



Metro Vision 2040

A program of DRCOG

Metro Vision 2040: Urban Centers

MVIC – August 6, 2014



Quick Metro Vision Update

- ◆ **Board approved formation of ad hoc groups to explore integrating housing and economic vitality into Metro Vision**
 - Staff currently reviewing Board member and Board alternate volunteers
 - Recommended ad hoc groups shared with Board in August
 - Committees begin meeting in September



Today's Presentation

- ◆ **Urban centers background and brief history**
 - Including history of “50/75” goal
- ◆ **Overview of key urban center-related activities during Metro Vision 2040 plan development**
 - Scenario and urban center analysis
 - Urban center survey and interviews
- ◆ **MVPAC Feedback**
- ◆ **Requested MVIC Feedback**
 - Metro Vision 2040 “policy” issues
 - Potential supportive actions

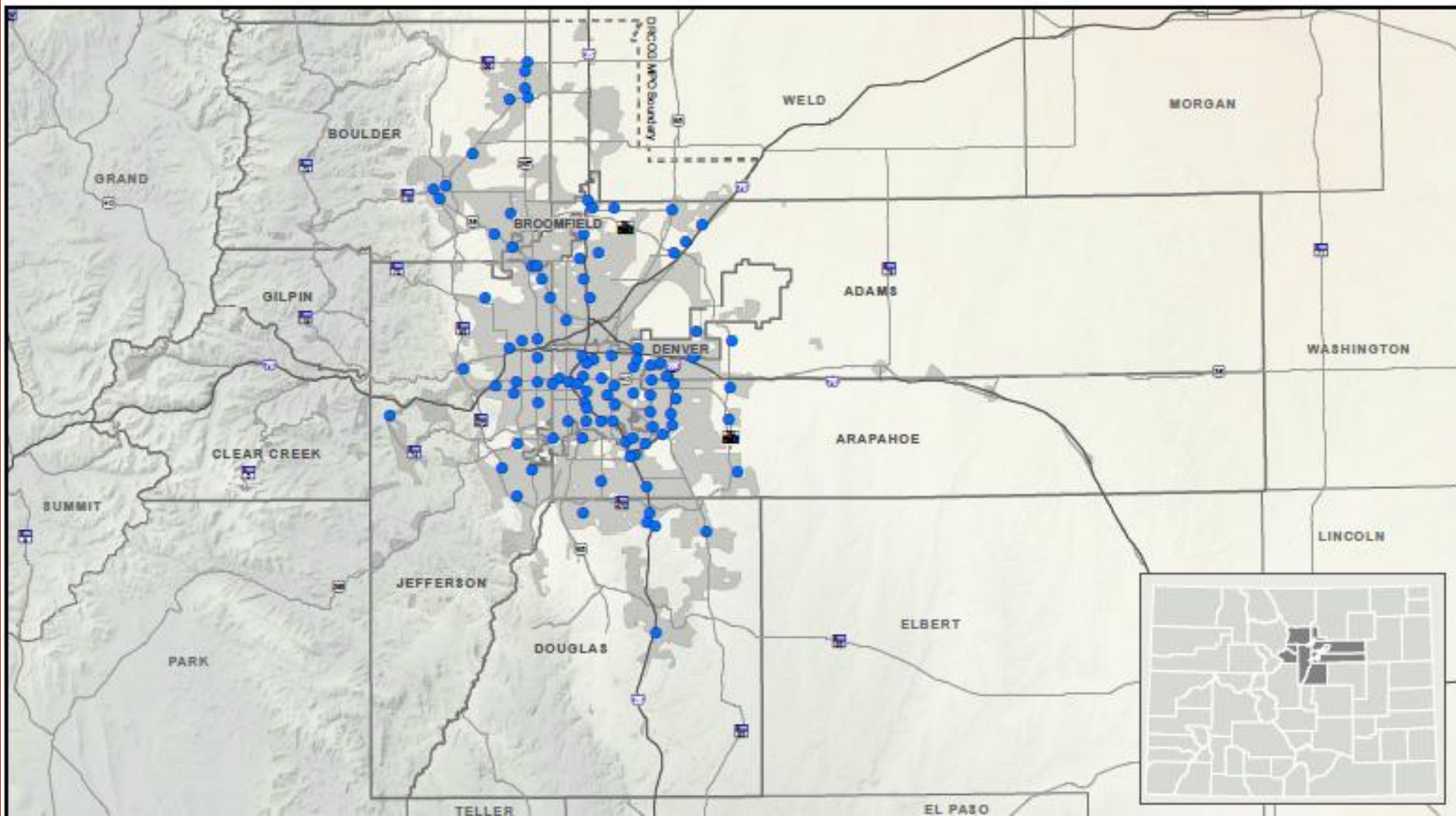


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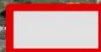
Urban Centers: Background



Urban Center Locations (2014)



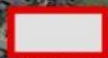
Littleton Downtown

 Urban Center

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

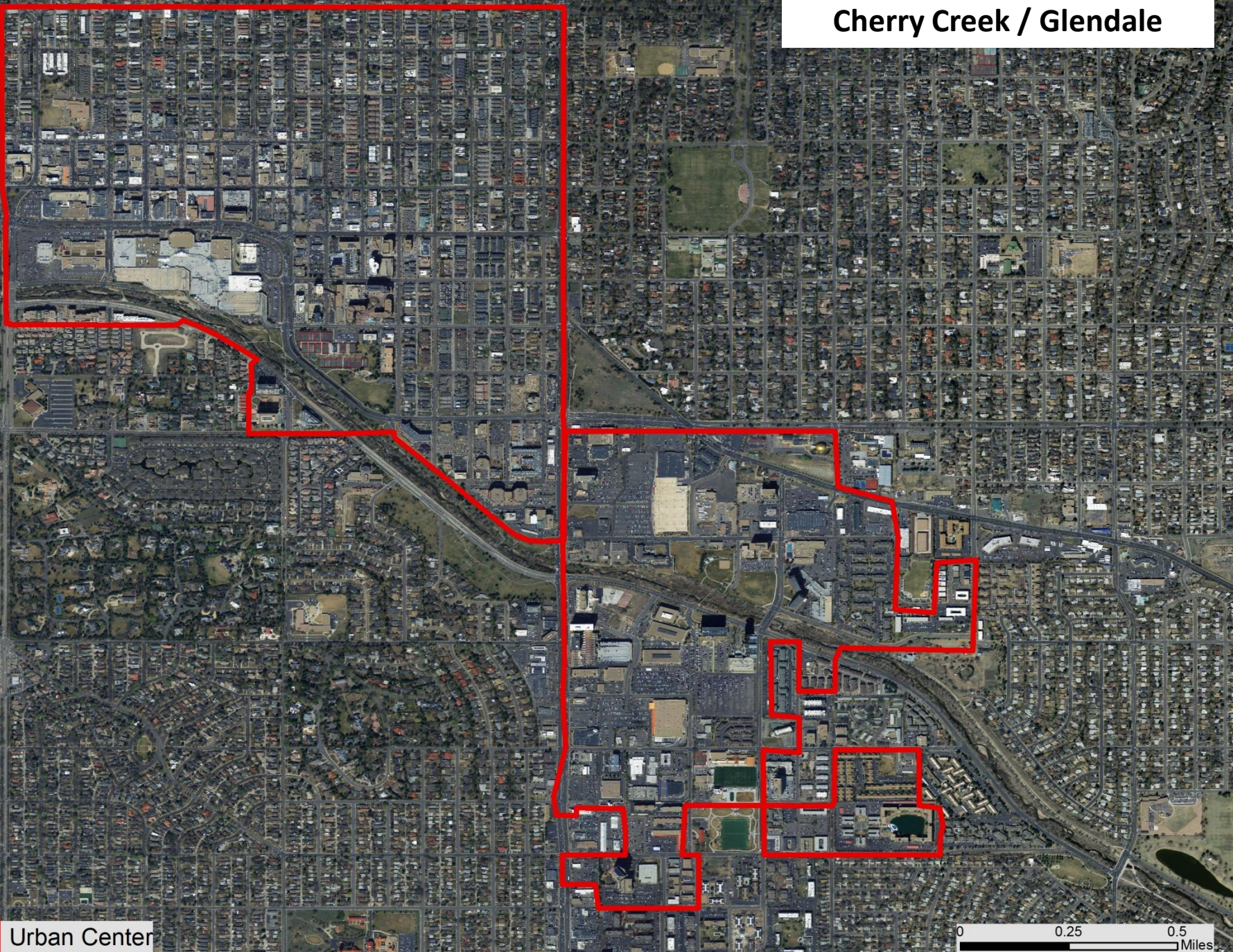
Westminster Activity Center



 Urban Center

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Cherry Creek / Glendale




Urban Center

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

SH7 & I-25 (Broomfield/Thornton)




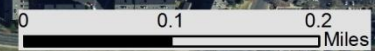
 Urban Center

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Lakewood Center



 Urban Center



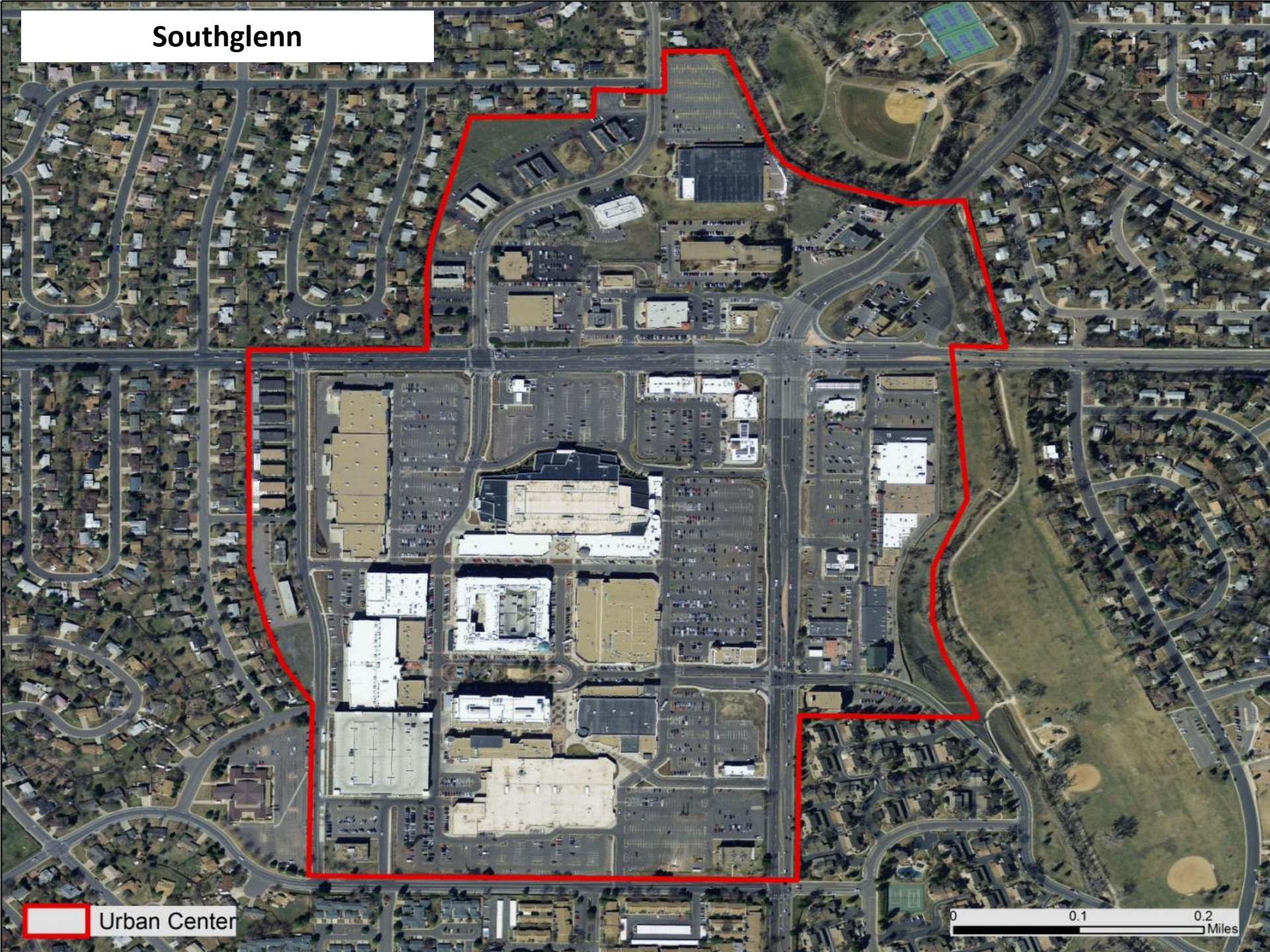
Downtown Castle Rock



Urban Center

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Southglenn



Urban Center

0 0.1 0.2 Miles



Urban Centers – Brief History

- ◆ **First recognized in 1978 regional plan**
- ◆ **Concept present in 1992 Metro Vision Guiding Vision**
- ◆ **Urban centers (forms) included in the original Metro Vision 2020 Plan**
 - Not identified, but recognition process created
- ◆ **Designation process simplified several times**
 - Most recently in 2011 (Board adoption in Jan. 2012)
- ◆ **“50/75” goal added as part of MV 2035 update (aka the sustainability update)**



Urban Centers – “50/75” Background

- ◆ **2009 Board workshop: direction to staff to incorporate sustainability into update**
- ◆ **“Sustainability Cafes” – July & August 2009**
- ◆ **Stakeholders provide input into initial set of sustainability concepts (30)**
 - Sept. – Oct. 2009: Board refines concepts (17) to create working definition and provide direction
- ◆ **November 2009 – MVIC and Board approved six draft goal statements (including 50/75)**
 - Direction to evaluate draft goals (realm of the possible)



Urban Centers – “50/75” Background

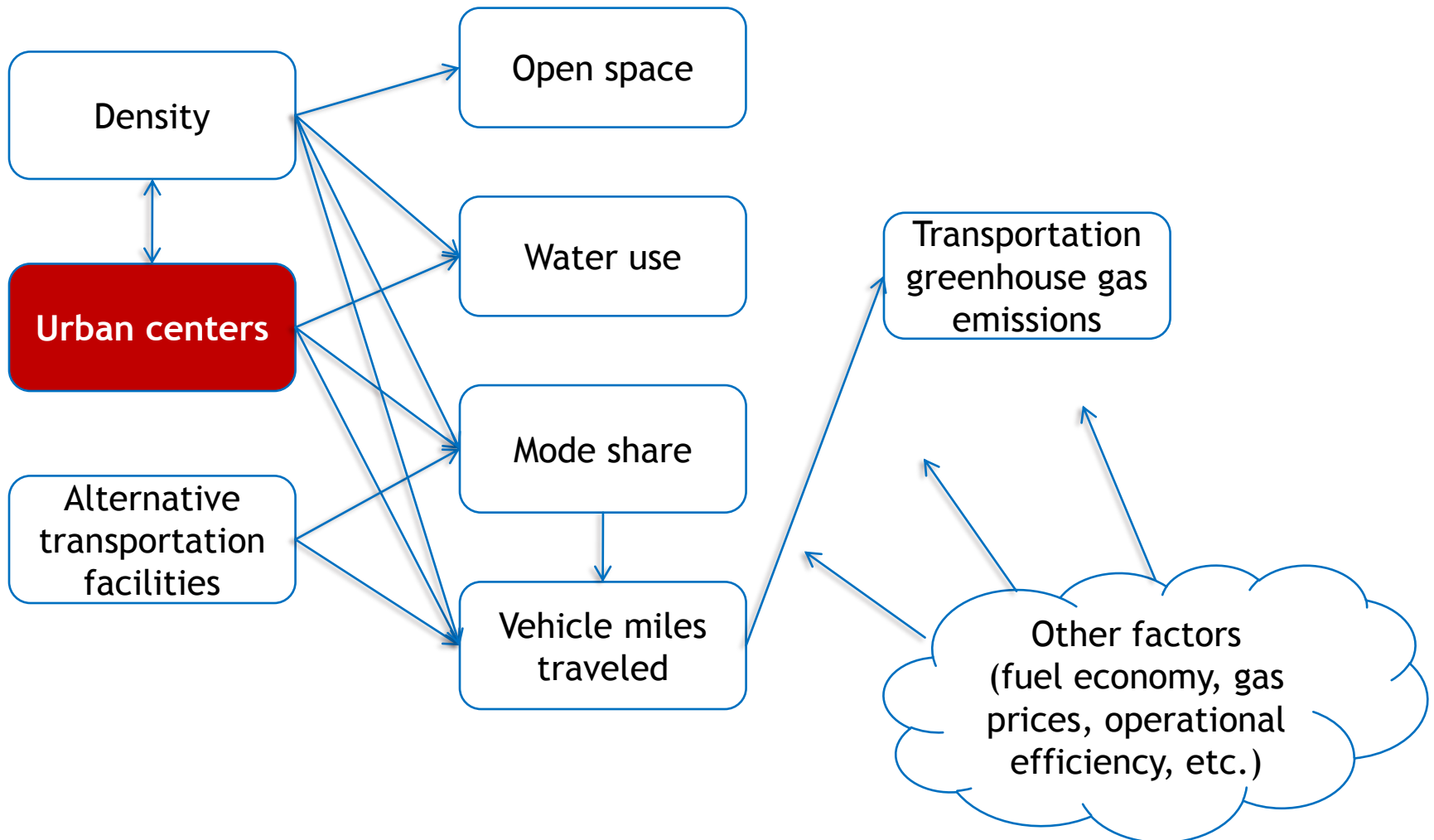
Scenario Evaluation (Nov. 2009 – Feb. 2010)

Key findings:

- Draft sustainability goals aggressive, but not impossible should the Board want to adopt
- Share of employment growth in line with local aspirations
- Share in housing growth approximately double local aspirations
- Established link between centers and other goals



Goal Relationships



Urban Centers

Vision: The Denver metro region will become an international model for healthy, livable communities by developing vibrant urban centers connected by a robust multi-modal network throughout the metro area. While each urban center will be unique, all urban centers will:

- be active, pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly places that are more dense and mixed in use than surrounding areas;
- allow people of all ages, incomes and abilities to access a range of housing, employment, and service opportunities without sole reliance on having to drive;
- promote regional sustainability by reducing per capita vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption; and
- respect and support existing neighborhoods.

Goal: Urban centers will accommodate 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new employment between 2005 and 2035. (See Appendix B for a list of recognized urban centers)

Policies

1. **Regional Advocacy and Investment.**

DRCOG will take a proactive role in identifying opportunities, providing resources and directing investment toward programs and infrastructure improvements that help local governments and the private sector develop successful urban centers.

2. **Minimization of Harmful Competition.**

The region will advocate for changes to tax structure to minimize detrimental competition among local governments for revenues and support collaborative progress toward the urban center vision.

3. **Location.**

Metro Vision encourages the development of urban centers at infill and redevelopment sites within the UGB/A throughout the metro area, while recognizing the unique significance of the Denver central business district. Metro Vision prioritizes urban centers around existing or proposed transit stations or with high-frequency bus service.

4. **Multimodal Connectivity.**

Urban centers will have high levels of internal connectivity and will be well-connected to the region at large.

5. **Housing Options.**

Urban centers will support housing suitable for a wide range of incomes and the full spectrum of life stages and physical abilities, providing good links to jobs, services and other opportunities and reducing the combined cost of housing and transportation.

6. **Transportation Options.**

Modes such as walking, bicycling and transit will be equally competitive with driving within urban centers.

7. **Design:**

Innovative planning, zoning and urban design strategies will promote higher-density, mixed-use development, pedestrian activity and accessible public space within urban centers. Parking management strategies, such as parking maximums and pricing strategies where appropriate, will minimize the potential negative effects of parking on urban center development and multimodal access.



50/75 Goal – Status Update

Metro Vision 2035 Goal: Urban centers will accommodate 50% of new housing and 75% of new employment between 2005 and 2035

- ◆ Housing (05-10): 21% of new housing captured in urban centers
 - 40% in 2009 & 2010
 - Newer data that incorporates apartment boom will likely push the percentage higher
- ◆ Employment (05-13): 55% of new employment captured in urban centers



Urban Centers & FY16-21 TIP Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Max Points	Scoring Instructions
Project Location	5	Project is within a ¼ mile of an urban center (or rural town center)
Urban Center (or rural town center) Characteristics	5	<u>5 points if 3 of following:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Served by transit (30 minutes combined services headways) •Mixed-use zoning/developments •Parking management strategies •Affordable housing preservation/development •Project identified in UC/STAMP



Urban Centers

Other Supportive Initiatives

◆ **Urban Center/Station Area Master Planning**

- To date Board has committed nearly \$6 million to support local planning studies focused on transit stations and urban centers
- Additional \$2.4 million set-aside in upcoming TIP

◆ **Regional Housing Diversity Study**

- Housing development trends impacting urban centers (i.e. barriers to attached for-sale products)



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Urban Centers: Metro Vision 2040



Scenarios – Key Observations

Metro Vision 2040 Scenario Analysis (2013)

- ◆ **Population and employment growth in urban centers will greatly influence the region's ability to meet Metro Vision goals (VMT, SOV share, etc.)**
- ◆ **Scenarios without significant housing and employment growth in urban centers and/or transit areas saw an increase in per capita VMT compared to the base scenario**



Urban Centers and Corridors

Other Key Activities

◆ Urban center survey as outlined in the Growth and Development Supplement

- Surveys returned for 82% of designated centers (84 responses)

◆ Interviews with urban centers and corridors

- 10 urban centers
- 5 corridors (6 jurisdictions)

◆ Metro Vision Idea Exchange

◆ Urban centers analysis and travel characteristics



What We Heard – Urban Centers

- ◆ **Weathered the recession well compared to other areas within communities**
 - 2/3rds are actively transitioning to higher intensity land uses
- ◆ **Many view centers as successful, but also see potential for additional positive outcomes**
- ◆ **Long-term commitment is critical (political will and staff attention)**
- ◆ **Some identified as largely “built-out”**



What We Heard – Urban Centers

- ◆ **Some confusion about the ‘50/75’ goal**
 - Impression that it applies locally vs. regionally
- ◆ **Most desire or are actively encouraging multi-family development**
 - +80% desire apartments, condos, mixed-use w/ residential with apartments most commonly developed
- ◆ **Majority of housing developed has been market rate**



What We Heard – Urban Centers

- ◆ **Oversupply of retail and commercially-zoned land within and adjacent to centers is a major barrier**
 - Also a significant opportunity (redevelopment), but comes with numerous challenges
- ◆ **Other locations struggle with small parcels and fractured ownership**
 - Hinders the attraction of multi-family and commercial/employers that require larger footprints
 - Parcel consolidation is difficult in strong and weak markets
- ◆ **Centers with large, undeveloped parcels or well-established business districts have done best**



What We Heard – Urban Centers

◆ **Strategies to attract employment have varied**

- Rail stations have been key for many
- ‘Upzoning’ to districts that allow vertical and horizontal mixed use
- Multi-modal investments and connections (sidewalks, streets, bridges, underpasses, etc.)

◆ **Financing infrastructure improvements**

- Urban renewal areas and tax increment financing
- Partnerships with master developers
- Business Improvement Districts

◆ **Many desire parks/open space and other cultural amenities (e.g. performing arts centers, etc.)**



What We Heard – Urban Centers

◆ **Universal desire for multi-modal transportation facilities**

- 75% indicated that current pedestrian, bicycle, or transit infrastructure needs moderate to significant investment and/or improvement
- Many rely on federal transportation funds available through DRCOG

◆ **Key needs: Bicycle infrastructure, supportive transit infrastructure, sidewalks, projects to connect transit and/or traverse major arterials**



What We Heard – Corridors

- ◆ **Should complement urban centers – not compete for significant share of population and employment growth**
- ◆ **Significant enhancements needed to improve mobility for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders**
 - Current function is to move high volumes of automobile traffic
- ◆ **Improvement strategies address image and function**
 - Zoning
 - Area plans
 - Design guidelines
 - Streetscape improvements



Metro Vision Idea Exchange

Urban Centers in Not-so-Urban Places

- ◆ **Parking is critical – but there is no perfect ratio**
- ◆ **Important to effectively program urban center spaces**
- ◆ **Flexible design to allow density is what's critical (along with economics)**
- ◆ **Investments in multi-modal infrastructure are key to sending signals to the market**
- ◆ **Must educate all stakeholders to optimize results**

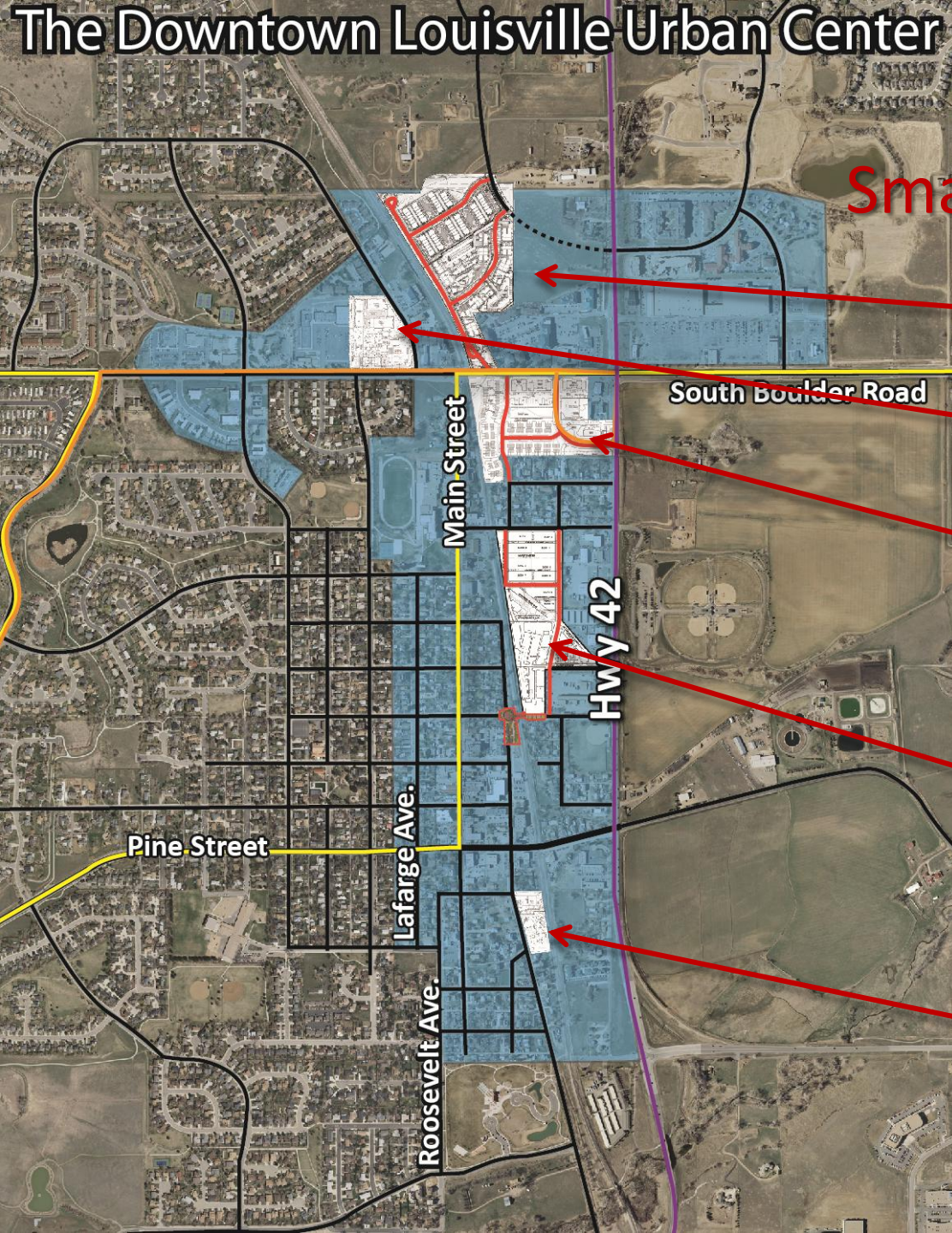




SOUTH ST. UNDERPASS

Architectural Enhancements - Alternative B

The Downtown Louisville Urban Center



Louisville's Small Town Urban Center

Steel Ranch South
228 Apartments & 58 Townhomes

Center Court
32,000 SF Retail & 111 Apartments

Coal Creek
30,000 sf Retail & 58 Townhomes

Downtown East Louisville
12,00 sf retail, 55 Townhomes, &
194 Apartments

Historic Grain Elevator
Redevelopment
Historic Landmark & 67,000 sf
commercial

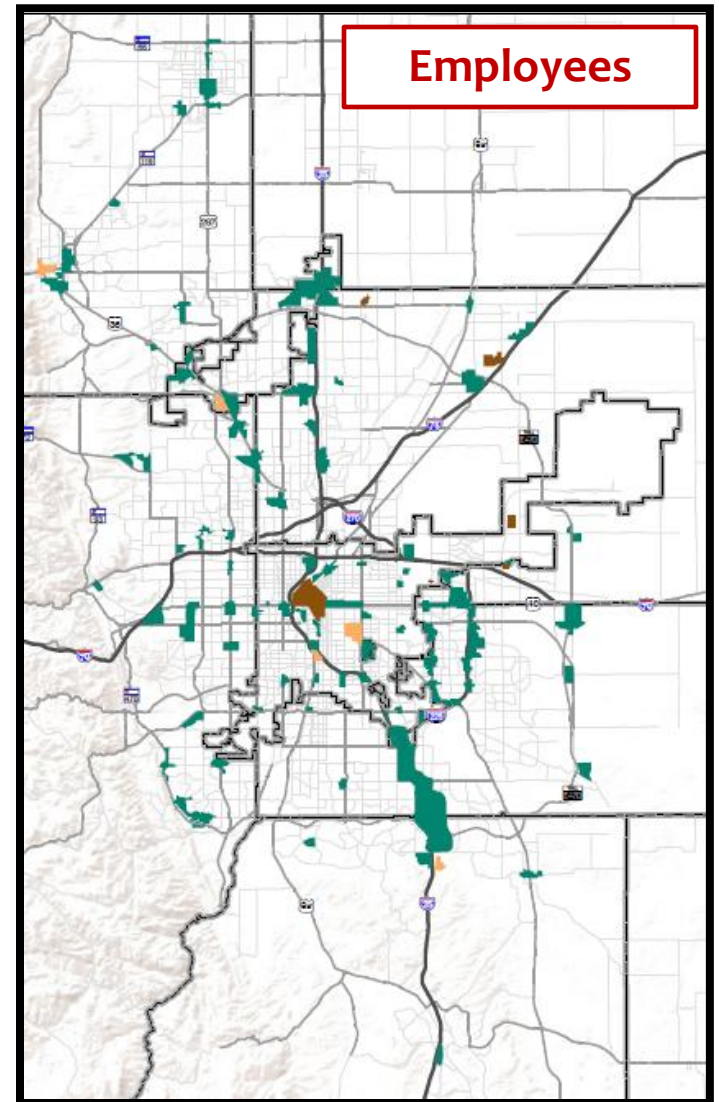
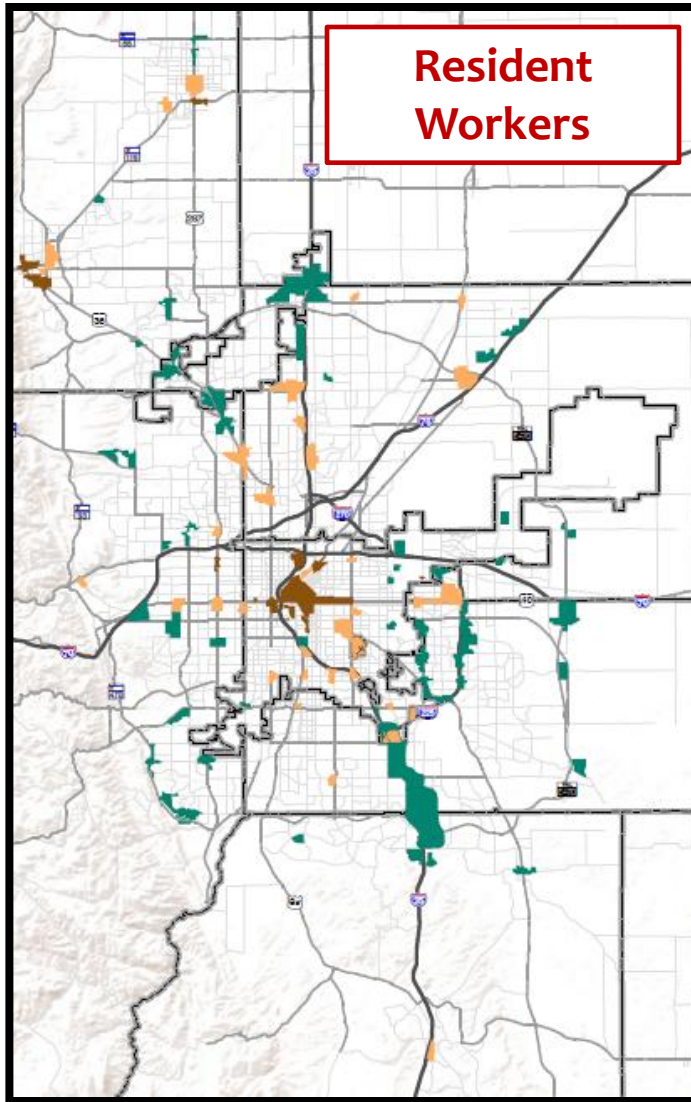
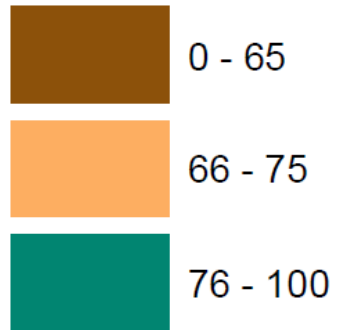


Urban Centers Analysis

Brief Summary

- ◆ **Urban Centers are successful because of multiple factors that work together**
- ◆ **Transit alone can result modest improvements to travel behaviors, but the full complement of factors are needed to maximize results**
- ◆ **Urban centers on the periphery may have positive characteristics, but still not impacting travel behavior**
- ◆ **Residents of urban centers are adopting supportive behaviors – more so than employees**

Commute by SOV



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Urban Centers: MVPAC Feedback



MVPAC

Urban Centers Discussion (June & July)

◆ Should urban centers be...

- ◆ the primary growth framework for the region? **YES**
- ◆ areas where investments should be prioritized? **YES**
- ◆ highly accessible areas that promote access to opportunity? **YES***
- ◆ areas where policies, development patterns and transportation investments contribute to other regional goals? **YES**

***Not there yet**



MVPAC

Urban Centers Discussion (June & July)

- ◆ Importance of centers should be noted throughout other plan elements
- ◆ Acknowledge high transit access areas, corridors, and urban center-adjacent
- ◆ Include language about first/last mile
- ◆ Type and quality of employment is critical – not just number of jobs
- ◆ Should include housing types and costs to address a broad range of incomes



MVPAC

Urban Centers Discussion (June & July)

- ◆ Metro Vision 2040 needs to be clear that centers are local and regional priorities
- ◆ Some communities are not looking for “more” growth, but “better” amenities
- ◆ Urban centers should not be differentiated to prioritize funding
- ◆ Continue to “raise the bar” vs. resistance from development community in some centers



MVPAC

Urban Centers Discussion (June & July)

◆ **Urban centers may be in different development phases – but there should be some shared attributes:**

- Mix of uses
- Multi-modal
- More intense than surrounding areas
- Accessible to a diversity of populations/incomes
- Gathering places



MVPAC

Discussion on Existing “50/75” Goal

- ◆ **Important to retain current target – other regions are more aggressive**
- ◆ **May not align with certain industries – i.e. those with high square footage requirements**
 - Primary jobs are only a piece of larger jobs picture
- ◆ **Ultimately a revised “jobs” target is needed**
 - Difficult/Impossible to identify “new” jobs
 - Staff should bring forward a recommendation (e.g. ratio of jobs in urban centers compared to remainder of region)



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Urban Centers: Request MVIC Feedback



Metro Vision 2040

Urban Centers

- ◆ **Should staff proceed with the concept of a measurable outcome related to urban centers?**
 - *Staff and stakeholders recommendation: keep an outcome similar to the exiting goal (magnitude)*
 - “50/75” will require adjusting for measurement (jobs)
- ◆ **What information will MVIC and the Board need?**



Metro Vision 2040

Urban Centers – Other Issues

◆ Continue to prioritize urban centers with high-frequency transit?

- *Staff recommendation: Yes, but also important to recognize other efforts (e.g. current TIP policy)*

◆ Add the following concepts?

- Supportive corridors and transit-accessible areas
- Gathering and green spaces
- Importance of partnerships

Staff recommends all three, but does not support “official” designation of corridors at this time.



Metro Vision 2040

Urban Centers – Potential Supportive Actions

- ◆ **Comprehensive review of urban center boundaries**
- ◆ **Publicize success stories (e.g. awards)**
- ◆ **Expand UC/STAMP eligibility to including partner organizations (e.g. improvement districts)?**
- ◆ **Assist in facilitating infill/catalytic projects?**
 - Database of development sites within centers
 - Preliminary community and financial feasibility assistance



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