Platte River and Mary Carter Greenway.

- 21 Provide a new sidewalk along the south side of Oxford Avenue.** This improvement is needed to connect to the River to Santa Fe Drive and will permit users coming from areas south of Oxford to access the Greenway Trail without having to cross Oxford Avenue.
- 22 Create a better connection between commercial uses at River Point and the recreational trail.** Physically and visually connect River Point to the recreational experience of the Greenway corridor through the use of informational signage or web sites, phone apps with QR codes, etc. that allow trail users to quickly access information on businesses and recreational opportunities in the River Point area, allowing businesses to take advantage of the benefits of their location along the Greenway amenity. Allow more integration of the commercial realm with the trail corridor through the development of multi-purpose gathering spaces, signage, and amenities.
- 23 Create a Greenway Trail connection along the east side of the golf course/west side of River Point Drive.** This trail would provide a better experience for trail users from east of the River wanting to access the Mary Carter Greenway, and would enhance the synergy between the South Platte and the shopping center. It would also improve safety for bike riders by reducing the number of streets intersections that they have to negotiate while traveling along River Point Parkway (using the existing sidewalk on the east side of the street). A recommendation was also made to consider an east-west trail connection through the golf course, which would need to be evaluated for feasibility and approved by Englewood and Sheridan's planning staff.
- 24 Show/develop a bike route east of Windemere along Oxford.** Coordination with Englewood Parks and Public Works required.
- 25 Provide a protected bikeway ("cycle track") Improvements along Oxford between Federal and east of Santa Fe.** A separated cycle track would be a "game changer" for bike access along Oxford Avenue. A project of this magnitude will need to be coordinated and funded by multiple agencies, including Englewood, Sheridan, CDOT and Arapahoe County, and the property owners along Oxford Avenue.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

- 26 Develop boating/tubing take-out on east side of Oxford Avenue**
 - **Develop "park and play" whitewater activity area.** Encourage Urban Drainage to move forward with the development of this area into a very accessible river-oriented recreation area. In addition to the whitewater improvements for boaters and kayakers, consider an accessible channel edge that would allow children and fisherman to access the water's edge in a safe environment. Provide take-out for boaters and tubers using this area.
 - **Develop large picnic pavilion in grassy area between golf parking and River to complement the river-oriented activity area** (per Englewood's existing plans.)
- 27 Improve parking lot/trailhead at Oxford Avenue and the River:** This parking lot, north of Oxford and west of the River, is slated to be expanded per South Suburban. This is a good opportunity area to strengthen the image of the corridor through the incorporation of identity elements such as signage, monumentation, art elements, kiosks, etc., so that the continuity of the Greenway is clear from Oxford, and the "district" brand is reinforced. **Team recommendation: Install image elements on the Oxford Avenue bridge.** (See detailed recommendations in the "Corridor-Wide Recommendations" section of this document.
- 28 Add overlooks and site amenities:** More benches, sitting areas, and overlooks should be added to this area to provide more opportunities for users to enjoy the River environment.

Land Use & Economic Development

- 29 Encourage River Point development to be more physically oriented to the Platte River/Bear Creek.** Support business development and architecture that adds vitality to the River and creek corridors through the incorporation of restaurants and hotels with patios and decks along the Creek, etc.
Team recommendation: Enhance and program amphitheater to create activity along the River corridor.
- 30 Consider future mixed-use redevelopment for Broken Tee Golf Course.** While controversial, this proposal arises due to the presence of numerous golf

courses along the Arapahoe County stretch of the South Platte. In the opinion of some of the charrette attendees these single-purpose uses limit the River corridor's potential to become a strong economic driver for the community, as they preclude economic development along the River. The City of Englewood disagrees with this idea. The design team recommends that uses such as golf courses along the corridor be re-evaluated on a five to ten year basis to confirm that they are in line with current corridor planning objectives. Refer to the "Corridor-Wide Recommendations" land use section for further explanation.

Reach 3: Oxford to Union

Area Overview

Framed by industrial uses, this segment of the South Platte River corridor has its own distinct character and opportunities that are quite separate from the rest of the South Platte corridor through Arapahoe County. The busy and gritty recycling industries on either side of the River are difficult to ignore, and can either be seen as one of the largest challenges to the continuity of the River Greenway experience and something to be hidden or screened, or they can be viewed as an opportunity to create a unique and exciting river segment that enriches the overall Greenway corridor with its contrasting landscape and the rich environmental themes that can be interpreted in this area. With general feedback from the charrette attendees to take the latter approach, creative approaches to celebrating the industries that are here with art, education, and elements of restored nature could make this one of the most unique experiences along the entire South Platte River through Metro Denver.

The River in this area appears extremely man-made, with little natural area or habitat development. It has significant elevation drop, evidenced by the numerous existing drop structures and chutes. Prominent riprap side slopes contribute further to its industrial feel. Some key challenges to be addressed include poor connectivity to the area from both the east and west sides, sparse and poor quality habitat, outdated and unattractive grade control and boating structures, very harsh edges along the existing land uses including extensive lengths of razor-wire studded fences and a general sense of neglect and lack of safety. It should be noted that it is likely that the adjacent industrial uses will not be moving out any time soon. Plans should be made to integrate these uses into the Greenway experience in the

short term, while proposing desired future land uses in the long term, if and when the existing businesses consider relocating or changing operations.

This segment also has especially acute needs for safe trail connections between the River corridor and neighborhoods to both the east and the west. Access points to the east and west to this reach are generally unsafe for cyclists, and are actually unfit for families and non-expert riders.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

- 31 Restore/enhance habitat along the corridor.** Improvements should be made along both the riparian river edge and in the upland areas along the banks. Opportunities should be found to provide integrated water quality treatment (at storm pipe outfalls, etc.).
- Team recommendation:** Include new wetlands areas, riparian edges, and upland habitat improvements in this segment. Look to modify the corridor's uniform cross section to include planting benches, and bury riprap with soil and revegetate to improve habitat, aesthetics and safety.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 32 Enhance trail along north side of Centennial Park between the Greenway with signage, lighting, and seating, and possibly a crusher fines jogging "shoulder" to create a primary connection to the Greenway from the west. Provide screening with a landscape buffer on the north side of the trail along the current park edge bordered by the RV storage area and a razor wire-topped fence.**
- 33 Develop Centennial Park's west side parking lot into a trailhead for the Greenway.** Provide Greenway identity elements (signage, monumentation, etc.), to indicate this is a gateway to the Greenway, and to provide an access point for local neighbors arriving by car, or bike and foot.
- 34 Create on-street bike route from Centennial Park's west parking lot to Federal Boulevard along Decatur Street.** The Federal and Decatur intersection needs to be evaluated and improved to create the safest crossing possible. Currently there is a signalized mid-block pedestrian crossing on Federal Boulevard approximately 100' south of the Decatur and Federal intersection, which allow pedestrians to cross safely, but the narrow sidewalks combined with and mid-block

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position of the crossing provide for a very poor bicycle crossing. Further study on a safe bike route through the neighborhood to King Elementary School and Bow Mar Heights Park is recommended.

35 **Develop safe on-street bike route from the southwest corner of Centennial Park to neighborhoods west of Federal Boulevard.** Improve pedestrian and bike crossing at Federal and Union. Implement planned trail improvements through the neighborhood west of Centennial Park along Union Avenue to Irving Street to Quincy. Tie into existing east-west trail on Quincy to tie back to Federal. A bridge or underpass is required at the Federal and Quincy intersection.

36 **Develop Quincy Street corridor as a major trail connection from River to west.** The trail would extend from the South Platte River to the neighborhoods west of Federal Boulevard. While the Quincy Street right-of-way between the Oxford Recycling and the RV Storage area will not currently allow a direct connection from Federal Boulevard to the South Platte River due to current use of the property, the potential exists to create a much better connection between the corridor and the neighborhoods west of Federal, utilizing the Quincy right-of-way from South Clay Street to South Irving Street. This connection will provide river access to Sheridan City Hall, all Sheridan middle schools, and Alice Terry Elementary School. Critical elements to this connection include:

- A bridge or underpass crossing of Federal Boulevard at Quincy Street.
- A safe bike and pedestrian route between the east side of the Federal and Quincy crossing to Centennial Park's west parking lot, possibly utilizing the Quincy Street right-of-way, and the utility corridor parallel to Clay Street.

37 **Extend the southwest greenbelt trail.** Connection would be made between the proposed City Ditch Trail to the planned Rail Trail paralleling Santa Fe Drive. This connection will add important connectivity to the neighborhoods east of Santa Fe in this area.

38 **Develop east side trail from Oxford to Big Dry Creek.** This trail will extend from Broken Tee Golf Course parking lot and the proposed whitewater park-n-play park, to the confluence of Big Dry Creek and the South Platte River south of Union. Underpasses will be needed under Oxford and Union Avenues. This trail has been proposed to be located closer to the River than the existing west side trail, with a more river-oriented

experience. This trail segment should provide extensive amenities including seating, art and interpretive stations. Interpretive viewing overlooks that interpret the adjacent metal recycling and car crusher industries could make this a destination attraction along the Greenway.

39 **Develop new pedestrian/bike bridge across South Platte at Quincy alignment.** This bridge will connect the existing west side trail with the proposed east side trail, providing more options for trail users and increasing the recreational value of this segment as well as safety. The bridge will also align with the proposed future trail connection to the west (if it develops) along the Quincy Avenue alignment.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

40 **Embrace and celebrate/enhance existing industrial land use and create a comprehensive interpretation program for the industrial corridor.** Incorporate an art program through the industrial reach of the River corridor that interprets the industries operating in this area—sustainable practices and recycling in particular. Ideas include “industrial art,” metal sculptures, recycled concrete structures, etc. Use art to create a unique identity for the Oxford to Union segment. The program could include a variety of media to interpret the industry, and the reality of recycling. Ideas include: QR coded interpretation and informational signage/resources/kiosks; murals on walls that present interpretive topics about recycling as well as the specific industries present in this reach. (Note, Some attendees expressed concern about graffiti as a result of this type of art/interpretive program.)

41 **Add overlooks and site amenities:** More benches, sitting areas, and overlooks should be added to this area to provide more opportunities for users to enjoy the river environment.

42 **Improve/enhance edges of corridor**

- **Consider enhancements and/or alternatives to razor wire fences.** While a certain amount of industrial character is expected in the corridor, harsh edges like razor wire fences diminish the experience along the Greenway. While secure edges at industrial properties are necessary for security and safety, alternatives such as berms, walls and screens should be explored.
- **Increase and enhance the “green edges” along edges of corridor with tree and shrub plantings.**

(Irrigation should be considered when evaluating this recommendation).

- 43 **Restore oxbow into habitat and educational area.** This area, just north of Centennial Park, is already home to numerous species. Bury or remove concrete along banks, and find ways to improve water quality in the pond. Develop user enhancements such as board walks, wildlife viewing blinds, outdoor classrooms/covered pavilions, etc., to facilitate nature study in this remnant oxbow of the Platte that pre-dates the straightening of the River in the 1960s.
- 44 **Partner with Urban Drainage to improve rafting and boat chutes and facilities.** Develop a new trailhead and boating takeout at Centennial Park along the Greenway edge; consider adding picnic shelters, habitat improvements, boating take-out and access paths. This is a highly visible location that also provides a good opportunity to create visibility and branding reinforcement for the Greenway corridor through monumentation, signage, site amenities, etc.
- 45 **Team recommendation: Install image elements on the Union Avenue bridge.** See detailed recommendations for identity and image elements in the “Corridor-Wide Recommendations” section of this document.

Land Use & Economic Development

- 46 **Transition area along the east and west side of the River into high density housing:** If and when ownership changes and/or economics cause a cessation or change from the current industrial uses (auto salvage and recycling) of these properties, land use for this area should transition to high density, river-oriented residential.

Reach 4: Union to Belleview

Area Overview

This segment has a variety of land uses adjacent to the River corridor, from the industrial uses and character of the Waste Management facility just south of Union, the strip retail, light industrial and big box retail uses along Santa Fe, and Walgreens on the southwest end, and multifamily residential wedged into the central west area. The Big Dry Creek drainage and trail corridor provide one of the largest opportunities for River corridor enhancement, with Murray Open Space, the fire training facility, and the Oxbow Property west of Lowe’s as key pieces to creating an important open space park and trailhead

to the Greenway, with all-important access and visibility from Santa Fe. Strong and continuous “green edges” to the corridor are important to creating a unified greenway through this highly variable landscape.

The character of the River through this corridor is lacking in diversity and interest. The channel is wide, with uniform grassy banks, and a sprinkling of cottonwood trees. This area would be greatly enhanced with a more variable river edge, with pools and riffles if possible, and with diverse riparian and wetland vegetation to attract wildlife and improve aesthetics.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

- 47 **Team recommendation: Create a more dynamic and diverse River corridor.** Add to the natural processes and diversity present in this reach of the River by varying the width and depth of the base flow channel, adding riffles and pools, and planting diverse bank vegetation to create more diversity in habitat types (aquatic and terrestrial), better tree canopy, and improved user experience.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 48 **Develop trail connection along south edge of Waste Management.** This connection will follow the Chenango Avenue Alignment from the Greenway to Federal Boulevard to improve access to the South Platte corridor from the neighborhoods to the west.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

- 49 **Trail improvement at Big Dry Creek/Mary Carter Greenway Trail.** Create a better trail intersection at the Big Dry Creek and Greenway paths, which currently has too tight of a radius.
- 50 **Team recommendation: Install image and identity elements on the Belleview Avenue Bridge.** (See recommendations in the “Corridor-Wide Recommendations” section of this document.)

Land Use & Economic Development

- 51 **Maximize public benefit of fire training facility property:** This facility occupies a critical property that is surrounded by open space parcels which are currently not well connected, and as such cannot

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develop to their highest potential. Ownership of this parcel is complicated, and the facility provides a valuable and necessary fire training function that cannot be found elsewhere without costing the participating municipalities/fire departments close to \$100,000 per year, so there are serious challenges to simply moving the facility to another site. However, the future of the fire training facility remains somewhat in flux in terms of the number of participating fire departments, cities involved, etc., so several options for action with this parcel are proposed as part of this Vision Framework Plan:

- **Option 1:** The best option in terms of providing multiple benefits for Greenway recreation, habitat, safety, and access (albeit the most difficult to accomplish) is to assist the ownership group to find a replacement location, and to purchase the fire training facility and develop it as a premier Greenway trailhead and open space park. This would allow the consolidation of the Murray Open Space Park, the Oxbow Parcel (west of Lowes), and the fire training property into a dedicated park and open space parcel that would become a true "emerald" along the South Platte River corridor. (One charrette group suggested that this property could also support river-oriented housing along with or instead of green space.)

Team recommendation: Consider group and family picnic sites in Murray Open Space area.

- **Option 2:** Work with the ownership group and users of the facility to reorganize the site to better serve its primary purpose of fire training, while integrating needed environmental safeguards (especially related to water quality), and opening up as much of the site as possible for public use during the times when fire training activities are not being held. In addition, develop educational and interpretive programs that explain the value of the facility to public safety. If properly redesigned, much better connections can be made between the Murray Open Space, Big Dry Creek, and the Oxbow Property.

Team recommendation: Consider group and family picnic sites where space is available.

- Note: Master plans have been done by South Suburban for Murray Open Space and the Oxbow Property. Revisions to the plans may be required if fire training facility improvements are performed, due to new opportunities and changing conditions.

52 Improve Big Dry Creek corridor

- **Investigate acquisition of property north of Big Dry Creek Trail between Santa Fe and Windemere** (currently a storage yard)
 - **Enhance north edge of Big Dry Creek between its confluence with the South Platte and Santa Fe underpass.** Consider plantings and other landscape improvements to create a more attractive corridor; work with property owners on the south side of this drainage (ACC Contractors) to screen and create a more attractive edge to their construction yard.
- Team recommendation:** Consider acquiring this property over the long term. Add lighting along Big Dry Creek Trail from the confluence of Big Dry Creek to Belleview Park for improved nighttime safety.
- **Enhance Big Dry Creek by removing invasive species, unsightly trees, and debris.**

53 Develop Greenway trailhead/programmable space at vacant property north Walgreens at Belleview (west side of River): This potential Greenway parking lot and trailhead would improve access to users from the west, and could include parking, picnic shelters, signage, etc. and be programmed for uses such as weekend farmer's markets. Other river-oriented business and revenue-generating uses would be acceptable.

Design team recommendation: Consider a long-term lease of this property with option to buy to allow basic trailhead development and recreational uses in the short term, and river-oriented businesses to move in if and/or when market forces allow.)

54 Improve Greenway edge conditions at the Waste Management facility.

- **Create visual screen with berms/trees.** Pursue option to re-orient the Waste Management transfer structures to have openings facing to the west (instead of existing east orientation) to help mitigate the trash and solid waste odors that currently are very prominent along this segment of the River corridor.
- **Interpretation opportunity at Waste Management:** Potential themes include recycling, waste, trash, and land fill technology.

Reach 5: Belleview to Bowles

Area Overview

This segment is bordered by commercial retail on the north from Belleview to Prince. Corridor land use then transitions to golf on the west and roadway edge (Santa Fe Drive) to the east, with the a large vacant development property on the southeast corner at Bowles and Santa Fe. Corridor improvement opportunities in the north section focus on improved physical and visual relationships between the retail shopping areas and the River corridor. Moving southward, the main opportunities lie in reducing the effects of Santa Fe Drive on the River corridor. The vacant property at the southeast corner is a major development opportunity that can advance important planning objectives, including connecting the corridor to downtown Littleton, and creating a mixed use river-oriented development that brings activity, business, and a civic presence to the River corridor and the water's edge.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 55 **Improve east-west connectivity for pedestrians and bikes along Bowles.** Consider a bridge across Santa Fe at Bowles and Santa Fe to better connect pedestrians and bikes to Littleton Boulevard and Downtown. Consider a separated bike trail along the south side of Bowles Avenue from Santa Fe to the South Platte, or at a minimum, widen the existing trail to 8' wide. Clarify trail route between Federal and the River (through Littleton Golf and Tennis Club parking lot) and provide a better connection between the Greenway Trail and the sidewalk on south side of Bowles Avenue.
- 56 **Create bike and pedestrian access from west neighborhoods.** Following Berry Avenue, this proposed bike route can connect as far west as the Bow Mar area, east to South Federal Boulevard, then south along South Federal to Bowles, and east along Bowles to the River. Evaluate the possibility to connect the Greenway Trail from Berry & Federal east across Littleton Golf Course.
- 57 **Encourage river-oriented, multi-use commercial development at Bowles and Santa Fe.** This currently vacant property is one of the greatest remaining development opportunities in the Littleton section of the South Platte River corridor. This is a site where a destination multi-use area oriented to the River can be developed. Development should emphasize commercial opportunities, enhance the river edge, recreational activity

and mixed use, and should have a civic feel. The river environment in this area should include plazas, accessible river edge, seating, play areas, sprayground and fountains, art, and extensive site amenities. It should also encourage activities along river's edge and in the water such as tubing, wildlife viewing, children's play, etc.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

- 58 **Enhance parking lot at Belleview with and South Platte.** This lot on the east side of the River and south of Belleview is a good opportunity to reinforce the Greenway brand and the River corridor district through the use of "identity elements". "Identity" treatment should be added to the Belleview Bridge per the recommendations in the "Corridor-Wide Recommendations section."
- 59 **Attenuate traffic noise from Santa Fe.** Traffic noise in this area is high due to the proximity of the South Platte to Santa Fe Drive. Work with CDOT to consider quieter pavements (current grooved paving is louder than many other pavement types.) Evaluate potential for noise barrier, berm or fence along Santa Fe.
- 60 **Promote and enhance an art/sculpture program in this reach.** Existing art elements provide a significant value in this highly visible reach of River corridor. An expanded art program could define this reach as an "art walk."
- 61 **Create more interest and diverse experiences along the River in this reach.** Consider more recreational features such as boating and tubing take-outs, seating, overlooks, picnic tables, and other elements that will provide opportunities for visitors to stop and enjoy this stretch of the River corridor. Consider the creation of safe and accessible river edges that provide users with opportunities to access and touch water in this area.

Land Use & Economic Development

- 62 **Enhance relationship of shopping areas to River.** Through creative urban design, design guidelines, signage, lighting, etc., extend the visual influence and the activity zone of the shopping areas (Riverside Downs, and the shopping area east of the River southeast of Belleview and Zuni) closer to the river's edge. Improve the physical trail connections and access in these areas to encourage migration from the shopping

areas to the River, and vice versa. Allow businesses relevant to Greenway user patronage to create a restrained commercial presence (i.e. bike rental and repair: Pedal Bicycles and fishing equipment: Anglers All). Program and accommodate public events like informal concerts near the River.

- 63 **Consider planning for mixed-use redevelopment for part or all of the Littleton Golf Course.** River-oriented development would spur economic development, and create a more vibrant river-oriented district. Refer to the “Corridor-Wide Recommendations” land use section for further explanation.

Reach 6: Bowles to Mineral

Area Overview

This segment is the least urban of any of the segments in the South Platte corridor project area other than the Mineral to I-470 segment. Adjacent uses on the west side of the corridor are relatively stable and established, and include open space parks, golf courses, and low density golf-oriented housing. The eastern side of the corridor includes many more areas of potential change and/or opportunity, including the defunct shopping mall and now call center at the Dish Network property, Hudson Gardens, the Denver Seminary, the future Breckenridge Brewery site, and the Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center. Key challenges for this segment include lack of connectivity to the neighborhoods west of the corridor, lack of River corridor access and visibility from the Santa Fe Drive corridor, and inconsistent land uses between Santa Fe Drive and the River. Major opportunities include the potential redevelopment of the Dish Network call center, enhancement of the Reynolds Landing Open Space Park and trailhead, and integration of the Breckenridge Brewery facility into the River corridor environment.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

- 64 **Continue to improve the South Platte River channel per the recommended restoration plan.** Look at narrowing the channel and the creation of riffle/pool sequences to improve habitat and diversity along the channel.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 65 **Improve Little’s Creek between the River corridor and downtown Littleton:** Little’s Creek is a key connection between the South Platte River and Downtown Littleton, and light rail. The corridor’s value would be further enhanced with an extension of the east end of Little’s Creek Trail eastward to the City Ditch Trail via an underpass or bridge at the railroad tracks. Improve the Little’s Gulch Trail through the Dish Network site by bringing it up to South Suburban’s standard trail width, creek crossing, and design standards. Improve the blind intersection at the junction of Little’s Creek Trail and the Mary Carter Greenway Trail.
- 66 **Develop a west side trail from south of Dish Network to Reynolds Landing.** This trail along the west side of the River south of Watson Lake is recommended to provide additional trail options to Greenway users and to reduce crowding and user conflicts on the existing trail on the east side. A pedestrian bridge will be required across the River at Reynolds Landing to connect the east and west side trails, to allow termination of the trail to protect the habitat areas along the west side of the River through South Platte Park, and to provide future access to the west through the Tuck property development for east side trail users. (Trail through Tuck property is not supported by the town of Columbine Valley.)
- 67 **Develop trail along north edge of Cooley Lake to west.** This trail would connect the Greenway to neighborhoods to the west, passing through the Tuck Property development. This trail would provide an important connection between the River corridor and the neighborhoods to the West. This connection is not supported by the town of Columbine Valley.
 - **Team recommendation:** Evaluate potential ways to implement this trail with significant buffers and barriers between the trail and Cooley Lake to protect habitat areas. Consider an expanded wetland edge along Cooley Lake that provides cover and habitat for wildlife while creating a barrier to human intrusion into this area.
 - **Develop bike trail/route from Tuck property to Platte Canyon Trail Road.** Consider on-street bike routes (marked bike path or “sharrows”) through

Columbine Valley along Driver Lane and Fairway Lane to connect the Greenway to Platte Canyon Trail Road.

- 68** **Integrate Hudson Gardens with River corridor.** Create clear connections from the parking lots on the east side of the Gardens to the Greenway for trailhead use, etc., and clearly mark with signage. Open up additional access points from Greenway Trail into the Gardens facility to encourage Greenway users to visit. Coordinate with Hudson Gardens' Master Plan (in progress as of the charrette).

- 69** **Integrate new Breckenridge Brewery facility and surrounding area into the Greenway Trail network.** Develop new trails that lead to the Brewery access road to provide direct bike and pedestrian connections to the Brewery from both northbound and southbound directions. Encourage activity associated with the Brewery to spill out to the Greenway to create opportunities for Greenway users to patronize the Brewery easily.

- **Develop trail connection between Lee Gulch Trail and Reynolds Landing on east side of pond.** The trail will increase use of the Lee Gulch Overlook area and pond, Reynolds Landing, and the Breckenridge Brewery area.
- **Improve path connection from residential subdivision south of Reynolds Landing to Greenway.**

- 70** **Create stronger connection between RTD lot/ Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center and the South Platte River corridor.** Consider Greenway monumentation and signage in locations visible to both the RTD facility and the shopping area. Stripe bike lanes and install directional signage to lead people safely to the Greenway Trail and the Carson Nature Center.

- 71** **Develop improved pedestrian/bike path along the north side of Arapahoe Community College.** Trail to follow Church Avenue between Prince Street and Dish Network Site (with at-grade crossing at Santa Fe).

- 72** **Develop trail along west side of South Platte from Lee Gulch to Mineral along Cooley Lake.** (This improvement is not supported by the town of Columbine Valley.) This trail would greatly expand Greenway user options for enjoying this very popular reach of the South Platte River corridor. Design of this reach of trail would

require extreme sensitivity to the adjacent habitat area to minimize impact on the natural resources.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

- 73** **Develop Watson Lake (across River from Dish Network) into a more valuable recreational resource.** Consider edge and habitat improvements and enhancements geared towards fishing, nature study, etc. Improvements might include a trail around the lake, tree plantings and additional fishing access.

Team recommendation: Evaluate the possibility to provide nature and recreational opportunities for mobility challenged visitors to the Greenway, especially if a Greenway parking lot/trailhead can be developed in the proximate area at Dish Network site, near the former "Tortilla Flats" restaurant area.

- 74** **Enhance Lee Gulch trailhead/open space area**

- Improve pond to be a more healthy and attractive natural and recreation area.
- Lee Gulch: SSPR has MP for open space park improvements.

- 75** **Enhance Reynolds Landing into a premier, multi-faceted open space facility.** Proposed improvements include:

- Accessible and safe water-edge "play zone" with boulders, tubing chutes, paths, etc. that allows visitors and children to touch the water, play in sand, and experience the Creek;
- Improved visibility of facility from Santa Fe including better signage, gateway treatment, etc.;
- River edge boating take-outs;
- New bike and pedestrian trails that connect Reynolds Landing with Lee Gulch Trail, and to the Breckenridge Brewery site.

- 76** **Hudson Gardens: Find appropriate use for 150' wide narrow land parcel;** Property parallels Greenway between Hudson Gardens and Dish Network: Potential uses: fitness course, mountain bike course, or natural area buffer and screening.

- **Team recommendation:** Use this parcel to provide more picnic areas and shade structures for the trail users.

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- 77 **South Platte Park buffer enhancements:** Buffer the visual effects of the Aspen Grove condos from South Platte Park through the use of a berm or a planting buffer. Irrigation requirements will need to be considered, at a minimum for the first two to three years after planting.

Land Use & Economic Development

- 78 **Encourage redevelopment of Dish Network call center property at corner of Bowles and Santa Fe to create high density, river-oriented, “civic” multi-use development.** This property is one of the greatest remaining opportunities in the Littleton reach of the South Platte River corridor where a destination multi-use area oriented to the River can be developed. Development should enhance the river edge, bring activity and mixed use to the corridor, and have a civic feel. The river environment in this area should include plazas, accessible river edge, seating, play areas, art, and extensive site amenities, and should encourage activities along the river’s edge and in the water, including tubing, wildlife viewing, children’s play, etc. Development should create strong connections to the east via an enhanced Little’s Creek corridor to the Downtown Littleton light rail, and the City Ditch Trail. Existing buildings/structures to remain should be redesigned or be re-oriented to embrace the River with windows, patios and decks. (Assistance with permitting may provide catalyst for these improvements to happen.)
- 79 **Develop future development vision for Breckenridge Brewery area**
- Encourage future redevelopment of the mobile home park near Breckenridge Brewery into river-oriented mixed use if/when the owner is ready to redevelop this property.
 - Redevelop industrial uses to south of Brewery site to more appropriate uses. Find appropriate use for narrow parcel adjacent to the residential subdivision to the south that enhances the River corridor and provides new economic development opportunities in this area.
- 80 **Tuck property residential redevelopment protect/ preserve South Platte Park from residential growth and limit lake shore access.** Protect Cooley Lake habitat through edge protection and habitat enhancement.

- 81 **Consider future redevelopment of Littleton Golf Course (south “nine”) into river-oriented residential or mixed-use.** Refer to the “Corridor-Wide Recommendations” land use section for further explanation.
- 82 **Purchase or otherwise plan for purchase of properties east of Hudson Gardens along South Vineland Street.** Transition to more compatible land use or open space land that provides improved physical and visual access to Hudson Gardens from Santa Fe Drive.
- 83 **Coordinate with Denver Water regarding the Nevada Ditch.** (Ditch is west of South Platte, mostly underground, going through Columbine Valley from Bowles to west edge of Tuck property, west side of Cooley Lake, across Mineral between Eaglewatch Lake and South Platte Reservoir.) Find out what the future plans are for this facility, and if there are any opportunities for River corridor enhancement along this alignment.

Reach 7: Mineral to C470

Area Overview

This segment is by far the least developed of any of the other segments. Other than the Polo Reserve residential development southwest of Mineral and the River and the Wolhurst Lake mobile home park at the southeast corner of this segment, all of the land adjacent to the corridor is either dedicated open space, or undeveloped private land parcels. The Ensor property on the east side of the River is the largest development opportunity, with access from both Mineral and Santa Fe Drive, and light rail connections at Mineral. The development of this property will also have a significant influence over the connectivity of this segment of the Greenway to the established neighborhoods to the east.

Water Resources, Habitat & Natural Areas

- 84 **Consider a “floodplain buffer zone” between adjacent uses and the South Platte corridor for the entire reach.** This buffer zone could mitigate impacts on the aesthetics, views, noise, and water quality by providing vegetative and earthen screens, wetlands and riparian areas, and undeveloped land at the edges of new development.

Trail & Multi-Modal Connectivity

- 85 Create trail connection from Greenway/River to neighborhoods east of Santa Fe. Trail would pass through the Ensor property, crossing Santa Fe Drive under the existing bridge underpass (midway between Mineral and County Line Road) to the east side of Santa Fe, and tying into trail around McLellan Reservoir, with connections to the High Line Canal Trail on the south side of the reservoir. The trail will require sensitive routing and design to minimize impacts on wildlife habitat.
- 86 Investigate a trail connection along the 7-11 Gulch between the southern edge of the Polo Reserve Development and South Platte Reservoir. This is one of the few potential trail connections between Platte Canyon Trail to the South Platte River, and would provide a direct connection to the Massey Draw Regional Trail, which extends west to Wadsworth Boulevard (approximately 1 1/2 miles west of Platte Canyon Trail).
- 87 Investigate developing the Last Chance Ditch corridor as another potential trail route from Platte Canyon Trail to the corridor (just north of 7-11 Gulch).
- 88 Plan for a high level of north-south bike/pedestrian connectivity between the Mineral Avenue RTD light rail station and the northeastern corner of the Ensor Property. In addition to well developed north-south surface crossings at signalized intersections, consider at least one bridge or underpass across Mineral Avenue to provide a safe, grade-separated route between these important areas to strengthen the transit-oriented development (TOD) potential for the northern edge of the Ensor Property.
- 89 Coordinate with CDOT to improve underpass at the Greenway Trail and C-470. This dangerous underpass needs widening due to poor sight distance, and a very tight turning radius. Consider including a trail on the east side of the South Platte River and habitat connections to Chatfield State Park for wildlife movement.

Recreation, Civic Uses, Education, Culture & Identity

- 90 Team recommendation: Install image and identity elements on the Mineral Avenue Bridge. (See recommendations in the "Corridor-Wide Recommendations" section of this document.)

Land Use & Economic Development

- 91 Create open space and trail corridors that reinforce the natural and man-made drainages/ditches while also creating a well connected development.
- 92 Plan for lower impact "buffer-type" land uses along edge of South Platte Park to minimize impacts on the natural and visual qualities of this natural open space resource.
- 93 Consider high density residential land use in the northeastern quadrant of the property near the intersection of Mineral Avenue and Santa Fe Drive.
- 94 Redevelop Wolhurst Lake Trailer Park into a river-oriented multi-use development when/if owner desires to transition property to a more permanent land use in the future.

Next Steps - Introduction

The South Platte Vision charrette has served as a great vehicle to identify a very wide range of potential projects that the South Platte Working Group, and its member organizations, can evaluate and prioritize for implementation into the next two to three year period. As an open and inclusive process, the charrette generated many, many sometimes contradictory recommendations for improvements to the South Platte River corridor, most which have not been vetted for feasibility (based on financial, physical constructibility, political, or other evaluation criteria). In this section the consultant team uses its knowledge of the South Platte River corridor, its experience in developing master plans and getting projects built, and its understanding of the goals and objectives of the SPWG members to propose “Next Steps” that will move the Group forward in its goal to get projects done in the corridor. These proposals are intended as a starting point for discussion for the SPWG members. These “Next Steps” are divided into the following categories:

Quick Wins: These are discrete and well supported projects that appear to be implementable if given the appropriate level of funding and stakeholder and agency support. These projects can probably be implemented in the next 2 to 3 years, depending on level of complexity, cost, and other factors like land ownership issues, etc.

Quick Studies: In the case of large, more complex and less well defined improvement recommendations, additional evaluation to determine feasibility and cost is needed. The “quick studies” will provide this information and allow the SPWG to make more informed decisions about whether to implement a project or not.

Charrette Follow-On Process: One of the main goals of the charrette was to begin to establish a dialogue between the diverse voices within the South Platte corridor. Based on the success of the charrette, this goal appears to have been achieved to some extent. However, the good will and idea exchanges that occurred in the charrette will quickly wither if not encouraged and nurtured by an on-going, inclusive process. These proposals for on-going interaction among stakeholders and charrette attendees are a starting point, intended to be massaged and revamped. The important thing is that there is a plan.

Quick Wins

1. **River District Identity Plan:** This is a design study to develop a unified plan to create a South Platte River District identity and brand for the corridor. This effort should pay significant dividends towards leveraging the (already) tremendous resources of the corridor. The district identity plan should address site amenities, signage and monumentation, and can also establish guidelines for how commercial areas within the corridor can be integrated with the River corridor in a controlled manner to create a more interesting, vibrant corridor. The plan should also address “corridor-wide” identity elements vs. local and municipal (unique and separate) identity. This plan can be a sourcebook that will guide all future projects in a consistent, attractive, and high quality manner.
2. **Oxford to Union Corridor Improvements Plan:** The charrette helped to generate significant enthusiasm towards a new outlook on the industrial core of the South Platte River corridor that embraces the area’s industrial character and makes these qualities the focus of a unique greenway experience. This improvements plan would develop an overall master plan for the Oxford to Union segment, including the generally supported East Side Trail as well as a public art program, interpretive program (recycling themes), edge treatments (tree plantings and alternatives to razor wire and unadorned concrete block walls). The plan would dovetail with the stream channel improvements being developed by Urban Drainage’s and the local government sponsor’s consultant. The master plan for this segment should establish the trail layout, potential art and interpretive locations, general grading and retaining walls, river access, overlooks (if desired), and landscape elements. From the master plan, initial construction/implementation phases can be developed to a final design package, with subsequent phases developed through a preliminary level of design.
3. **Whitewater “Park & Play” at Oxford Avenue:** This river improvement element, currently under preliminary design by Urban Drainage’s and the local government sponsor’s consultant, will bring activity to the industrial segment of the corridor, has good parking and street access, and will also enhance river channel stability and habitat as well.

4. **Little Dry Creek Corridor Enhancements:** Improvements to this important trail and drainage corridor would include channel improvements, habitat enhancements, trail, and landscape elements, as well as lighting and identity elements (if desired). The feasibility of a trail underpass at South Platte River Drive would be an important design study that will influence the future of how the rest of the east side of the South Platte River would be designed/developed. Potential partnerships with Urban Drainage should be pursued, especially if there are hydrological improvements that could be achieved as part of this potential project.
5. **South Platte River Drive East Side Trail/Promenade - Dartmouth to Hampden:** As mentioned in the Vision Framework Plan, it is the opinion of the consultant team that this area between Santa Fe Drive and the River is poised for significant change due to its proximity to the Englewood City Center and light rail. If and when the City of Englewood constructs the Floyd Avenue underpass under Santa Fe and the proposed Floyd Avenue Bridge, this area will become directly connected to light rail, and development could be relatively rapid. Having a plan in place for the preferred design of the east edge of the River would be very important to inform the Floyd Avenue underpass and bridge project. Implementation of a promenade/trail along the east side could be a catalyst that helps to jump start redevelopment in this area, and could actually encourage private developers to look upon the River as a valuable amenity to be engaged by new development instead of ignored in favor of an internally focused development plan. An important aspect to this project is providing access to the River in this reach, which is generally inaccessible due to steep banks and walls. River channel and habitat improvements could also be an important component of this potential project as well.
6. **Centennial Park Oxbow Nature Area:** The remnant oxbow north of Centennial Park is a great opportunity for a habitat enhancement, education and interpretation project. Improvements could include pond edge grading and vegetation, water aeration, trails, boardwalks, overlooks, and shade shelters. This area could be developed to accommodate school groups for environmental education field trips. A project budget for this project could be calculated fairly quickly, followed by design documents and implementation within one to two years.
7. **Purchase of the Vacant Property Adjacent to Walgreens North of Belleview:** This site is not a high priority Greenway development site, but purchasing it would simply be taking advantage of a vacant, accessible site adjacent to the Greenway which could be developed into a Greenway trailhead, with parking and picnic facilities. This facility could potentially be programmed for community uses such as fund raisers, farmers markets, etc., or sold or leased back to a business that would provide beneficial services for the Greenway, such as a restaurant, etc.
8. **Greenway Edge Enhancement at Waste Management:** Potential collaboration with Waste Management to reduce the impacts of the solid waste transfer station near Union Avenue could greatly improve the user experience in this area. Englewood City staff have had talks with Waste Management regarding the re-orientation of the transfer "sheds" so that the open sides would face west, away from the Greenway. This would likely reduce the impact of the odors from the site significantly. A landscaped berm or wall along the east edge of the Waste Management site is desired to screen the barns and provide a more aesthetic edge. Indications are that Waste Management may partner with efforts to reduce their impacts on the site. An interpretive component, focused on landfills, waste, and recycling could also be integrated into this project scope. This project should be straight forward, and could likely be designed and implemented within one to two years.
9. **Reynolds Landing Improvements:** With the development of the Breckenridge Brewery and the new signalized access at Santa Fe, Reynolds Landing will likely start to have more visibility and usership. This South Suburban trailhead has also been identified as being under-utilized, as well as a good candidate to take some of the recreational use pressure off of South Platte Park. Improvements recommended for this area include river edge improvements that allow children and others to safely engage the water. Other potential river related improvements include boating take-outs, habitat improvements, fishing access points, and river channel improvements. From a circulation standpoint, new trails have been recommended to provide better

access to the Breckenridge Brewery site, and to the Lee Gulch trailhead and pond. The addition of trees, vegetation, and smaller picnic shelters would make this facility more attractive to users. This project could be combined with the on-going channel improvement projects that were initiated in 2013 by Urban Drainage and the local agency sponsors to create comprehensive improvements to this facility.

10. **Integrate Hudson Gardens with the River:** The charrette identified Hudson Gardens as somewhat of a missed opportunity for the Greenway, and vice-versa. The Gardens have great access from Santa Fe, spectacular garden areas that are free and open to the public, and should be thoroughly integrated with the Greenway experience. Lacking are trail connections between parking lots to the east, trailhead signage and monumentation (kiosks, etc.) marking an entrance to the Greenway, a re-worked western edge along the River, possibly with improved trails to allow more integration with the Greenway and its users. Hudson Gardens is currently updating its master plan. Designing and implementing the improvements listed above is not a complex process due to the consolidated ownership; Design and implementation/construction could be completed in one year.
11. **Watson Lake Improvements:** Recommendations for this small pond across the River from the Dish Network Call Center call for a loop trail, landscape and habitat enhancements, and expanded fishing access. This facility is another opportunity to attract more fisherman away from South Platte Park. Design and implementation for this potential project would be very straight forward, and could likely be completed within one year.

Quick Studies

1. **Fire Training Facility Master Plan:** The fire training facility occupies a very strategic location along the South Platte River corridor between Union and Belleview Avenues, and has been identified as a potential redevelopment opportunity by the charrette attendees. It is situated between the River and South Suburban's/Littleton's Murray Open Space to the east, and adjacent to the Oxbow Open Space property to the south. Through either a relocation of the training facility to another site, or the reorganization of the site to allow some public use in addition to a reorganized fire training component, the site could become the element that unifies the disparate open space properties in this area into a significant open space amenity at the prime location of the Big Dry Creek and South Platte River confluence. While it is generally agreed that the current (and infrequent) use of the site as a training ground for fire fighting is not the best and highest use of this property, it is also acknowledged that the facility serves a very important training role for the communities in western Arapahoe County. Furthermore, it is likely that moving the training operations would be expensive and complicated, as alternate sites may be difficult to find, and getting the four owners to agree on a course of action could be very difficult. Despite these challenges, the potential benefits from reorganizing or relocating the fire training facility are quite large and merit a study that will determine the future of this facility for the near term and allow the South Platte Working Group to either act on a new plan for the site, or put this idea to bed and move on to other concerns. The master plan project should be performed by planners, landscape architects and real estate consultants who are able to look at both the relocation and site reorganization options. The project scope should also include an assessment of the feasibility of the ownership group agreeing to any proposed actions or changes to this facility.
2. **Oxford Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvement Study—Windemere to South Platte River:** The bike and pedestrian route along this stretch of Oxford is perhaps the most unsafe, yet necessary, of any along the South Platte River corridor. This is a required connection for those accessing the River from central Englewood, as alternative routes into the River corridor are Big Dry Creek, more than a mile to the south, and Little Dry Creek, about a mile to the north. With the development of the Oxford Light Rail station and the new adjacent TOD residential, this crossing route is a critical link for commuters accessing light rail from neighborhoods and businesses west of Santa Fe. Based on discussions with the City of Englewood and the City of Sheridan, the construction of a bridge or underpass to completely resolve the safety issues would be an extremely expensive proposition that is not currently funded. However, non-structural improvements, including increased signage, roadway striping, guard rails, and possibly some crosswalk signalization could potentially improve safety and user experience for this connection, and are worth evaluating. The study should be performed by a transportation planner specializing in pedestrian and bicycle safety related design, followed by detailed design of proposed improvements for implementation.

- 3. Centennial Park to Quincy Avenue Trail Connection:**
The significant lack of trail connections to the neighborhoods west of the South Platte River was identified as an important issue during the charrette. One of the neighborhoods with the worst access to the River is the area around Alice Terry Park, between Oxford and Union Avenues, west of Federal Boulevard. There is no good route for cyclists to reach the South Platte safely from this neighborhood, and things are not much better for pedestrians. The City of Sheridan has been looking into possible trail routes between Centennial Park and the areas west of Federal. There is great potential to provide a safe bike and pedestrian route through this corridor that would provide a dramatic improvement to access, and it is recommended that a detailed trail route and preliminary design study be done to move this effort forward, and to assist with attaining grant funding that might be available to make this trail project a reality.
- 4. Corridor-Wide Water Quality Opportunities Study:**
There was significant discussion during the charrette about dealing with water quality throughout the corridor. If the South Platte Working Group and the corridor stakeholders are interested in potentially improving water quality within the corridor, a study needs to be done to identify the storm run-off sources throughout the corridor. The best opportunities for useful treatment will be those situations where runoff from surrounding roads, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces currently flows into the South Platte or one of its tributaries without any kind of treatment. To have any beneficial effect, treatment must occur to the water before it gets into a major drainageway as meaningful treatment of water already in the River, or one of its major tributaries is not feasible. A study of runoff areas, along with an evaluation of the available open spaces that could potentially infiltrate, or temporarily pond runoff to reduce pollutants, would establish the water quality opportunities in the corridor. This list could then be evaluated by the group as to whether further action is warranted. This study should be led by a civil engineer with specialization in drainage and hydrology.
- 5. Corridor-Wide Habitat Study:** Many of the recommendations documented in the Vision Framework Plan refer to enhancing or restoring habitat areas. To best understand the corridor's habitat, and issues and opportunities, a corridor-wide habitat study should be done that not only identifies good and bad habitat, but also identifies key weak links in wildlife corridors, and valuable habitat resources that should be preserved and enhanced.

