

# Stories From the Field:

# Local Experiences Conducting Health Impact Assessments (HIA)

DRCOG MetroVision 2040 Idea Exchange

December 15, 2014

Denver, CO

Gretchen Armijo, AICP

Denver Department of Environmental Health

*Be Healthy* **Denver**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

# Presentation Overview

1. What is Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?

2. Globeville and Elyria Swansea HIA

3. Lessons Learned

- *What went well*
- *Challenges/barriers*
- *Stakeholder engagement – same or different than other planning processes?*
- *Elected official involvement*
- *Communications and outreach (and surprises)*
- *Next Steps: Implementation*

4. Emerging Trends in the Field

***Be Healthy* Denver**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## Health Impact Assessment

A systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.

Through HIA report and communications

Judge health effects of a proposed project, plan or policy

Highlight health disparities

Provide recommendations

Raise awareness among decision makers and the public

Make health impacts more explicit



Through the HIA process

Engage & empower community

Recognize lived experience

Build relationships & collaborations

Improve the evidence

Improve transparency in decision making

HIA Step	Description
Screening	Determines the need and value of an HIA
Scoping	Determines which health impacts to evaluate, methods for analysis, and a workplan
Assessment	Provides: 1) a profile of existing health conditions 2) evaluation of potential health impacts
Recommendations	Provide strategies to manage identified adverse health impacts and maximize benefits to health
Reporting	Includes: 1) development of the HIA report 2) communication of findings & recommendations
Evaluation & Monitoring	Tracks and evaluates: 1) the process of conducting the HIA 2) impacts on decision-making processes and implementation of the decision 3) impacts of the decision on health outcomes



HIA Principle	An HIA should . . .
Democracy	Involve and engage the public, and inform and influence decision-makers
Equity	Consider distribution of health impacts, pay attention to vulnerable groups and recommend ways to improve proposed decisions for affected groups
Sustainable Development	Judge short- and long-term impacts of a proposal
Ethical Use of Evidence	Use evidence to judge impacts and inform recommendations, not set to support or refute a proposal; be rigorous and transparent
Comprehensive Approach to Health	Be guided by the wider determinants of health

HIA has been used throughout the world in a broad array of decision contexts, in various sectors of government and society

## State / Local Policies

### Education

- School discipline
- School funding
- School integration

### Labor

- Paid sick days
- Hiring practices
- Pay equity

### Incarceration alternatives

### Agriculture

- Farm to school
- Agricultural plans

### Energy

- Smart meters
- Cap & Trade

## Land Use and Transportation

- New housing or mixed-use dvpt
- Public housing redevelopment
- Commercial projects
- Infrastructure projects
- General Plan updates
- Specific and Area Plans
- Zoning plans
- Transit-oriented development
- Transit corridor or station plans
- Highway or arterial plans
- Siting of polluting facilities
- Natural resource extraction

# HIA for New Neighborhood Plans in Globeville and Elyria Swansea, North Denver

- To inform a City decision point: Neighborhood Plan updates
- To add health considerations to City policy and investment decisions (requested by Council)
- To analyze the environmental and health concerns that residents have raised
- To recommend evidence-based changes to the built environment that can improve health

*Be Healthy* **Denver**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# DENVER CITY COUNCIL



## 2014 Council Priorities

### Retain Revenue for Denver (Citywide Policy)

Implement a Robust Retail Strategy that Supports Denver's Tax Base.

- ◆ Provide incentives for retail & other businesses to locate & remain in Denver
- ◆ Encourage residents & visitors to shop in Denver

### Solid Waste Plan (Public Works)

Accelerate Implementation of the Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan.

- ◆ Set clear timelines & provide sources of capital funding to improve solid waste service
- ◆ Establish a three-cart waste collection system citywide (Recycle, Compost, Trash)
- ◆ Convert dumpsters to roll-out barrels, especially in Denver's low-income neighborhoods
- ◆ Ensure Large Item Pickup in areas prone to illegal dumping

### Health Impact Assessments (HIA) & Plans (Community Planning & Development)

Budget for Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) & Action Plans in Neighborhood Planning Processes.

- ◆ Make HIAs a standard component of all neighborhood plans
- ◆ Develop an implementation plan for addressing HIA findings

### Police Patrols & Traffic Cars (Department of Safety)

Increase Police Patrol Cars & Traffic Cars in Relationship to the Size & Scope of the Proposed New Police Precincts.

### Gang, Graffiti & Violence Prevention/Enforcement (Department of Safety)

Enhance Resources for Gang, Graffiti & Violence Prevention & Enforcement.

### Shared Service Projects with DPS (Multiple City Agencies)

Collaborate & Work on Shared Services Projects with Denver Public Schools (DPS).

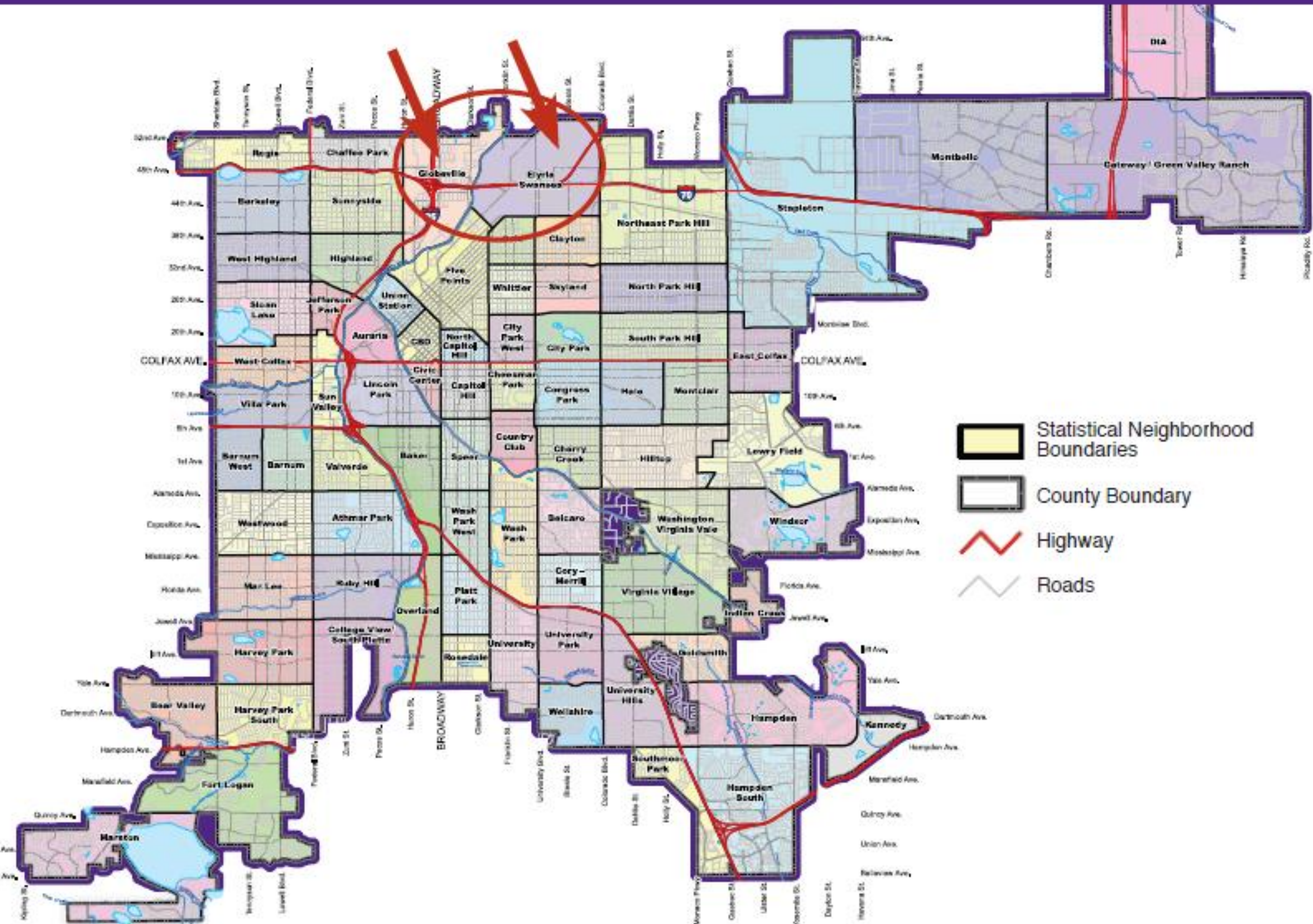
### Youth Development (Office of Economic Development)

Enhance Training and Job Opportunities for Disconnected Youth.

- ◆ Empower Denver's youth through skills training & economic development opportunities
- ◆ Plan & host job fairs
- ◆ Find ways to expedite the hiring of youth at little or no cost to employers



# Globeville and Elyria Swansea Neighborhoods in Denver





# SCOPING:

## Health Impacts to Evaluate (community priority)

- Environmental quality including air, odors, noise, water, soil
- Connectivity and mobility
- Access to goods and services including healthy food
- Community safety
- Mental wellbeing and stress



*Be Healthy* **Denver**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# ASSESSMENT: Health Status

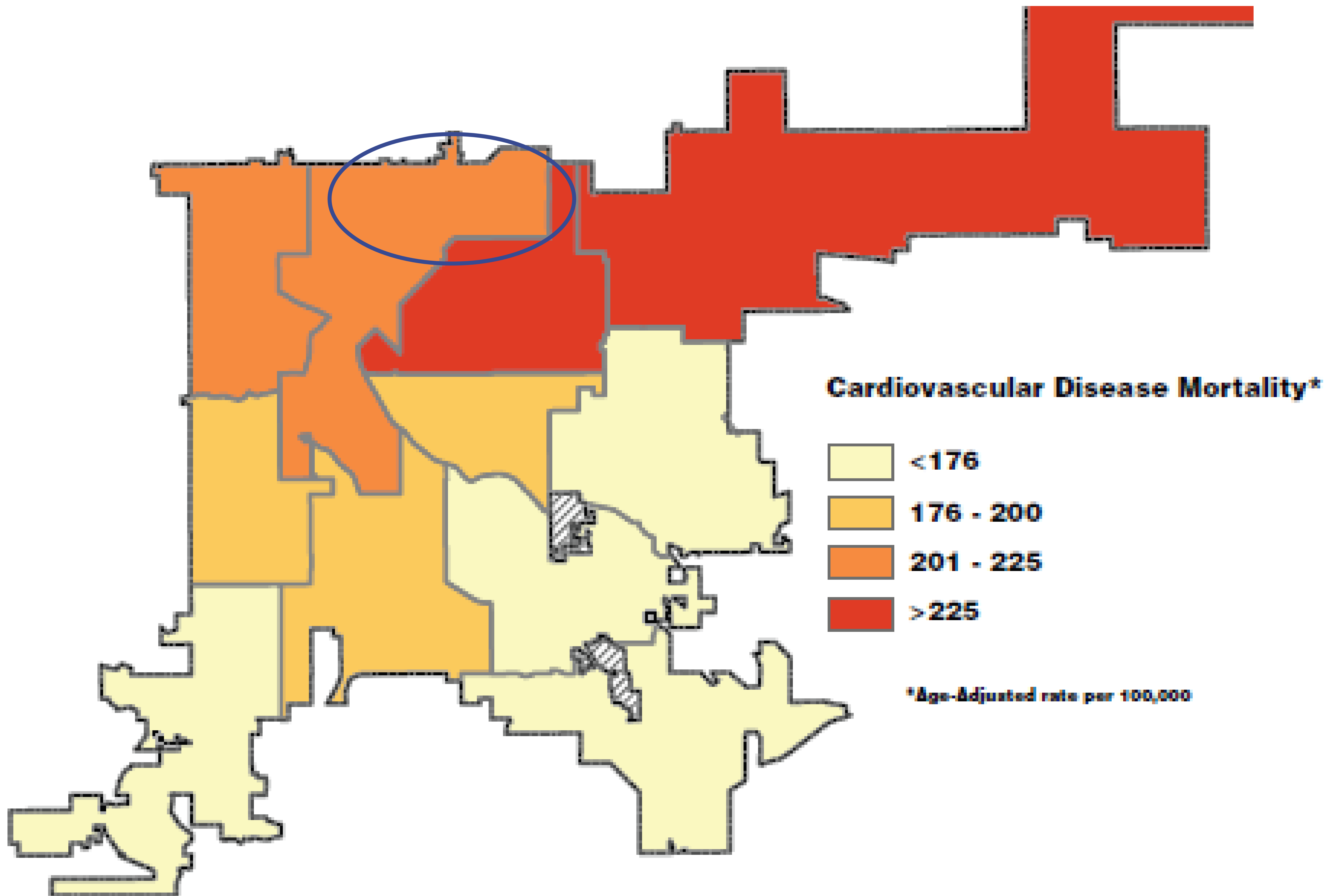
Globeville and Elyria Swansea:

- primarily Hispanic populations
- families with young children
- low socioeconomic status
- history of environmental pollution and injustice (I-70, industry)
- disparate health status compared with Denver overall





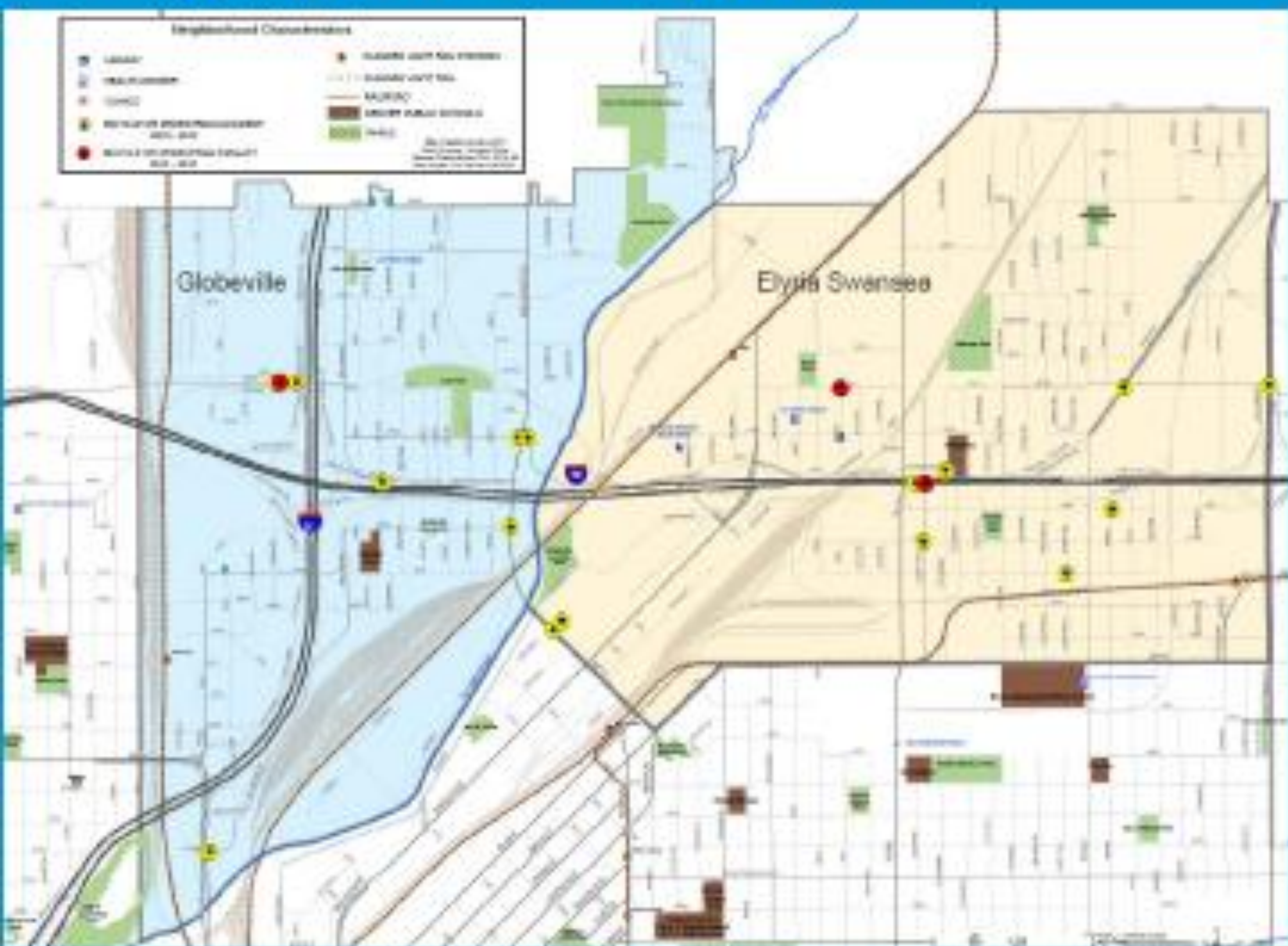
# Cardiovascular Disease Deaths DENVER, 2010





# ASSESSMENT: Community Safety

**FIGURE 27:  
Traffic, Bike and Pedestrian Accidents**



## How Community Safety Affects Health

Traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety and real and perceived crime in a community all contribute to a sense of community safety. In addition to pedestrians and cyclists being injured in accidents, other factors that can contribute to fears of an unsafe environment include physical signs of disorder such as abandoned buildings, graffiti, litter, and loitering. Several studies have found that the amount of physical disorder in a neighborhood is linked to fear of crime.<sup>8</sup> Physical neighborhood design that encourages interaction and a sense of community has been shown not only to reduce crime, but also to create a sense of community safety and security.<sup>9</sup>

### Traffic Crashes and Injuries

There has been a lot of research conducted on the relationship between traffic crashes and injuries to passengers, cyclists and pedestrians. Traffic speed, traffic volume and road design are key factors that affect how many injuries there are in an accident and how severe they may be.

One review of 16 research studies found 11% fewer road traffic injuries in areas designed to reduce traffic speeds with features such as narrow travel lanes, medians, sidewalks and street trees.<sup>10</sup>

Slower vehicle speeds result in fewer pedestrian injuries. With vehicle speeds below 20 miles per hour, the probability of serious or fatal injury is less than 20% of the probability of injuries at higher speeds. With speeds above 35 mph, most injuries are incapacitating.<sup>11</sup>

Bike lanes keep bicyclists safer. One study found the risk of injuries to cyclists was lowest on road bike routes, on-road marked bike lanes and off-road bike paths, compared to roads without these. Street lighting and paved surfaces also improve cyclist safety.<sup>12</sup>





# RECOMMENDATIONS:

## Recommendations

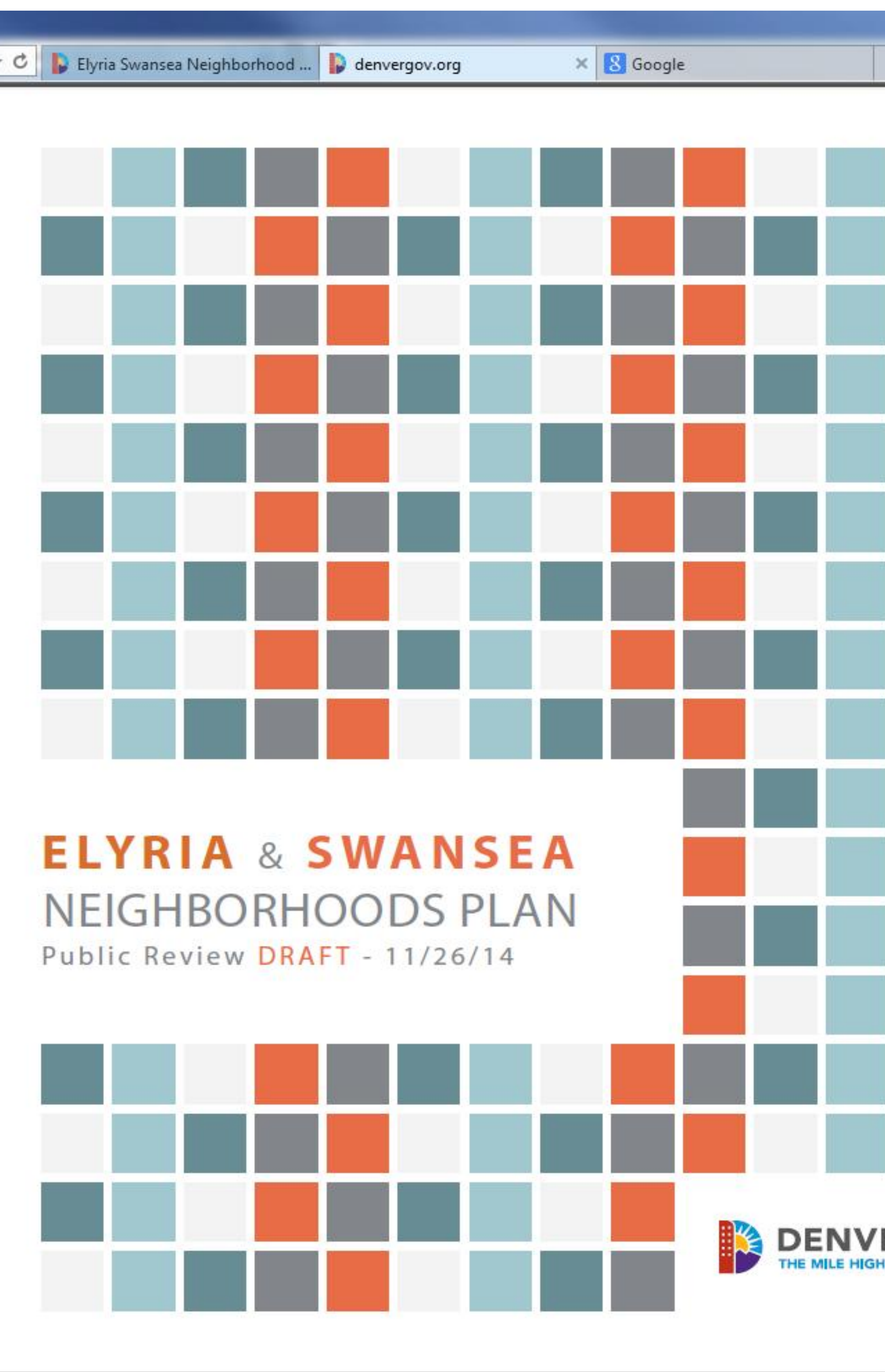
### A. Health Recommendations To Be Included in the Globeville and Elyria Swansea Neighborhood Plans

A = air quality O = Odors N = Noise W = water S = soil CM = connectivity and mobility GS = goods and services access  
 CS = community safety MW = mental wellbeing

SECTION OF HIA REPORT								# IN REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS
A	O	N					MW	1.A	Minimize negative environmental impacts on residential neighborhoods from industrial uses through methods such as land use designation, zoning, buffering, or other means.	CPD
					CM		CS MW	2.A	Prioritize street infrastructure improvements, including sidewalks, bike lanes, bus stop furnishings, and intersection crossings, to achieve the goals of the 2014 City Council Priorities, Denver Moves (2011) and the Strategic Transportation Plan (2008).	CPD/ PW
					CM	GS	MW	3.A	Connect streets as prioritized in the Globeville and Elyria Swansea Neighborhood Plan "Street Grid Connectivity Map."	CPD/ PW
							CS	4.A	Explore measures to reduce the incidence of pedestrian and bicycle injury crashes at locations where multiple crashes have occurred. Such locations may include 'gateway intersections' such as 47th & York and 47th & Brighton Blvd. in Elyria Swansea, and 45th & Washington and 51st & Washington in Globeville.	DPD/ PW CPD
		N						5.A	Noise in residential areas and schools near major roadways and highways should be mitigated to no more than 55 decibels, where feasible. <sup>1</sup>	DEH/ PW CDOT/ CPD
		N						6.A	Sound walls or other noise mitigation measures are recommended along major roadways and highways where sound levels at schools <sup>2</sup> and homes <sup>3</sup> are expected to increase by 5 decibels or more, or exterior noise levels are expected to be 55 decibels or greater, or interior noise levels are expected to be 45 decibels or greater. <sup>4</sup> Community preferences regarding aesthetic qualities of sound mitigation should be considered.	DEH/CPD/ PW/ CDOT
		N					CS MW	7.A	Explore solutions to reduce the health impacts from trains. These could include "Quiet Zones" (intersections specifically designed so that trains do not have to sound horns), or grade separation of trains from other modes of transportation (i.e., roads constructed over or under tracks to eliminate the need for trains to sound horns at these crossings and to aid in the prevention of people and trains crossing paths). One intersection to explore for potential modification includes the train crossing at 47th St. & York St.	PW/CPD/ CW Montero/ Railroads



# Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for Neighborhood Planning in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

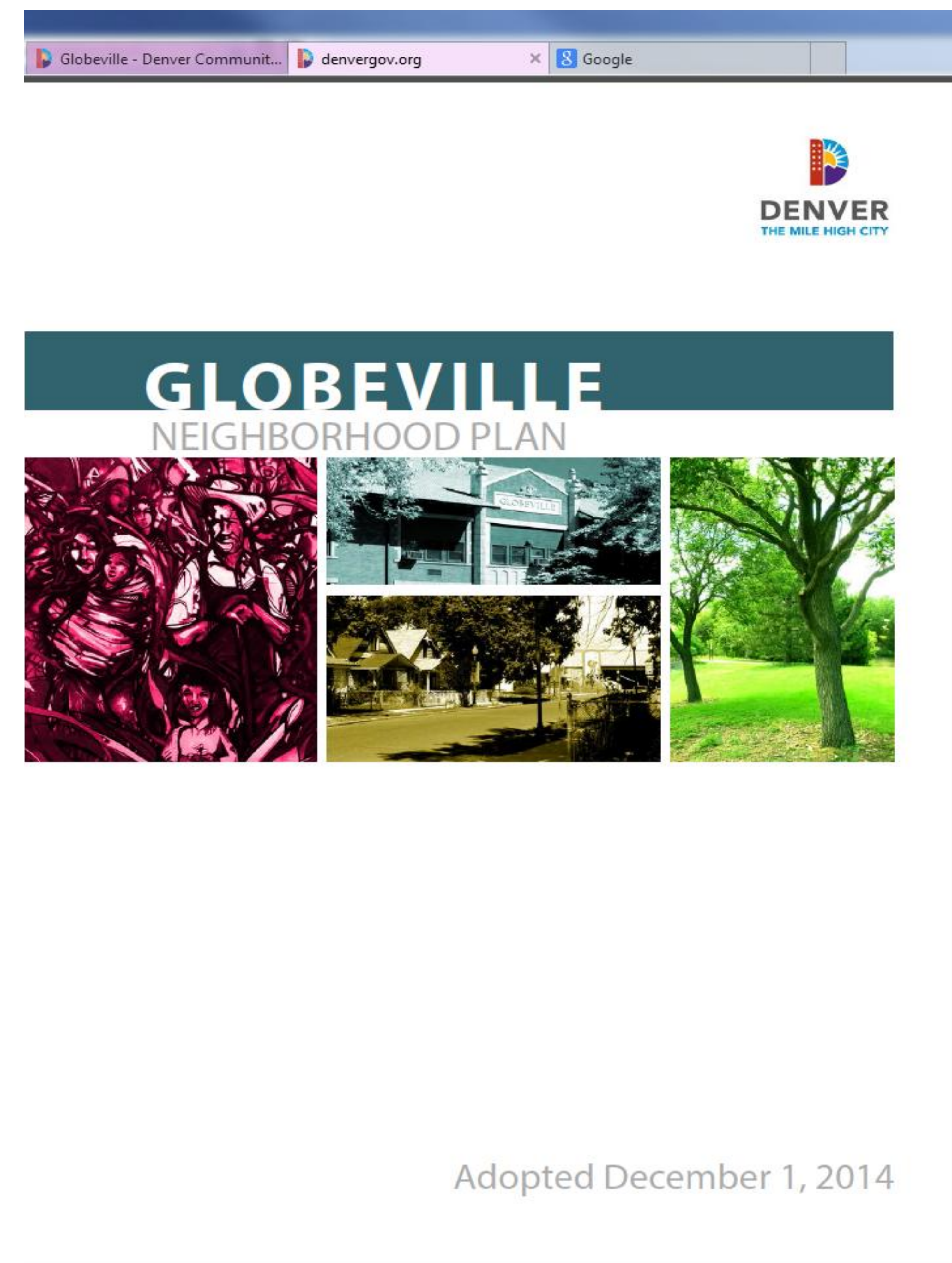


HIA adds:

health data and analysis



evidence-based strategies to improve health





# Lessons Learned

- *What went well?*



How **Neighborhood Planning**  
**Affects Health** in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

SEPTEMBER 2014



*Be Healthy Denver*  
COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# Lessons Learned

- *What went well*
- **Challenges/barriers**



How **Neighborhood Planning**  
**Affects Health** in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

SEPTEMBER 2014





# Lessons Learned

- *What went well*
- *Challenges/barriers*
- ***Stakeholder engagement – same or different than other planning processes?***



How **Neighborhood Planning**  
**Affects Health** in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

SEPTEMBER 2014



*Be Healthy Denver*  
COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# Lessons Learned

- *What went well*
- *Challenges/barriers*
- *Stakeholder engagement – same or different than other planning processes?*
- ***Elected official involvement***

How **Neighborhood Planning**  
**Affects Health** in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

SEPTEMBER 2014



*Be Healthy Denver*  
COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# Lessons Learned

- *What went well*
- *Challenges/barriers*
- *Stakeholder engagement – same or different than other planning processes?*
- *Elected official involvement*
- **Communications and messaging (and surprises)**



How **Neighborhood Planning Affects Health** in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

SEPTEMBER 2014



*Be Healthy Denver*  
COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# Lessons Learned

- *What went well*
- *Challenges/barriers*
- *Stakeholder engagement – same or different than other planning processes?*
- *Elected official involvement*
- *Communications and messaging (and surprises)*
- ***Next Steps: Implementation***



How **Neighborhood Planning**  
**Affects Health** in Globeville and Elyria Swansea

SEPTEMBER 2014





# Emerging Trends in HIA / HiAP

- Health Impact Assessment is just ONE of MANY tools
- HIA is a means to an end.....that of Health in All Policies (HiAP)

## Health in All Policies

a collaborative approach that integrates health considerations into policymaking across sectors, to improve the health of all communities and people.

*Be Healthy* **Denver**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



# Emerging Trends:

## A range of tools to achieve Health in All Policies

- Health Impact Assessment
- Comment letter
- Share pathway diagrams
- Policy brief
- Fact sheet
- Infographic
- Public testimony
- Web page or blog
- Op-ed or other media strategy
- Create new indicators database
- Connect with partners to get health at the table early
- Specialized tools like walkability audits
- Communications guide for use by other sectors
- Create an interagency MOU for a project

*Be Healthy* **Denver**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

# Emerging Trends: Screening becoming more precise

- Screening is where you select the right tool for the job

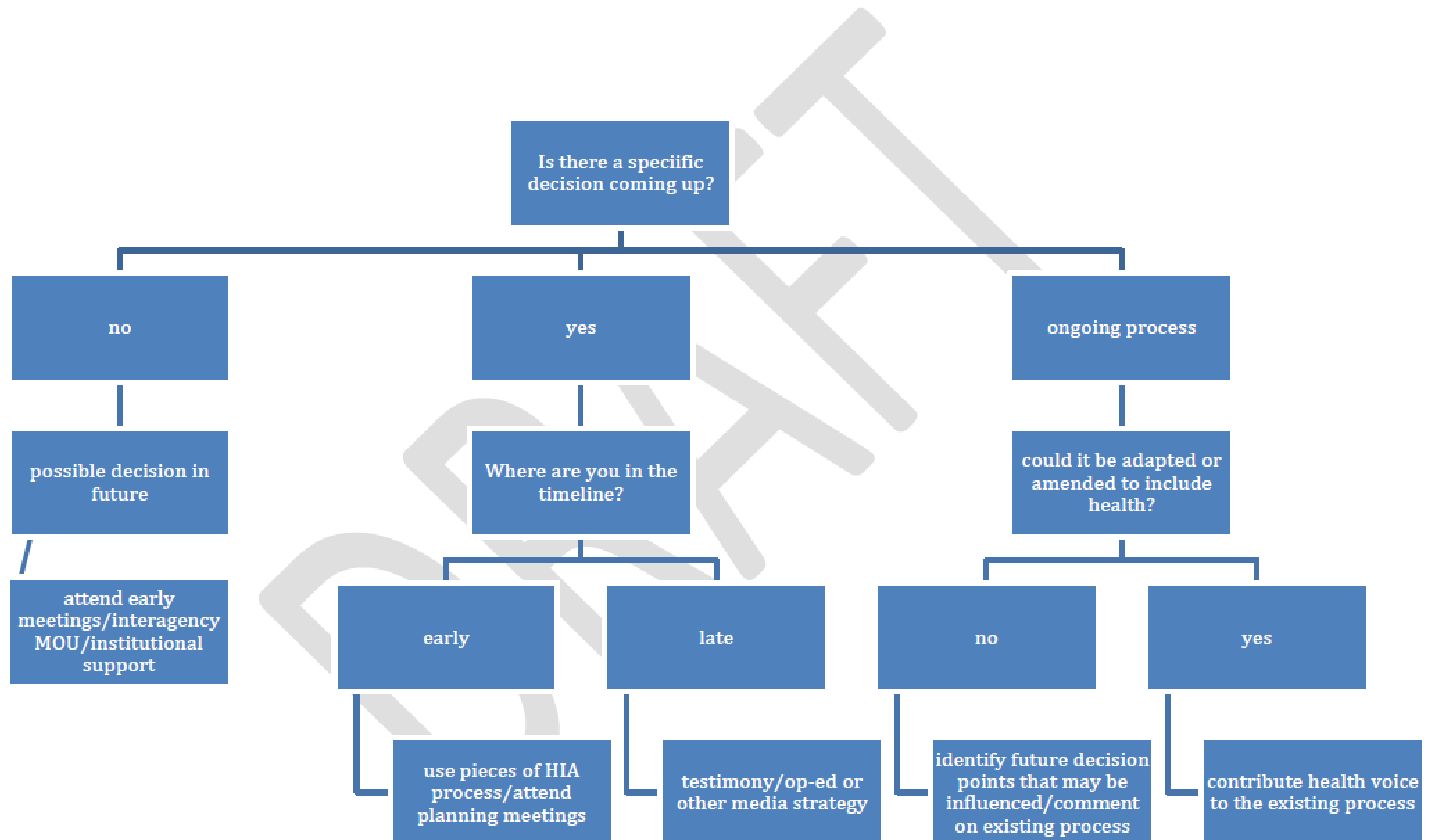


- Screening takes into consideration:
  - Timing: inform a decision point
  - Available evidence
  - Funding
  - Level of controversy
  - Resources
  - Political will
  - Champions



# Emerging Trends: Development of Screening Tools

## Health in All Policies DECISION TREE



*HIA (and other HiAP tools) adds health considerations into public policymaking....for better, more informed decisions.*

Gretchen Armijo, Built Environment Administrator  
Denver Department of Environmental Health  
[Gretchen.armijo@denvergov.org](mailto:Gretchen.armijo@denvergov.org)

Human Impact Partners  
[www.humanimpact.org](http://www.humanimpact.org)

***Be Healthy Denver***

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS



**DENVER**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH