

# FITZSIMONS STATION AREA PLAN

A Framework for Transit-Oriented Development



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# Preface

The *Fitzsimons Station Area Plan* is one in a series of station area plans prepared by the City of Aurora to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) around the existing and planned rail transit stations. This plan presents the long-term vision for the station area, illustrated with fundamental concept and land use framework diagrams. By planning in advance for potential redevelopment, problems relating to piecemeal infill development in fragmented ownership patterns can be addressed. A station area plan provides guidance for land use, transportation networks and zoning within one-half mile of a station platform in order to support development that builds on the light rail transit infrastructure. A station area plan reduces the potential for inappropriate development that will preclude future TOD with the station area.

This station area plan is based on fundamental concepts derived from the policy directions of the *2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan*. The plan was developed collaboratively with the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority (FRA) and in consultation with the property owners, residents in the adjacent neighborhoods, the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and hospitals,

and the Regional Transportation District (RTD). This plan defines planning principles and concepts, land use recommendations, and implementation strategies (i.e., zoning and public improvements) for the defined study area. The intent of this plan is to identify the long-term vision for urban-scale, walkable, mixed-use development that is transit-supportive, and to develop strategies to implement a common vision. The plan presents city policy for the long-term (approximately 20 years) to prepare for public investment and private development.

This plan is intended to be flexible. Property owners and developers can provide site plans that vary from the fundamental concepts and framework visions without necessitating amendments to this plan. Any variations or alternatives must conform to the key principles for transit-oriented development as outlined in the *Aurora Comprehensive Plan* and the fundamental TOD concepts presented in this plan.



**Aurora Light Rail Stations**



Figure 1. Aerial view of part of the study area and the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus

# 01

## Introduction

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### 1.1 Background

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Located in northwest Aurora, on what was the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, is a one square mile area that has been rapidly developing as a pre-eminent medical education, hospital and research center. The army base was decommissioned in 1999, and since that time the Fitzsimons area has become one of the largest medically-related redevelopment projects in the United States. This area is quickly transforming into a vibrant urban district with a distinct research and educational character, unique in the region. The growing hospital, office and medical developments will make this a major employment center in the region with a potential of 46,000 employees at build-out.

With rapid growth of a concentrated employment center come challenges, one of which is transportation access. The opening of the 10.5-mile Aurora (I-225) Line in 2016 will help to address this since the greater Fitzsimons area and hospitals will be served by two light rail stations. The Colfax Station will be an elevated station over

Colfax Avenue, located between Fitzsimons Parkway and I-225, and will provide transit access for the hospitals and the University of Colorado schools and colleges. The Fitzsimons Station, shown in Figure 2, is located approximately 1,600 feet east of Peoria Street on the north side of Fitzsimons Parkway and will serve the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus, a developing area for office, research and housing, as well as the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The *Fitzsimons Station Area Plan* will serve as the policy document to guide the redevelopment of the area within a one-half mile radius of the Fitzsimons Station. This plan was developed collaboratively by the City of Aurora, the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority (FRA), the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and numerous area stakeholders.

This station area plan arose from the relocation of the originally planned light rail station which was to be located on Montview Boulevard approximately in the center of the one square mile Fitzsimons area. Through the planning process for the light rail line (I-225 Environmental Evaluation, 2008), the City of Aurora and RTD refined the location of the

light rail line and the eight planned stations. The Montview station, located at the intersection of Montview Boulevard and Ursula Street, was centrally located to serve the Anschutz Medical Campus and the planned Colorado Science and Technology Park. However, the University of Colorado had concerns about the long-term impacts and interference of the light rail line and station on sensitive research instruments, and in 2013, the RTD Board agreed to the University's request to relocate the planned light rail station and line. Following an analysis of station and line alternatives, RTD agreed to move the line approximately one-half mile to the north along the north side of Fitzsimons Parkway, and locate the new station in an approximate alignment with the planned Scranton Street extension.

The relocation of the station significantly changed future planning and development opportunities within the FRA lands and promoted the opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD). Coincident with this, the FRA was examining the potential development scenarios for the 184 acres in its ownership. Previously identified as a hub for the medical and bioscience industry in the adopted

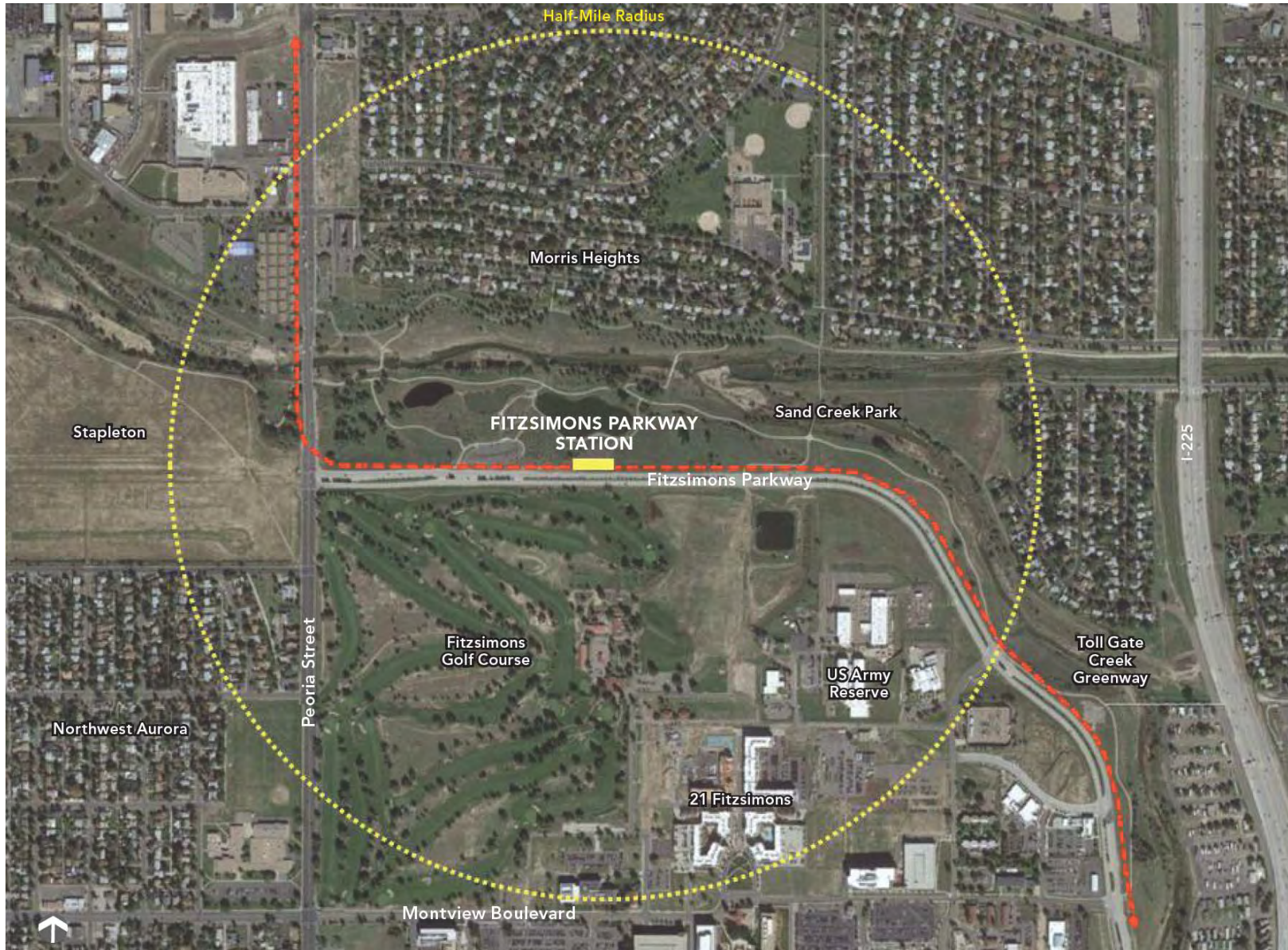


Figure 2. Station Location and Study Area





University Physicians, Inc.



21 Fitzsimons

2007 *Colorado Science and Technology Park Master Plan*, the FRA was looking to update the master plan to better reflect the changes occurring in the bio-medical industry. The FRA had identified a new development direction as the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus, to be built primarily on the golf course that was constructed for the Army base. The recasting of the area as an “innovation district” opened the opportunity for a new development direction.

Innovation districts that are emerging across the county tend to be physically compact, transit-accessible districts with a mix of employment, housing and retail. They are based on economic, social and physical “networks” that encourage clustering of research, education, and related businesses, resulting in a free exchange of creative ideas and enhanced networking. The goal of the FRA has been to give emerging enterprises the opportunity to build or lease corporate, clinical, and other space adjacent to the wealth of intellectual capital and institutional knowledge already at the Anschutz Medical Campus. As a result, an additional objective of the station area planning process became to incorporate the FRA’s

efforts to refresh their vision and redevelopment strategy, as well as the objective of incorporating exceptional pedestrian and bicycle access to the Fitzsimons Station.

The opportunity to collaborate on an updated vision to reassess and modify, as appropriate, land use, infrastructure, and site design guidelines was approached collaboratively by the city, the FRA and their respective consultant teams.

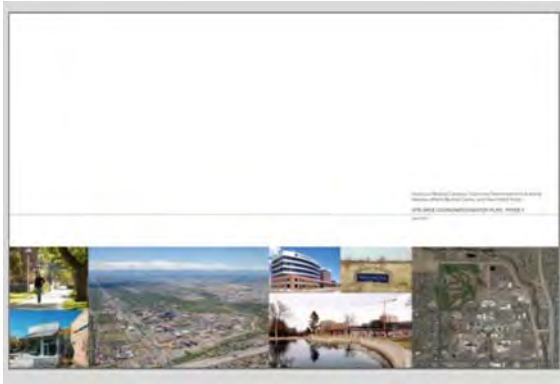
## 1.2 Study Area

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This plan focuses on the development potential of the land south of the Fitzsimons Station to Montview Boulevard, as well as connections to the station area. The one-half mile study area for the Fitzsimons Station Area Plan is shown in Figure 2. The study area is generally bounded by Peoria Street on the west, Montview Boulevard on the south, Toll Gate Creek and Fitzsimons Parkway on the east, and the Morris Heights neighborhood on the north.

The advantage that this area has is that most of the land is owned by a single owner, the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority. This allows for a comprehensive approach to development and implementation initiatives, such as completing needed infrastructure such as utilities and roads.

South of Montview Boulevard is the Anschutz Medical Campus, which includes the University of Colorado’s health sciences-related schools and colleges, the Children’s Hospital, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and Hospital,



Site-Wide Coordinated Master Plan document



Fitzsimons Redevelopment Area – view looking northeast

and the Veteran’s Affairs Hospital, currently under construction. The University of Colorado facilitated a planning study, the *Site-Wide Coordinated Master Plan – Phase II (2014)*, that identified a comprehensive vision for all the entities in the greater Fitzsimons area. This station area plan continues the University’s planning effort with a concentration on the area north of Montview Boulevard to Fitzsimons Parkway.

Development of land in the study area presents a great opportunity to add distinctive land uses that complement the existing Anschutz Medical Campus and hospitals to the south of the study area. The transformation of this area from the existing condition of mostly undeveloped land to a unique new part of Aurora with office, hotel, residential and retail properties set in a quality urban environment with attractive public spaces will create one of the largest employment areas in the metro Denver region. It is expected that at build-out, approximately 46,000 people will be employed at both the Anschutz Medical Center and hospitals, and in the new developments of the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Station Area Plan

To date, the City of Aurora has completed eight station area plans for both light rail and commuter rail stations on the Aurora Line and the East Rail Line, including a station area plan for the nearby Colfax station. The station area plans implement the policies of the *Aurora Comprehensive Plan* and establish the long-term vision for land use and transportation networks around the existing and planned stations.

The city’s goals for station area development can be briefly summarized as:

- Encourage the right mix of land uses;
- Promote density and compact development patterns;
- Encourage and promote the use of transit and bicycling;
- Create pedestrian precincts and pedestrian connections;
- Manage parking and traffic circulation; and
- Create a special “sense of place” at the station and within the surrounding development area.

The Fitzsimons Station area is identified as an “Urban Activity Center” in the *Aurora Comprehensive Plan*, and is a station area that will have higher building densities than the other station area types in the city. Fitzsimons is considered to be a destination station due to the concentration of employment, housing and retail, and the long-term development potential. The guiding vision for the area is for it to develop as an urban, mixed-use area with the primary function as an employment center, with a range of complementary land uses. This plan will provide the policy guidance so this can be achieved.

The purpose of the Fitzsimons Station Area Plan is to:

- Establish a long-term vision for the station area;
- Identify the key opportunities for development based on projected market demand;
- Develop a preferred land use concept that emphasizes office and research development, and includes supporting residential, hospitality and retail uses;
- Develop transportation concepts that maximize convenient pedestrian and vehicular

- connections between the transit station and surrounding areas;
- Identify the zoning approach; and
  - Identify implementation actions that are instrumental to realizing key infrastructure improvements and other actions needed to realize the long-term vision for the area.

### 1.3 Role of the Station Area Plan

The *Fitzsimons Station Area Plan* is the policy document that presents the overall vision for the area, identifies the zoning approach and the implementation actions. The plan builds on the TOD policies in the *Aurora Comprehensive Plan* and is adopted as an amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*. Together with this station area plan, there are several documents that set the standards and guidelines for development, and some are prescriptive where this is required to deliver the important elements for the vision for the area.

This station area plan sets a clear vision for development of the area and is to be used together with the zoning and infrastructure documents. The existing zoning for most of the undeveloped land in the study area is Planned Development–Mixed-Use (PD-MU) and the guiding zoning document that establishes land use zones, road layout and concept street sections, the open space network, and design standards is the General Development Plan. For the details of site design, the guiding



Hierarchy of planning and reference documents

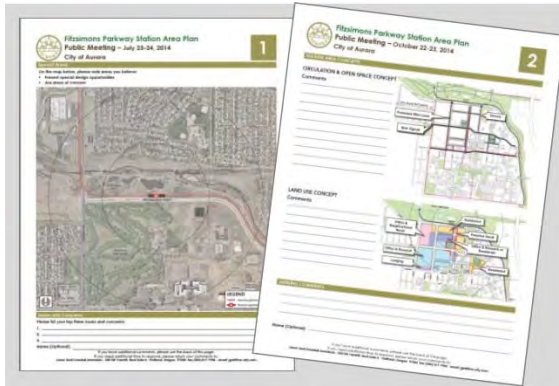
document is the design guidelines that establish requirements for building massing and design, streetscapes and signage. Proposed developments are reviewed by a Design Review Board to ensure that developments meet the urban design vision and applicable site and design standards and guidelines. Infrastructure planning and implementation is to be guided through the infrastructure master plan and the public improvement plan. The relationship between these documents is indicated in the diagram above.

An urban renewal area that includes the lands north of Montview Boulevard, owned primarily by the FRA, was approved by City Council in 2008 to support redevelopment and provide financing for the bio-science research district north of Montview Boulevard. The vision for this urban renewal area is described in *The Colorado Science and Technology Park Urban Renewal Plan*. The plan outlines a wide range of land uses and activities to be used in the implementation of the urban renewal plan, and established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) area. The boundaries of the urban renewal area are shown in Figure 3.

It is recognized that the build-out of the station area may be over a period of up to 50 years, and this station area plan provides the flexibility to respond to changes in future land use demands, and to also respond to factors not apparent at this point in time.



Figure 3. Colorado Science and Technology Park Urban Renewal Area



**Response Forms**



**Community Workshop**

## 1.4 Planning Process

The vision and strategy for this station area plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the city and the FRA. Through an extensive cooperative process, ideas and concepts were shared between the city and the FRA, vetted through a Steering Committee, and presented to the public and policy makers for their comments.

In June of 2014 a design team led by Crandall Arambula was commissioned by the City of Aurora to prepare the station area vision. This vision was developed through an inclusive process that included a Steering Committee to advise on the policy direction, and a Technical Working Group that provided advice on the practical details and site considerations. The Steering Committee's role was important in providing guidance so that the plan meets the needs of the FRA, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the community at large.

Two community workshops were held in July and October of 2014 to solicit comments on the land use and transportation concepts as they were

developed. Each workshop consisted of two parts: a presentation on the project issues and designs, and a "town hall" type workshop with questions and answers. Comments from the community were collected on response forms and focused on the importance of pedestrian and bicycle connections to the entire Fitzsimons area, traffic impacts of new office development in the study area, and the importance of connections across Peoria Street between the residential areas to the west and the Fitzsimons station area and the Anschutz Medical Campus to the east.

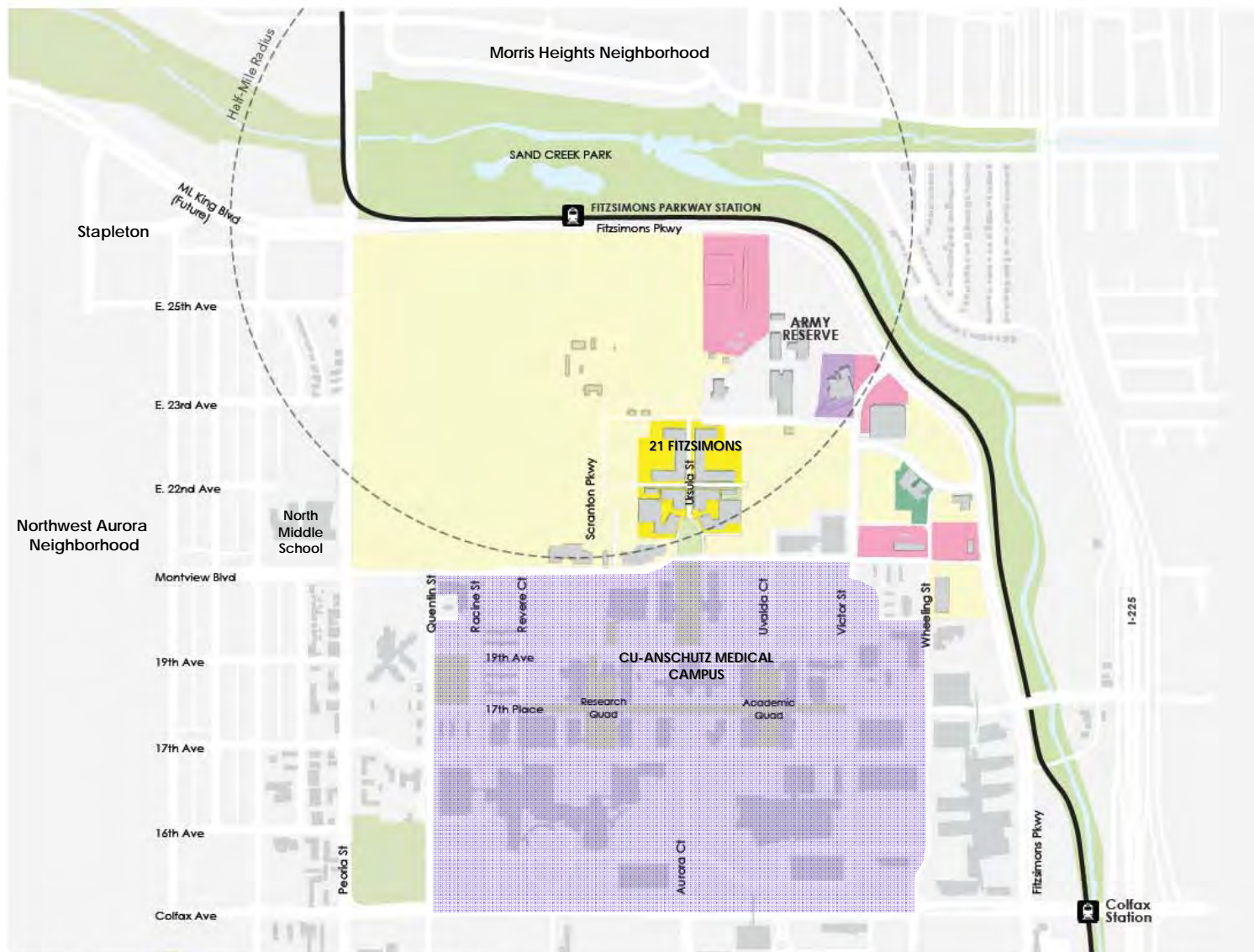
The station area planning process focused not only on the long-term vision and aspirations for the area, but also on realistic opportunities and implementation. Economic and market demand information was provided by ArLand Land Use Economics, part of the city's consultant team, for the purpose of ascertaining where the land use and density proposals were consistent with market demand projections. A number of the land use options were developed and appraised according to the market assessments provided by both the city's and the FRA's economic consultants.

The in-progress concepts were presented to the Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group, and finalized concepts were presented to the Aurora City Council and the FRA Board. Revisions were made to reflect ideas and concerns identified by the various groups. The final concepts were presented at a public open house and to the advisory groups in June of 2015. The result was the *Fitzsimons Parkway Planning and Design Study (2015)*, a detailed planning document which formed the basis for this station area plan.

The *Fitzsimons Station Area Plan* was drawn up through consultation and consensus, and the development framework identified in this plan is a result of this collaborative effort.

Figure 4:  
Station Area Properties—  
North of Montview Boulevard

- FRA
- City of Aurora
- Army Reserve
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- CU Anschutz
- Private Ownership
- Existing Park/Open Space



SOURCE: SITE-WIDE COORDINATED MASTER PLAN - PHASE II, AUGUST 2013

## 02

# Site Context and Analysis

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Sand Creek Park



Post Chapel

### 2.1 Site Location and Context

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The Fitzsimons Station is located on the north side of Fitzsimons Parkway, approximately 1,600 feet east of Peoria Street. Sand Creek Park, an approximately 85-acre city park, is located directly north of the station. South of Fitzsimons Parkway and north of Montview Boulevard is the developable area in FRA ownership, with approximately 150 acres available for new development or redevelopment. The ownership entities in the study area are shown in Figure 4.

The Fitzsimons Army Medical Center was founded in 1918 to treat casualties during and following World War I. The center was closed in 1999 and development of the University of Colorado and Children's hospitals, and the academic campus (Anschutz Medical Campus) soon followed. Within the study area, a few notable historic structures exist, including the Post Chapel (1942), and remnants of the Colonel's Row (two former officers' residences). The 18-hole golf course, initially opened in 1918, is situated on the northwest quadrant of the site but is slated for development.

#### Morris Heights Neighborhood

Portions of the surrounding neighborhoods are within the study area. Immediately to the north of the Fitzsimons Station is the Morris Heights residential neighborhood, composed primarily of single-family housing that was built between the 1950s and 1960s. The residents of the Morris Heights neighborhood can access the station and the Fitzsimons campus area via pedestrian and bicycle paths that cross Sand Creek. There are very few development sites in this neighborhood and while the neighborhood has seen little change in recent years, the area is ideally positioned so that residents have good access to both the Fitzsimons and Peoria Stations. The Peoria Station is a transfer station, connecting the Aurora line and the East Rail commuter line (A Line). The Aurora Housing Authority is developing a new housing project on the east side of Peoria Street north of E. 30th Avenue, which is within one-half mile of the Fitzsimons Station.

#### Northwest Aurora Neighborhood

To the west is the Northwest Aurora neighborhood,

which has a variety of single-family, multi-family and commercial buildings dating generally from the 1940-1970 time period. The area has a traditional grid of streets and pedestrian-scaled residential blocks. North Middle School, on Montview Boulevard, is an important educational and recreational hub for the neighborhood. A mix of retail, office and residential uses line the west side of Peoria Street. There is the potential for redevelopment on some of these parcels and there are several vacant parcels that could become infill development sites. Further to the south is E. Colfax Avenue, the once vital commercial center of Aurora which is now undergoing a revitalization in segments as an important "main street" and arts district in the city.

Also in this general area and included within the study area is Stapleton Aurora, which is to develop as a mixed-use area with commercial and residential uses west of Peoria Street and north of 25th Avenue.

Pedestrian and bicycle connections between all the surrounding neighborhoods and the Fitzsimons area were considered as an important element throughout this planning study.

## 2.2 Natural Systems

The variation in topography between Montview Boulevard and Fitzsimons Parkway is significant, with an approximate fall of 40 feet in elevation to the north. Since the majority of walk-up trips to the Fitzsimons Station are likely to originate within a quarter mile, the significant grade change will provide a challenge for universal pedestrian and bicycle access and building site design.

A major 100-year flood event in September of 2013 affected roadways in and surrounding the Fitzsimons area. The storm runoff from the greater Fitzsimons area is divided into five master drainage basins, with water flowing generally to the north and east, and ultimately into Sand Creek and Toll Gate Creek. The 100-year floodway and floodplain are contained north of Fitzsimons Parkway. The 500-year floodplain extends south of Fitzsimons Parkway.

Within the study area, significant stormwater system improvements have been made in anticipation of future development, including major

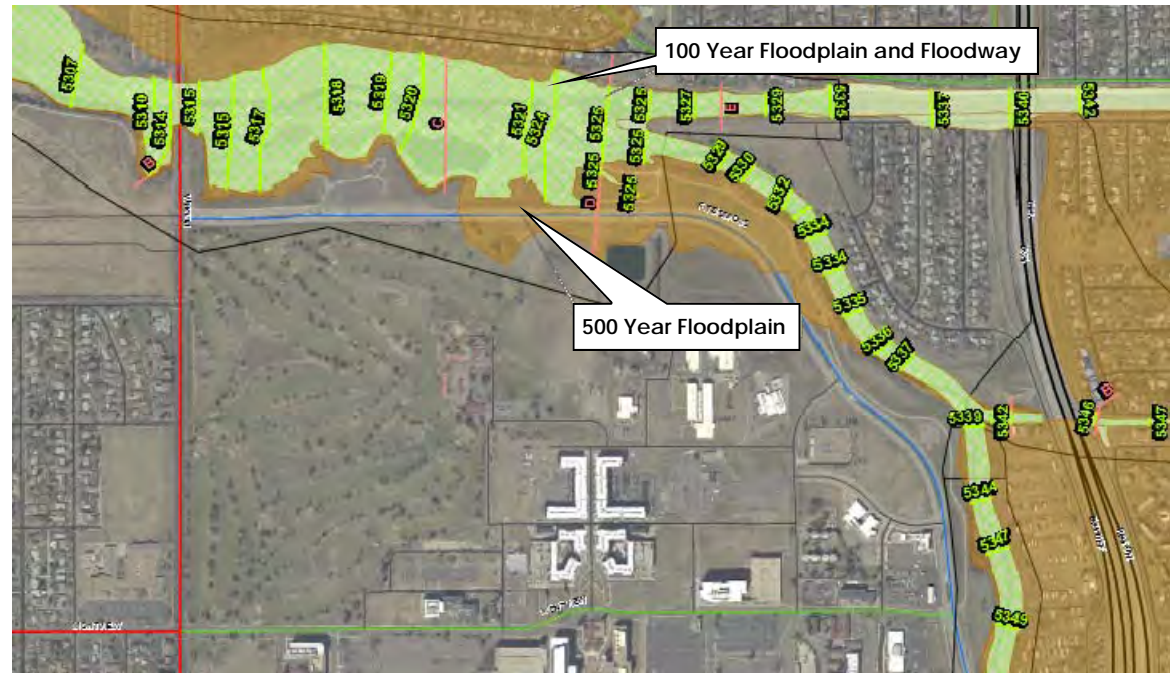


Figure 5. Floodplain Map (FEMA, 2010)

trunk storm sewer lines along Fitzsimons Parkway, Peoria Street, Montview Boulevard, 22nd Avenue, Scranton Street, Ursula Street and 23rd Avenue. The central portion of the FRA property and the Anschutz Medical Campus drains through a series of storm sewers and outfalls into a regional detention and water quality basin, and discharges through a 48-inch outfall to Sand Creek.

The western portion of the FRA property (comprised mostly of the existing golf course) currently surface drains northward to Fitzsimons Parkway. The current drainage study identifies locations for future regional water quality basins that would be constructed with development and will discharge through the existing outfall to Sand

Creek.

A major upgrade to the storm sewer lines is being planned by the city and could be located as a new line in the Racine Street right-of-way and expanded to include basin drainage, or another option is potentially upgrading the existing line along the east side of Peoria Street.





**21 Fitzsimons**



**Bioscience Park Center**



**Bioscience 2**

### 2.3 Recent Development Activity

The FRA was created in 1995 through an agreement between the City of Aurora and the University of Colorado as a special entity to supervise the evolution and redevelopment of the army medical center into a medical and bioscience district. The first facility built was the Bioscience Park Center, which opened in 1999. Additional research facilities were renovated in the following years, and a 40,000-square-foot wing was added to the Bioscience Park Center in 2012. In the fall of 2015, the 112,000-square-foot Bioscience 2 building was completed. It includes research facilities, businesses and the University of Colorado’s Bioengineering program and provides an opportunity for commercial bioscience companies to interact on a daily basis with students from the university.

Other entities located within or in proximity to the study area include: 21 Fitzsimons, a 600-unit residential project with ground floor retail built in phases between 2008 and 2014; the U.S. Army Reserve facilities; University Physicians, Inc., a

multi-specialty group practice of faculty physicians and ancillary health care providers; the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center; the Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home; over 40 large and small organizations and businesses; and properties in University of Colorado and City of Aurora ownership.

One of the city’s goals is for this northwest part of the city to become an urban center with education, business, research, and health care. The greater Fitzsimons area has two urban renewal areas. The Colorado Science and Technology Park Urban Renewal Area was established in 2008 to support the redevelopment and provide financing for the office and research area located north of Montview Boulevard and west of Victor Street. The Fitzsimons Urban Renewal Area, established in 2001, includes property on the south side of E. Colfax Avenue, on the west side of Peoria Street, on the east side of Fitzsimons Parkway, as well as the Anschutz Medical Campus and hospitals. Urban renewal tools such as tax increment financing have been key in assisting with the development of properties on the south side of Colfax Avenue, such as the Hyatt Hotel and

convention center and the Forum at Fitzsimons residential project.

In the larger northwest Aurora area, new and thriving businesses and residential areas are envisioned, such as new retail and cultural attractions in the Aurora Cultural Arts District along Colfax Avenue, and the establishment of new development and attractions such as the Stanley Marketplace in Westerly Creek Village. The Fitzsimons Innovation Campus and the Anschutz Medical Campus form the major employment area in northwest Aurora with approximately 22,000 employees in 2015. Within the broader city context, the greater Fitzsimons area with the Anschutz Medical Campus and the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus is seen as one corner of the “opportunity triangle” which also encompasses the Stapleton and Lowry redevelopment areas as the other corners on the triangle.

## 2.4 Market Analysis

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The original master plan for the Colorado Science and Technology Park had aspirations to create a major bio-medical center. The scale of these original plans envisioned a dense office area with approximately six million square feet of office and labs. Since 2008 (when that plan was created), the landscape of the biomedical industry has changed, with large pharmaceutical companies now opting to partner with research institutions rather than building stand-alone research and development centers and buildings. The impact of this change has been a rethinking of the direction and scale of this area.

### Innovation District Concept

With the change in what the FRA has witnessed in the demand for biotech office and research facilities, there has also been an emergence of a new concept, the “innovation district”. Innovation districts have in recent times sprung up at locations around the world, and are a reflection of the innovation economy with an increasing clustering of anchor institutions, companies and start-ups in small geographic areas. These districts are a response to the familiar yet isolated suburban corporate campuses and science parks. The innovation district places emphasis on the quality of life and the integration of work, housing and recreation. Partly in response to the growing preference of young, talented workers to congregate in vibrant neighborhoods that offer choices in housing, transportation and amenities, these districts have made urban and urbanizing areas increasingly attractive. For the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus, the relationship between new businesses and the medical campus and hospitals provides for a synergistic relationship that advances economic growth.

A market study was conducted as part of this

station area plan to identify potential demand for residential and commercial uses near the station and on the FRA lands. The market study’s scope examined local and regional economic and demographic trends and projections impacting the Fitzsimons station area. Current, near and long-term market trends were considered, and stakeholder feedback was incorporated into an evaluation of the projections. This market information formed a basis for the planning types and intensities of uses, and led to the preferred land use concept. As with any plan and development concept, the actual mix and timing of development will vary, according to market forces.

The findings of the market study and demand potentials are summarized below and in the table in Figure 6.

### Key findings

- The population in the area will continue to grow. The Primary Market Area, defined as the area approximately within three miles the station, is comprised of over 170,000 persons in over 56,000 households. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) forecasts an additional 28,000 new households in the market area by 2040.
- The Anschutz Medical Campus employed about 21,224 people in 2014. At full build-out, it is expected that the campus will include over 18.5 million square feet of development and employ over 45,000 people.
- The Anschutz Medical Campus has significantly changed employment in Adams and Arapahoe Counties. In 2003, the greatest number of jobs in the two counties was in Retail Trade. Construction provided the second highest number of jobs. By 2013, Health Care and Social Assistance had become the area’s largest employer.

### Employment

The FRA estimates a 10-year demand for office, including potential “innovation district” uses, of approximately 300,000 square feet. For the long-term, the eventual build-out (including the existing office and research buildings in the study area) could comprise over six million square feet of office, research, and innovation space, and hotel and residential uses.

### Residential

The multi-family residential rental market is very strong given the demand for student and employee housing. For the immediate area around the Fitzsimons campus, the estimated lease up and absorption could total 1,700 to 2,400 units over the 10-year period to 2024. Strong demand for student housing has been verified through recent surveys of the student population. Housing responsive to student needs could be among the first projects considered for the area given the strong demand.

### Commercial (Retail and Hotels)

The demand for retail is tied in very closely with the household build-out in the vicinity. With the development of Stapleton Aurora and new housing on the FRA land, the demand for the amount of retail could increase. While there is an estimated demand for approximately 90,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and other services based on employment and household growth, the potential challenge will be about the location and phasing. With a commercial and higher density mixed-use area identified to be built in Stapleton Aurora immediately on the west side of Peoria Street, the retail in the study area is likely to lag behind the development of residential and office uses on the FRA lands.

There is a current demand for additional grocery stores in the market area, although the demand for a grocery store may be reduced through the

opening of a new King Soopers grocery store in the East Bridge community at Stapleton. The Stanley Marketplace project is to include a small, specialty food market. With these two new stores, the current demand may be substantially reduced.

Employees, students and others on the Anschutz Medical Campus tend to stay close to their workplaces rather than venturing out to eat. However, there would be demand for food and convenience services which would increase as the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus grows, and these retail uses are envisioned to be accommodated on the ground floor of buildings throughout the area. While convenience retail and restaurants can be dispersed throughout the area and incorporated into mixed-use buildings, the locational preference may be to have these retail uses on streets with higher traffic, due to drive-by visibility, or adjacent to parks to take advantage of this amenity.

By 2024, there would be demand for one to two additional hotels of 125-150 rooms each. Demand for one hotel would be based on future employment growth. Demand for another hotel could be based on the health and wellness concept which would have the potential to expand the market by bringing in clientele that would participate in the programs at the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center. The closest new hotel is the 249-room Hyatt and convention center on the south side of Colfax Avenue, built as part of the Fitzsimons Village project.

**Senior Continuum of Care**

Based on potential growth in households with residents who would be age qualified and require assistance as well as growth in the caregiver population, demand from market area growth would result in a potential demand for approximately 150-175 independent and assisted living units in the next five years.

**Fitzsimons Station Area Market Potential (2024)**

Use	Units/SF	Niches
Residential Multifamily	1,700 – 2,400 units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General wider average market rental rates have been in the \$1.30 to \$1.76 per square foot rental ranges</li> <li>• The recently built 21 Fitzsimons II has been successful at raising average price per square foot ranges through the addition of smaller units and fewer frills. The company estimates that two-thirds of their renters are affiliated with the Anschutz Medical Campus.</li> <li>• Heights and densities for new projects should start at levels commensurate with the 21 Fitzsimons projects (four stories). Because of the parking needed, and because parking structures typically need residential rents over \$2 per square foot to be supportable, a parking plan should also be developed as part of any new plan.</li> <li>• There appears to be student housing demand based on a recent survey commissioned by the Student Services office of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.</li> </ul>
Innovation District (Office)	300,000 sf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on FRA analysis of office and innovation district potentials in the area</li> </ul>
Lodging	1-2 hotels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional demand for hotel through 2024 may be 200 rooms. A health and wellness hotel not previously seen in the area may expand demand.</li> </ul>
Retail	90,000 sf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term demand based on employment and household growth on campus and in station area. Can consist of neighborhood servicing and convenience retail dispersed throughout the area.</li> </ul>
Senior continuum of care services	150-175 units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term demand for 150-175 independent/assisted living units</li> </ul>

Figure 6. Market Study – Fitzsimons Parkway Station Area Planning and Design Study, January, 2015

Figure 7:  
Fundamental Concept  
Diagram



# 03

## The Vision

### 3.1 Vision and Objectives

Throughout the station area planning process, the key principles for transit-oriented development (TOD) from the *2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan* shaped the development of the fundamental concept and the land use and transportation frameworks (Figure 8).

The vision for the Fitzsimons station area expands on the previous plans for the bio-tech district by introducing the “innovation district” concept for an urban, walkable area that features office uses in forms ranging from single story to multi-story buildings, multi-family housing adjacent to the existing 21 Fitzsimons project, new hotels, a range of facilities including local shops and restaurants, and attractive parks and plazas that are important gathering places and amenities.

#### Fundamental Concept

The Fundamental Concept Diagram (Figure 7) provides a “snap shot” of the essential station area concepts. The *Fitzsimons Station Area Plan’s*

#### Summary of Transit-Oriented Development Principles

1. **TOD works as a “district”.** The one-half mile area around the transit station is the minimum area of influence from the transit station. These areas can become new neighborhoods where development draws value from the transit stations, parks and plazas are gathering places, and the mix of uses allows pedestrians to easily reach their destinations.
2. **TODs must be walkable.** TODs are to create an urban scale where the pedestrian is important. Attractive and safe pedestrian connections are a priority in TODs.
3. **Central spaces give identity to TODs.** Public spaces are very important in TODs, and parks, plazas and main streets that are beautiful and useful can become important identifying elements.
4. **TODs connect to the surrounding neighborhoods.** The pedestrian network of the TOD should allow easy pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods. The relatively small size of the blocks should allow for an attractive and convenient pedestrian experience.
5. **Density is important.** TOD should have density sufficient to create an active center for an existing or new neighborhood. Higher densities take advantage of the massive public investment in transit. Density also creates the potential for diversity of housing types, a range of land uses, and the possibility of neighborhood-serving retail. Density should transition from the highest densities in the core of the TOD around the transit station to lower densities next to existing residential neighborhoods.
6. **Design matters.** The quality of building architecture and the design of streets, parks and plazas are important elements that create the identity of a station area.
7. **Promoting sustainability.** Compact development promotes efficiency in infrastructure, and may require innovative approaches to detention and water quality.

Figure 8. TOD Principles, *Aurora Comprehensive Plan*

primary objectives are to develop land use and transportation concepts for the one-half mile area surrounding the Fitzsimons Station, with an emphasis on:

- Land use scenarios for the immediate station area and the FRA-owned lands extending south to Montview Boulevard
- Maximizing pedestrian and vehicular connections between the transit station and surrounding areas.

In the future, an opportunity to incorporate the U.S. Army Reserve property within the station area

development should be explored.

The Fundamental Concept Diagram (Figure 7) illustrates the following key features:

#### Station Area Development

- Land uses include a wide mix of office, retail and residential development with a primary focus on supporting employment associated with innovation/office uses including: lab space and facilities, studio innovation, co-work and creative flex space, general office, and research and development. Office uses, which will

initially extend north from Montview Boulevard, would be responsive to the needs of the innovation companies.

- Residential uses will occur north of the existing 21 Fitzsimons housing development and along the east side of Scranton Parkway
- A concentration of regional retail uses, if warranted by the market, will be primarily located at the northwest portion of the station area along Peoria Street and Fitzsimons Parkway. Retail will also be dispersed throughout the area, and potential locations may include sites opposite the Fitzsimons Station at Scranton Parkway or in proximity to the 21 Fitzsimons housing development.

#### **Complete Streets Connections**

- Montview Boulevard and 23rd Avenue will be designed with an emphasis on mobility, providing a balance of pedestrian, auto and bicycle access within the district and serving as the primary east/west routes through the area. Pedestrian and bicycle connections across these streets are important to facilitate safe, convenient connections to the station.

#### **Fitzsimons Station Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections**

- Pedestrian and bicycle routes will be designed to be safe connections between the Fitzsimons Station and the Anschutz Medical Campus
- Along Scranton Parkway, a central parkway will provide a linear open space connection and additional street enhancements such as wide sidewalks, on-street parking and bike lanes, establish this street as the primary connection to and from the Fitzsimons Station as well as a focus for innovation district office and residential development
- Racine Street will incorporate wide sidewalks, a bike facility such as a protected bikeway or on-street bike lanes, and a two-lane roadway that

provides important access within the district and a direct connection to Sand Creek Park and the west side of the Anschutz Medical Campus

#### **Open Space Amenities**

- Serve as central organizing features for new development and form an interconnected network of open spaces with the complementary Anschutz Medical Campus commons, quadrangles and parade grounds. As amenities, they also will attract market-rate housing and office uses to the Fitzsimons Station area.

#### **Anschutz Medical Campus Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections**

- The Fitzsimons Station area will be connected to the system of interconnected promenades and green landscaped streets that link internal campus open spaces, such as the Parade Grounds and the 19th Place Promenade, within the Anschutz Medical Campus. As development occurs and the street network is constructed, Scranton Parkway will become a major pedestrian and bicycle connection between the station and the Anschutz Medical Campus.

### **3.2 Innovation District Subareas**

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The Land Use Framework and Innovation District Subarea diagram (Figure 9) illustrates the new development patterns that can occur and identifies the types and locations of station area uses. On many parcels, a mix of vertical and horizontal uses is suggested. Where parcels contain a vertical mix of uses, the most likely predominant land use is indicated. The land use framework is intended to encourage flexibility and includes blocks where alternative uses are designated, in place of a single, primary use.

Predominant uses have been located and categorized into subareas to:

- Maximize development potential based upon existing use adjacencies and site attributes
- Maximize utilization of existing and planned improvements such as stormwater lines or other utilities
- Address existing development agreements between the FRA, the United States Army Reserve, the University of Colorado, the City of Aurora, and others
- Respond to conceptual short-term and long-term phasing strategies
- Provide flexibility. In some instances, multiple predominant uses are offered to respond to possible changing market conditions
- Recognize the acquisition of approximately 25 net acres on the FRA site north of Montview and east of Peoria by the University of Colorado
- Address policy decisions for development outside the planning area. In particular, the amount and location of student housing responds to the City Council's desire to foster market-rate student housing in adjacent surrounding neighborhoods rather than primarily within the station area Residential subarea

Figure 9:

Land Use Framework –  
Innovation District  
Subareas

- Innovation Office
- Hotel
- Flex: Retail or Office
- Residential
- Flex: Residential or Office
- Park/Open Space
- Existing Park/Open Space
- 'District Boundary'



SOURCE: CIVITAS, CRANDALL ARAMBULA

The station area includes the following six subareas:

1. Innovation Office
2. Hotel
3. Residential
4. Flex Retail or Office
5. Flex Residential or Office
6. Park/Open Space

Of the 184 acres in FRA ownership, approximately 55 acres will be required for existing and future street rights-of-way based on the FRA's vision for an urban, employment center.

### 3.2.1 Innovation Office Subarea

The subarea is substantial in size: it extends from Montview Boulevard on the south to 23rd Avenue on the north, and between Peoria Street on the west and Scranton Parkway on the east. Innovation office uses are also envisioned on the east side of the campus between Uvalda and Victor Streets and east of Victor to Fitzsimons Parkway

The subarea provides opportunities for office start-ups, business incubators and accelerators, and a limited amount of complementary retail and service uses. The important locational characteristics for this urban employment area are:

- Proximity—fronting Montview Boulevard, the blocks are directly adjacent to the Anschutz Medical Campus advanced research and other anchor institutions
- Visibility—the sites are located adjacent to the busy major arterial roadway (Peoria Street) that provides high visibility due to over 30,000 daily trips
- Access—the sites can be easily accessed from an existing signalized intersection at Montview Boulevard and Peoria Street, future signalized

### Land Use Framework Summary with Subareas at Build-Out\*

<b>Office</b>	<b>Up to 4,602,445 Square Feet of a mix of office types</b>
<b>Hotel</b>	<b>250 – 300 Rooms for two hotels</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>850 – 1,455 Dwelling Units</b>
<b>Retail</b>	<b>20,000 – 120,000 Square Feet</b>
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Up to 17,557 spaces</b>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<b>Approximately 9 acres</b>

\* Build-Out Totals from the FRA conceptual development requirements, Fitzsimons Innovation Campus General Development Plan (2015)

Figure 10. Land Use Framework Summary

intersections at 23rd Avenue and Peoria Street, Racine and Fitzsimons Parkway, and Montview Boulevard and Racine Street. Additional right-in/right-out access points are anticipated as part of a local street grid that are defined in the FRA General Development Plan and associated traffic studies.

- Prominent Address— these office and mixed-use buildings can capture the benefits of multiple “front door” addresses along the existing Peoria Street, Montview Boulevard, and the future Racine Street, 23rd Avenue and Scranton Parkway signature streets.

#### General Development Character

- Development should front primary and existing streets, including Peoria Street, to create a more urban street edge that defines and creates a more pedestrian friendly public realm. Primary building access from the street, green spaces or pedestrian corridors in addition to access from internal parking lots or structures is encouraged

- Street-oriented retail along 23rd Avenue or other Primary streets should be served by adjacent on-street parking where feasible
- Parking should be located behind or to the side of buildings. Design techniques that minimize parked car visual impacts from streets and the disruption of the pedestrian environment should be implemented. Flexibility in parking location may be considered on a project by project basis to allow for some surface parking during initial phases until the market is ripe for structured parking

#### Detail

Development detail should be developed as part of a FRA General Development Plan and design guidelines document, including:

- Permitted and conditional land uses. Prohibited uses should generally include those that are auto-oriented, warehousing or storage. Manufacturing or assembly uses may be appropriate, but limitations on uses that may



create adverse impacts—noise, air quality, etc. should be considered.

- Parks, plazas and open space should be of adequate size and design to serve nearby employees and residents. Entry plazas should be incorporated into individual building design, where warranted.
- Identification of site standards such as minimum and/or maximum building footprints or setbacks, minimum heights and bulk planes, build-to lines, or other relevant site requirements
- Site coverage and/or floor area ratio (floor area ratio – defined as the ratio of a building to the area of the lot on which the building is located) requirements and minimum and/or maximum building heights (measured in stories) for each block. Consideration of sight line and Front Range or other skyline view corridors should be defined.
- Urban design standards, such as parking lot screening, stormwater facilities design, etc.
- Parking standards similar to those identified in the city's requirements for TOD zoning.
- Sustainable development and best management practices.

### 3.2.2. Hotel Subarea

Two parcels comprise a subarea identified for future hospitality use, one at the intersection of Montview Boulevard and Racine Street, and the other at the intersection of Uvalda Street and Montview Boulevard. These should be boutique and specialty hotels that complement the adjacent uses. The hotel uses are strategically identified for these locations to meet the following important siting criteria:

- Proximity—fronting Montview, the blocks are directly adjacent to the Anschutz Medical Campus advanced research institutions, the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center, and

near the Children's Hospital, University of Colorado Hospital, and the future Veterans Affairs Hospital.

- Visibility— the sites are located adjacent to Montview Boulevard that also provides easy access by automobile, walking or bicycle.
- Adjacency— the existing 21 Fitzsimons mixed-use development provides a food and beverage amenity for hotel guests in addition to those likely to be provided within the hotels.
- Environment— unlike hotel development along busy Colfax Avenue, hotels along Montview will be in a quieter setting and near green, park amenities.

#### General Development Character

The hotels are intended to complement the new hotel development in the area, such as the Springhill Suites and the Hyatt Hotel and Conference Center located south of the Anschutz Medical campus along Colfax Avenue. Rather than duplicate these market segments, the study area hotels should provide lodging for a different market segment than is currently underserved in the area.

#### Detail

Additional development detail should be developed as part of as part of the General Development Plan and design guidelines document that identifies minimum and/or maximum building heights and footprints, setbacks, build-to lines, and other urban design standards.

### 3.2.3 Residential Subarea

Development in the Residential Subarea development is envisioned for blocks along Scranton Parkway between 25th Avenue to the 21 Fitzsimons project, south of 22nd Avenue. Multi-family residential development is the major opportunity in the station area and residential development should build upon the success and "lessons-learned" (i.e., unit size, unit mix, rents,

etc.) from the 21 Fitzsimons project and other successful apartment development close to the Anschutz Medical Campus. The subarea can accommodate a range of multi-family housing opportunities, ranging from affordable apartments, student housing, to market rate apartments, condos and town houses.

Residential development can be successful at this location since it has the following locational and character advantages:

- Proximity—fronting the Scranton Parkway, development along these blocks will have an attractive amenity in the Scranton Parkway linear greenway park as well as being close to the Fitzsimons Station and easy access to destinations on the Aurora Line corridor such as the Aurora City Center, or transit destinations outside the corridor such as the Denver Tech Center, Downtown Denver or the Denver International Airport.
- Amenity— the subarea is located close to Sand Creek Park and its regional multi-use trails that link the parcels to areas outside the study area.
- Jobs-Housing Balance—future employees at the planned Innovation Office subarea and existing Anschutz Medical Campus will have an opportunity to live close to their jobs, thereby enabling them to save time and money commuting. Living in this subarea will provide residents a unique opportunity to live "car-free" or "car-lite".

#### General Development Character

- Development should avoid an institutional, repetitive, "apartment complex" character. Multiple developers and architectural design styles should be utilized to ensure variety and diverse architecture.
- Development should front Scranton Parkway to create a more urban street edge that defines and creates a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Primary building access/lobbies

should be from the street, green spaces or pedestrian corridors as well as from internal parking lots or structures. Along Primary streets, ground floor units may be accessed from the street rather than internal corridors.

- Residential development should be phased to maximize density.
- Parking should be located behind, within buildings, or in structures. Parking should be screened so that it is not visible from the public street. Parking structures should be wrapped by housing or include active ground floor uses, or screened by landscaping or other means.

#### **Detail**

Additional development detail should be developed as part of the General Development Plan and design guidelines document, and should include:

- Minimum density of 50 dwelling units per acre (gross density) and a maximum of 1,450 total dwelling units.
- Minimum four-story residential apartment buildings are preferred; three story suburban-styled walk-up apartment buildings and single-family detached units will not be permitted.
- Identification of site standards such as setbacks, minimum heights, build-to lines, or other relevant site requirements.
- Development of urban design standards, such as parking lot screening, private open space requirements, etc.
- Parking standards similar to those identified in the city requirements for TOD zoning.
- Sustainable development and best management practices.

#### **3.2.4 Flex (Retail or Office Subarea)**

The Flex (Retail or Office) Subarea is defined by Peoria Street on the west, Quentin Street on the east, Fitzsimons Parkway on the north and 23rd Avenue on the south. Access to development on

the parcels would also be provided by 25th Avenue. The subarea allows for development of a major corporate office use, or potentially a small commercial center. A combination of uses, such as a signature office buildings and supporting uses such as retail shops, restaurants and service uses could also be envisioned.

#### **General Development Character**

- Development should front the Primary streets such as 23rd Avenue, Racine, Scranton, Fitzsimons Parkway and Peoria Street to create an urban street edge that defines a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Primary building access/lobbies should be from the street or plazas as well as from internal parking lots or structures.
- Parking should be located behind, within buildings, or in structures. Parking areas should be visually screened from the public street.
- For office development, where parking structures are provided, they should be located behind office buildings or screened by landscaping or other means.
- Buildings are to be set back along Peoria Street to allow for a linear park with a multi-use path, running path and landscaping. A multi-use path would also be located along Fitzsimons Parkway.

#### **Detail**

Development details should be defined as part of the General Development Plan, design guidelines document and other associated reports, and should include:

- A minimum gross floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.3 for retail. Greater intensity should be fostered through use of multi-story buildings.
- Permitted and conditional land uses.
- Open space requirements, particularly if open spaces may serve as the focus of development.
- Loading and service areas should be screened or buffered from adjacent development to reduce impacts on the pedestrian environment.

- Identification of site standards such as minimum and/or maximum building footprints and heights, setbacks, build-to lines, and other relevant site requirements.
- Urban design standards, such as parking lot screening (landscaping, walls, landform, etc.), stormwater facilities design, etc.
- Parking standards similar to those identified in city requirements for TOD zoning.
- Sustainable development and best management practices.

#### **3.2.5 Flex (Residential or Office) Subarea**

This approximately 28-acre Flex Subarea could contain both residential or office development, and is envisioned for the blocks bound by Quentin Street on the west, Ursula Street on the east, Fitzsimons Parkway to the north, and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the central park to the south. Primary north-south access roadways through the parcel would include Racine Street and Scranton Parkway. Development of the subarea is envisioned as a latter phase of the overall study area.

#### **General Development Character**

- Development should front Primary and existing streets to create an urban street edge that defines a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Primary building access should be from the Primary street, and can include entry plazas.
- Parking should be located behind, to the side of buildings, or in structures. Parking should be screened from the public street and should not be accessed from the primary street and disrupt the safety of the pedestrian environment. Where parking structures are provided, they may include active ground floor uses. Where no active ground floor use occurs, the parking structure should be screened by landscaping or other means.

### Detail

Development details should be included in the General Development Plan, design guidelines document and associated reports, and should include:

- Minimum residential density of 40 dwelling units per acre (gross density)
- Minimum four-story residential buildings are preferred; three story suburban-styled walk-up apartment buildings should be discouraged.
- Identification of residential site standards such as minimum and/or maximum building footprints or setbacks, minimum heights, build-to lines, or other relevant site requirements.
- Identification of permitted and conditional uses for office development. Prohibited uses should generally include those that are auto-oriented, warehousing or outdoor storage. Manufacturing or assembly uses may be appropriate but limitations on uses that may create adverse impacts—noise, air quality, etcetera, should be considered.
- A minimum gross FAR of 0.5 for office uses should be required. Greater intensity should be encouraged, particularly for development sites close to the Fitzsimons Station.
- Minimum and/or maximum building heights for each office block should be identified.
- Consideration of Front Range sight line or other skyline view corridors.
- Urban design standards, such as setbacks, parking lot screening, stormwater facilities design, etc.
- Parking standards similar to those identified in the city requirements for TOD zoning.
- Sustainable development and best management practices.

### 3.2.6 Parks and Open Space

The purpose of the park and open space



Plaza and Park at Bioscience 2 and 21 Fitzsimons

framework is to locate a network of parks that provide an amenity and focus for development within the station area including:

- An approximately 3.5-acre small urban park centrally located within the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus, north of 23rd Avenue and west of Scranton Parkway. This park would serve the flex (residential and office) subarea, as well the innovation office subarea to the south and residential subarea to the east. The park is envisioned to be a central hub and gathering place with amenities that encourage its daytime and evening use. Amenities could include small commercial uses that would help enliven the space.
- A “promenade” urban parkway centered within Scranton Parkway that provides the spine to the open spaces system and a direct connection between the Anschutz Medical Campus, the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus and the light rail station.
- A linear park along Peoria Street with a multi-use path, running path, street trees and landscaping, and benches and pedestrian street lights.
- Additional promenades along the east side of

Uvalda Street, and at Scranton Street between Montview Boulevard and 19th Avenue, that provide an enhanced pedestrian walkway or potential separated off-street bicycle connection to key Anschutz Medical Campus open space quadrangles.

### General Development Character

- The design of the park and open space network should be urban in character and complementary to the adjacent uses, with a mix of hardscape and more traditional park elements.
- Parks, plazas and open spaces should be a focus of development and be inviting and attractive.

### Detail

- A detailed design study for Scranton Parkway with options for a grade-separated crossing of Fitzsimons Parkway as an integral element should be prepared.
- Additional details for the park and open spaces should be provided as part of the General Development Plan.

### 3.3 Transportation Framework

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The Transportation Framework identifies the street grid and road hierarchy, and describes the character for key station access routes. It has an emphasis, in terms of focus and detail, on “complete street” multimodal connections within a half-mile radius of the Fitzsimons Station extending south to Montview Boulevard, west to Peoria Street and east to Fitzsimons Parkway. The urban grid and small block structure ensures that frequent connections are provided for vehicular and pedestrian linkages. The block structure mirrors the established grid in the Northwest Aurora neighborhood to the west, but in some locations dimensions are adjusted to better accommodate contemporary building floorplates of new development.

The Transportation Framework diagram (Figure 11) includes:

- A roadway hierarchy that establishes a network of “A Streets” that are fixed in location and design; “B Streets” which are more flexible in location and design; and Existing Streets Enhancements that provide improved station area access and multi-modal improvements to key existing streets. Primary Streets and Secondary Streets will be constructed according to the requirements of the City of Aurora’s Urban Streets Standards document and the General Development Plan for the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus.
- “Active transportation” pedestrian and bicycle circulation design elements that will reduce auto dependency, traffic and parking impacts, and foster health benefits that are in alignment and promoted by the adjacent Anschutz Medical Campus institutions.
- Shuttle bus transit routes throughout the FRA

area and the Anschutz Medical Campus. Since the station is located outside of a comfortable walking distance (i.e., five to ten minute walk) from any of the existing major employers in the Anschutz Medical Campus, a bus shuttle route and stop locations have been identified to provide light rail access to key destinations within a reasonable timeframe.

#### **Fitzsimons Station Parking**

Existing parking supply near the Fitzsimons Station is limited. Within 400 feet of the proposed station there are currently no public parking facilities. A parking lot for Sand Creek Park is within 1,000 feet of the station and is for patrons of the park and is not intended as a light rail park-n-ride facility. No other parking is currently available to service future users of the station, and RTD has stated that no parking spaces will be provided with the station. Given this, there is a need for a kiss-n-ride location close to the Fitzsimons Station. This facility is for the convenience of transit patrons and the location will be determined through discussions between the city, FRA and RTD.

#### **Peoria Street and Fitzsimons Parkway Streetscapes**

The major multi-lane streets adjacent to the study area are Peoria Street and Fitzsimons Parkway. Peoria Street will be the most visible urban edge for the station area. The Peoria Street urban edge can be defined and enhanced with ground floor uses that are incorporated into the medium-density office and retail uses that could develop along this street.

The Peoria Street urban edge will develop a distinct character by including the following:

- Buildings with ground floor façades that front onto Peoria Street, wherever possible. Given that it is envisioned that buildings will primarily front onto the primary east-west streets, it is

important that the buildings should also be configured to include ground floors and building entrances that front onto Peoria Street. Street level commercial uses and building entrances will encourage pedestrian activity along Peoria Street. Additional details for the design of the Peoria Street building façades are contained in the design guidelines document.

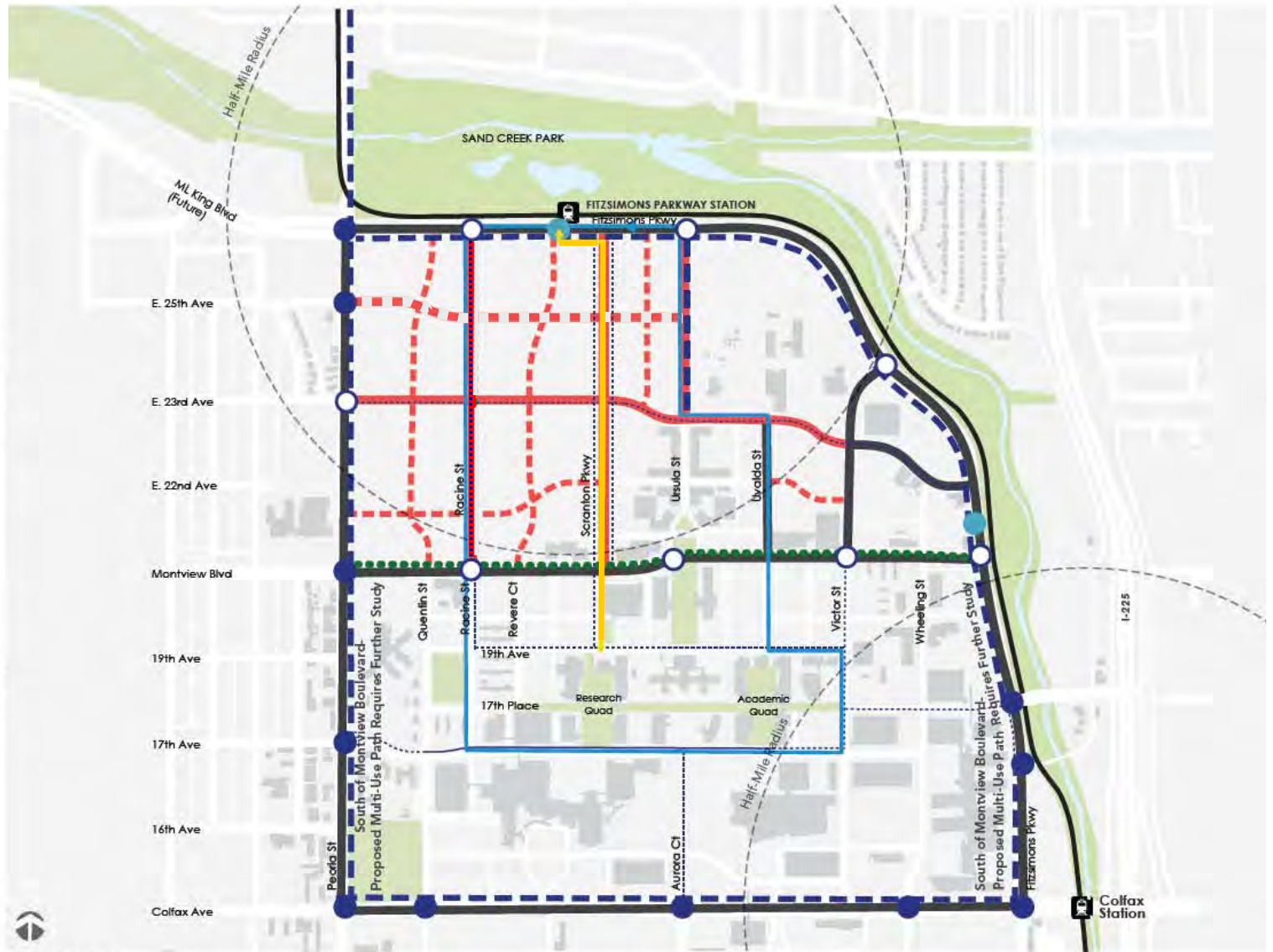
- A landscaped urban linear park that will provide a setting for the office and retail uses envisioned along Peoria Street, as well as providing screening of any parking lots or parking structures. The linear park will emphasize movement by the users by providing a multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists as well as a soft-surface jogging path. It will be a pedestrian connection between the neighborhoods, the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus, Sand Creek Park, and other destinations in the area. The linear park must be designed to be safe, attractive and visually interesting, with street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, seating areas and other amenities. The street trees and plantings along the east edge of Peoria Street will provide a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles. The linear park at both the Fitzsimons Parkway and Montview Boulevard intersections will provide opportunities for gateway features for the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus.

The Fitzsimons Parkway urban edge is envisioned to have a continuous street wall with buildings fronting onto Fitzsimons Parkway. Building façades with retail uses and building entrances will contribute to an active streetscape. The streetscape will also include multi-use path, street trees, pedestrian-scaled light fixtures, street furniture and other amenities.

Figure 11:  
Transportation  
Framework Diagram

Transportation Elements

- █ Primary Streets
- ▬ Secondary Streets
- ▬ Existing Streets Enhancements
- ▬ Proposed Multi-Use Path
- Proposed Protected Bikeway
- - - Proposed Bike Lane
- ▬ Existing Bike Lane
- ▬ Existing Trail
- ▬ Proposed Trail
- ▬ Primary Pedestrian Connection
- ▬ Proposed Shuttle Route
- Existing Traffic Signal
- Future Traffic Signal
- Future Pedestrian Activated Signal (HAWK)



SOURCE: CIVITAS, CRANDALL ARAMBULA

### 3.4 Active Transportation Concept

The station area plan advocates using the street and pedestrian network as a key structuring element that also defines the character and identity of the station area. For the station area to see a transfer of a significant number of current and estimated future daily commuting trips away from autos to walking and cycling, it is essential that well designed safe and direct active transportation routes be established. The benefits of these active transportation routes are reduced auto congestion, enabling a potential reduction of parking requirements for future station area development, and an increase in light rail usage.

Prior to the relocation of the station, Anschutz Medical Campus employees and students were within a comfortable quarter-mile walking distance (i.e., five minutes) from a Montview Station. With the relocation of the station, most employees are less likely to walk to the station due to the increased distance and the topographic challenges. To provide an alternative means of access, the station area plan identifies direct, convenient and safe, five-minute bicycle access routes (i.e., approximately one-mile routes) as a means of providing this essential connection not only from the Anschutz Medical Campus but also from the entire study area and FRA properties. The Active Transportation Concept identifies:

- Routes that are intended to build upon existing infrastructure constructed in the Anschutz Medical Campus and multi-use paths along existing arterial streets and within Sand Creek Park.
- Future routes that will provide linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and incorporate planning concepts for future facilities, such as the planned Montview Boulevard bike lanes.
- Enhanced pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks to foster walking within a quarter mile of the

station and for those willing to travel further distances.

#### Bicycle and Pedestrian Enhancements

Station area streets are designed to include premium “active transportation” or pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities as shown on Figure 12 and consisting of:

1. Protected bike lanes, bicycle facilities physically separated from automobile traffic by raised curbs, parked cars, landscaping, bollards, or other vertical elements. These separated bike lanes offer a higher level of safety and therefore attract a broader range of the general public.
2. Multi-use paths are proposed:
  - Along the south side of Fitzsimons Parkway from Peoria Street to Montview Boulevard. Extending the multi-use path south of Montview is encouraged and will require further study.
  - Along the east side of Peoria Street in a linear park extending from Fitzsimons Parkway to Montview Boulevard. Extending the multi-use path south of Montview is encouraged and will require further study.
  - Within Sand Creek Park, numerous new multi-use trails will be constructed that connect into the existing network of community and regional trails. These connections are fully described in the *Sand Creek Park Master Plan (2014)*.
  - A new Toll Gate Creek multi-use regional trail, to be completed in 2018, will provide a connection south to the Colfax Station and beyond.
3. An internal network of on-street bike lanes that provide direct access to destinations throughout the station area and the adjacent Anschutz Medical Campus.

4. Bicycle facilities such as a secure location for a designated bike station in close proximity to the station platform along Fitzsimons Parkway. The facility could provide bike parking, bike repair and bike rental. The city is to work with the FRA, Anschutz Medical Campus and RTD to incorporate a bike share program.

#### Primary Pedestrian Connection

Scranton Parkway serves as the primary pedestrian connection and open space amenity between the Fitzsimons Station and the Anschutz Medical Campus. Incorporating bicycle infrastructure is essential, as the street is approximately 2,570 feet in length (extending from Fitzsimons Parkway to Montview Boulevard) and 40 feet in elevation change occurs between a high point at 23rd Street down to Fitzsimons Parkway.

The design concept for the parkway would include wide sidewalks, a linear green space and on-street bike lanes. The linear green space would provide an opportunity for a variety of activities, and with the elevation change, views from the high point at approximately 23rd Avenue to Sand Creek Park and the light rail station. Design of the green space and programming for activities should be complementary to adjacent residential or office land uses. This is a place for trees, lush looking plantings, and generous amounts of seating.

To ensure safe and direct access to the station platform and Sand Creek Park, a future grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing should not be precluded.

Figure 12:

Active Transportation Diagram

-  Proposed Multi-Use Path
-  Proposed Protected Bikeway
-  Proposed Bike Lane
-  Existing Bike Lane
-  Existing Trail
-  Proposed Trail
-  Primary Pedestrian Connection
-  Future Pedestrian Activated Signal (HAWK)
-  Bike Station



SOURCE: CIVITAS, CRANDALL ARAMBULA

### 3.5 Road Hierarchy

The Roadway Hierarchy Diagram (Figure 13) illustrates the minimum street types and locations required to provide adequate station platform and development parcel access. Moreover, it establishes a development context with scale and massing determined by the block size and primary frontages for future land uses. These street functions, width and streetscape design elements will contribute to the creation of a distinct and attractive innovation district.

The transportation framework establishes holistic “complete streets” where minimum facilities for all modes—auto, truck, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle are adequately provided. These complete streets include essential auto and truck infrastructure with appropriately sized roadway travel lanes and in most instances, curbside parking and loading zones.

Within the street grid, a hierarchy of streets has been established to address both mobility and adjacent land use needs. Street type categories are:

- A. Primary Streets
- B. Secondary Streets
- C. Existing Streets with Enhancements (i.e., Montview Boulevard, Peoria Street)

Other improvements include:

- D. Off-Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements (i.e., Ursula Street)
- E. Local Transit Circulator Shuttle Bus

Street furniture, lighting, landscaping and paving materials would be further defined as part of the design guidelines and other related documents.

A traffic study for the area north of Montview Boulevard conducted by the city is based on the

anticipated development build-out and the existing traffic patterns for the Anschutz Medical Campus and the FRA properties. The study, utilizing a traffic demand model, analyzed projected traffic movement patterns and volumes based on land uses and densities. The detailed traffic analysis identified likely future traffic volumes, desirable roadway widths and intersection configurations, and traffic control methods. Preliminary results indicate that 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenues, in addition to Montview Boulevard, will carry high volumes of traffic, particularly in the morning and afternoon peak traffic hours and at the major intersections with Peoria Street and Fitzsimons Parkway.

#### “Primary” Streets and “Secondary” Streets

The station area will have priority connection streets (Primary Streets) as well as secondary access and pedestrian streets (Secondary Streets). The Primary Streets provide complete street transportation access through the station area. The Primary Streets will also serve as the front door of new development and the primary building facades should face these streets. Primary Streets are characterized as well-designed and attractive streets with wide sidewalks, street trees and amenity zones, and on-street parking and bicycle facilities, where appropriate. For example, Primary Streets will limit driveway cuts and will require the highest attention to building façade design and pedestrian access to buildings.

Secondary Streets will serve as the primary connections to parking facilities and will allow driveway access and building service functions with appropriate design and screening. The location and design of a building’s vehicle and service access will be informed by these street types. These streets also provide strong pedestrian connection to the Primary Streets. Where a development parcel does not have frontage along a Primary Street, buildings should front onto a Secondary Street.



Montview Boulevard

#### Existing Streets with Enhancements

Peoria Street will be the visible edge to the station area and will have an important pedestrian/bicycle connection incorporated into the streetscape.

Montview Boulevard will be the important multi-modal street in the Fitzsimons area, providing the important pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhoods to the west.

#### Building Orientation

Buildings are designed to have fronts and backs. Street-based architectural design guidelines ensure that the fronts of buildings face the Primary Streets and that the driveway, service, and loading sides of the buildings face the Secondary Streets. All will have similar basic street and sidewalk requirements but may also have special requirements that reflect the street’s function (i.e., as a residential street or a main street). Street type combined with architectural design guidelines will govern building design and orientation to appropriate streets.



Figure 13:  
Road Hierarchy Diagram

- Primary Streets
- - - Secondary Streets
- Existing Streets Enhancements
- Existing Traffic Signal
- Future Traffic Signal
- Future Pedestrian Activated Signal (HAWK)



SOURCE: CIVITAS, CRANDALL ARAMBULA

## Primary Streets

The Primary Streets provide key routes throughout the station area, and they also serve as the front door of new development. They are attractive urban tree-lined streets with wide sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

The new Primary Streets in the study area are 23rd Avenue, Racine Street, Scranton Parkway and the Ursula Street extension. Figures 14, 15 and 16 illustrate conceptual street sections that show the intended character and key elements of three of these Primary Streets. Additional information on all the Primary and Secondary Street concepts is contained in the *Fitzsimons Parkway Station Area Planning and Design Study (2015)*.

### 23rd Avenue from Peoria Street to Fitzsimons Parkway

This street bisects the FRA site and, like Montview Boulevard, is a through street between Peoria Street and Fitzsimons Parkway (Figure 14). It offers an opportunity to knit the areas and different uses on the north and south sides of the street into a unified whole rather than as disparate districts. The intent is to keep the road section as narrow as possible while recognizing its function as a through street. With on-street parking, bicycle lanes and wide sidewalks, buildings can have active frontages with ground floor retail and service uses.

The street consists of two segments:

- a) Segment 1 — new street construction would occur from Peoria Street to Victor Street. A new traffic signal is proposed at the intersection of 23rd Avenue and Peoria Street.
- b) Segment 2 — the existing street will be enhanced between Victor and Fitzsimons Parkway in dimension and character consistent with the design of the Street Segment 1 to the west.



Figure 14. 23rd Avenue from Peoria Street to Fitzsimons Parkway (Concept illustration)

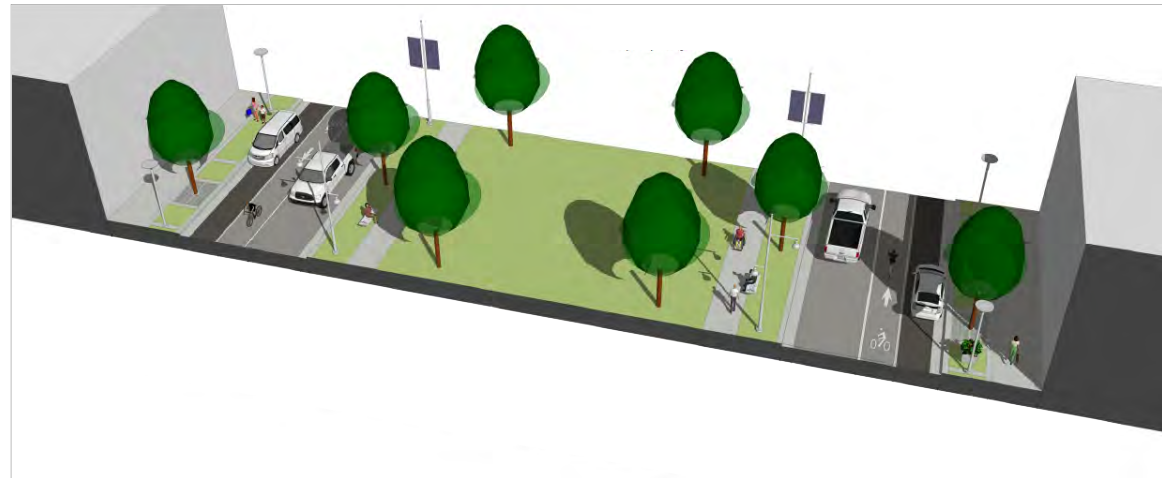


Figure 15. Scranton Parkway from Fitzsimons Parkway to 22nd Avenue (Concept illustration)

### Scranton Parkway from Fitzsimons Parkway to Montview Boulevard

The street serves as the primary station connection and open space amenity between the Anschutz Medical Campus and the Fitzsimons Station platform (Figure 15). A linear green space provides an opportunity for a variety of activities along its length. This is an inviting environment for people to stroll to the station or parks, and a space for both residents and office workers to enjoy. The street would include an approximately 90-foot-wide linear open space bracketed by one-way streets. Within the linear open space, a promenade with sitting areas and locations for public art should be provided, as well as opportunities for programmed space with both hardscape and landscape areas and active and passive recreation areas.

To ensure safe and direct access to the station platform and Sand Creek Park, a future grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing location should be identified in the design of the parkway and linear green space.

### Montview Boulevard from Peoria Street to Fitzsimons Parkway

The street generally separates the FRA site and the Anschutz Medical Campus. Today, it serves mostly as a service street, has an unpleasant pedestrian and bicycle environment, and is visually chaotic, lacking landscaping and streetscape amenities. The street is envisioned to be a focus of development for innovation office and hospitality uses. Additionally, it is envisioned as a complete street that provides a vital pedestrian and bicycle linkage across Peoria Street to northwest Aurora and further to the west, and to the Westerly Creek Village redevelopment area including the Stanley Marketplace. Protected bike lanes on the north and south sides of the street are recommended (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Montview Boulevard from Peoria Street to Fitzsimons Parkway (Concept illustration– three lanes)

### Racine Street from Fitzsimons Parkway to Montview Boulevard

The street serves as an active transportation route that extends from Fitzsimons Parkway south into and through the Anschutz Medical Campus. The route also functions as a primary connection linking pedestrians and bicyclists from Stapleton via bicycle connections on the new Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard extension. Through the use of bike lanes and a robust amount of landscaping, the street has been specifically designed to accommodate and encourage pedestrian and bicycle use.

### Ursula Street from Fitzsimons Parkway to 23rd Avenue

Located along the seam of station area development on the west and stormwater detention facilities on the east, the street is important for

vehicular access/egress due the planned traffic signal, and for the pedestrian/bicycle connection to the station, Sand Creek Park and the Morris Heights neighborhood. A generous amount of landscaping should be provided, especially for screening along the detention facility edge.

In preparation for the opening day of the Fitzsimons Station, the City of Aurora will construct a multi-use path with pedestrian-scaled lighting along the east side of the Ursula Street alignment and a portion of Fitzsimons Parkway from Ursula Street to the planned HAWK signal and pedestrian crossing located midblock and centered on the station platform.

### Victor Street from Montview Boulevard to Fitzsimons Parkway

The street serves as the eastern leg of the station

active transportation access loop that extends south into and through the Anschutz Medical Campus. The street also provides direct access from a signalized intersection at Fitzsimons Parkway to University of Colorado properties north of 23rd Avenue and the Children's Hospital Colorado and Anschutz Medical Campus south of Montview Boulevard. Detailed street sections are provided as part of the General Development Plan.

### **Uvalda Street from Montview Boulevard to 23rd Avenue**

In the future, the street is envisioned to be a focus of development for innovation office and hospitality uses. The street provides a key pedestrian and bicycle linkage between proposed open space amenities within the office innovation development area and the Academic Quad, a major open space within the Anschutz Medical Campus.

### **Fitzsimons Parkway**

The street separates the station area from the Fitzsimons Station light rail platform, Sand Creek Park and regional trail networks. Today, it serves as a by-pass arterial roadway along the east and north sides of the FRA property and Anschutz Medical Campus and will, in the near future, connect to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard providing a direct regional arterial connection between the station area, Stapleton and Downtown Denver. Today, the roadway design provides for high speeds and high traffic volumes and is forecast to carry 27,000 vehicles per day by the year 2035 (Source: *Site-Wide Coordinated Master Plan – Phase II Report, April 2014*).

On opening day of the Fitzsimons Station, it is anticipated that a multi-use path on the south side of the street will be constructed from Ursula Street to a location at the mid-point of the station platform and will include a pedestrian-activated HAWK signal. An additional HAWK signal will be provided

north of the intersection at Montview Boulevard with access across the light rail tracks to the Toll Gate Creek Trail.

In the future, the street is envisioned to be a focus of development for flex office and/or residential uses with some limited Fitzsimons Parkway oriented commercial uses serving transit patrons and nearby residents and workers. Additionally, it is envisioned as a street that provides a vital pedestrian and bicycle connection along the north side of the FRA property and connections across Fitzsimons Parkway to the station platform, Sand Creek Park, the regional trail system, and the Morris Heights neighborhood.

While the roadway serves as a region-serving arterial roadway, there is a desire to balance the needs of through auto traffic with safe pedestrian and bicycle access. In addition, future development is to be oriented to Fitzsimons Parkway, providing a high level of "eyes on the station" that support a safe station platform environment, and the Sand Creek Park, which is an attractive amenity for development.

### **Secondary Streets**

Secondary Streets are identified in order to support a fine-grained street grid and create appropriately scaled block sizes. The Secondary Streets provide necessary access within the station area and may be developed as private streets or as public rights-of-way. In many instances they provide a functional role — a place for access to parking, service bays or other necessary uses. In other instances they may provide a setting for front door development that might be animated by ground floor activities. Their character and function will be determined by their location and adjacent land uses. Prior to future site plan approvals, the placemaking character and following design parameters and elements should be clarified.

## **3.6 Local Transit Circulator Shuttle Bus**

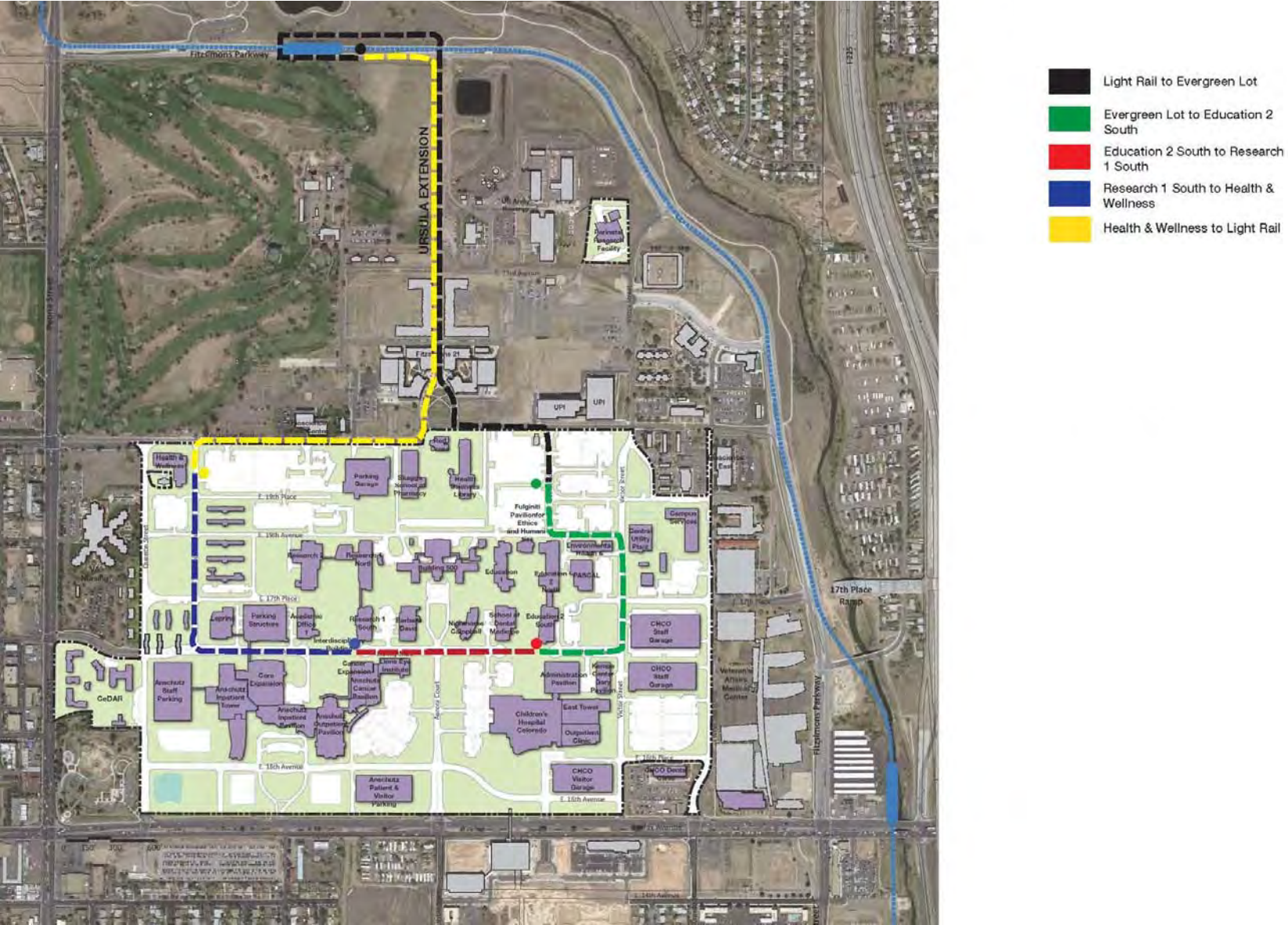
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The University of Colorado conducted an analysis of potential routes for a shuttle service linking the Anschutz Medical Campus to the Fitzsimons Station. The study examined phasing strategies that ensured services could be adequately provided for 2016 light rail line opening day while not precluding opportunities for serving additional transit destinations as the Anschutz Medical Campus builds out over the next few years. A perimeter route along arterial streets was identified along with a shuttle stop location adjacent to the transit platform on Fitzsimons Parkway as the recommended Short Term Circulator Route concept (Figure 17). Additional shuttle shops would be along Wheeling Street, 17th Avenue and Racine Street in the Anschutz Medical Campus.

To better facilitate service to the station area FRA development parcels and provide a more direct and time-saving route to the Anschutz Medical Campus, the Local Transit Circulator Diagram illustrates a preferred future circulator route along Fitzsimons Parkway, Racine Street, 17th Avenue, Victor Street, 19th Avenue, Uvalda Court, 23rd Avenue and Ursula Street. Although this future route is conceptual at this time and is dependent on future roadways and signalized intersections, it is presented here as a concept and as a basis for discussion. In the near term, the Short Term Circulator Route will provide service at opening day of the Fitzsimons Station.

The location of future shuttle stops, design, and any other necessary shuttle infrastructure will need to be developed in cooperation with the University of Colorado.

Figure 17: Local Transit Circulator Diagram Using Future Roadways



SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, CIVITAS

# FITZSIMONS INNOVATION CAMPUS

## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT #6

SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 3 SOUTH  
 RANGE 67, WEST OF THE 6TH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN  
 CITY OF AURORA, COUNTY OF ADAMS, COLORADO

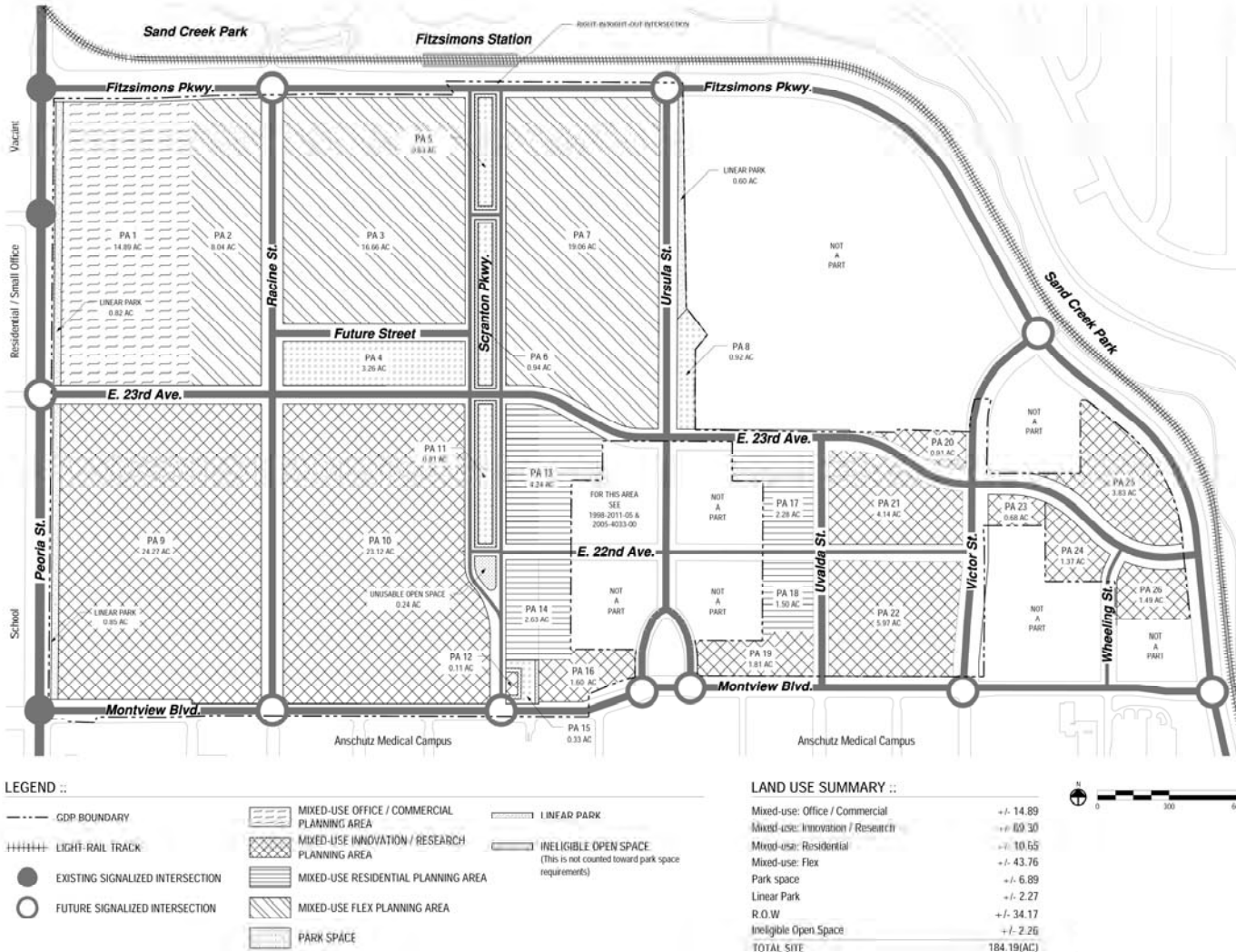


Figure 18. Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority – General Development Plan Amendment #6, Land Use Concept

# 04

## Zoning Guidance

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### 4.1 Station Area Plan and General Development Plan

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The City of Aurora has typically included the use of the city's Transit-Oriented Development Zoning District as the preferred zoning for the station areas. However, given the unique attributes and history of the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus and the existence of a zoning district that is close to meeting the intent of this plan, it was decided that the preferred approach was to amend the existing Planned Development-Mixed-Use (PD-MU) zoning and the associated General Development Plan (GDP).

The Fitzsimons Innovation Campus General Development Plan, Amendment No. 6 amends the original Fitzsimons Army Medical Center General Development Plan that covered approximately 184 acres by expanding the range of uses. The existing PD-MU zoning was intended to facilitate the creation of a primarily bio-research and office area with complementary uses such as retail and hotels. The new amendment includes adding residential land uses, updating the transportation, pedestrian

and bicycle networks, defining new parks and Scranton Parkway, and updating the overall infrastructure and public improvement plans.

The land uses and design guidelines in the General Development Plan Amendment will align closely with those in the city's TOD zoning district, but also reflect the unique attributes of the site and the ability for development phasing. The General Development Plan Amendment establishes the land uses for the district as well as density and height parameters. The land uses include office and innovation research, retail, residential, and hotel. These revisions to the General Development Plan will be made concurrent with this document. A full list of permitted uses is provided in the General Development Plan.

It is expected that development will occur incrementally in the station area over 20 years or more. For the near-term, there is strong demand for uses such as hotels and multi-family residential. Office uses and development related to the University of Colorado will no doubt follow once the golf course area is available for development through the successful land transfer agreement

with the U.S. Army. The type and location of office uses will evolve, depending on market demand. The Land Use Concept from the General Development Plan, shown in Figure 18, illustrates the distribution and area for the various land uses.

Site development proposals will be evaluated in relation to this station area plan, the General Development Plan, a design guidelines document, and the associated traffic study, infrastructure and public improvement plans.

Figure 19:

Station Area  
“Early Action”  
Access Projects

- 1 Ursula Street and Fitzsimons Parkway Sidewalk Extension
- 2 Scranton Parkway
- 3 Montview Boulevard Enhancements





# 05

## Implementation

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### 5.1 Near and Long-term Projects

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This station area plan presents a vision for development around the Fitzsimons Station and this section outlines the strategies and action steps to build on the near and long term opportunities, part of which will arise from the opening of the light rail station, and another milestone for development will occur with the transfer of land, including the golf course, from the U.S. Army to the FRA.

Establishing and continuing plan implementation momentum early is essential for the success of the Fitzsimons station area and FRA properties. Initiation of the station area access projects provides evidence that the City of Aurora is committed to the redevelopment of the FRA properties and providing direct and safe access to light rail transit.

In all, three projects are identified as essential to “set the table” for future and planned Fitzsimons Innovation Campus development and to provide opening-day pedestrian and bicycle access to the Fitzsimons Station. The projects are identified below and in Figure 19, and a brief description of

key actions follows:

- **Ursula Street and Fitzsimons Parkway Sidewalk Extension** – planned for opening day of the Fitzsimons Station and light rail, a multi-use path will be constructed along the east side of the Ursula Street right-of-way (from 23rd Avenue/Ursula Court to Fitzsimons Parkway) and the south side of Fitzsimons Parkway from Ursula Street to a mid-block crosswalk location centered on the Fitzsimons Station platform
- **Scranton Parkway** – new sidewalks, roadway and a linear open space extend from Montview Boulevard to Fitzsimons Parkway
- **Montview Boulevard Enhancements** – sidewalk, protected bike lanes, and roadway enhancements extend from Peoria Street to Fitzsimons Parkway

#### **Ursula Street and Fitzsimons Parkway Sidewalk Extension**

The City of Aurora is in the process of designing specific multi-use path improvements to Ursula

Street and Fitzsimons Parkway. The multi-use path will connect the existing housing development on Ursula Street and 23rd Avenue to Fitzsimons Parkway and a planned signalized pedestrian and bicycle HAWK crossing centered on the Fitzsimons Station Platform.

This sidewalk extension is largely funded by a Transportation Improvement Program grant administered by the Colorado Department of Transportation. An intergovernmental agreement with CDOT has been executed and the city has received a Notice-to-Proceed to begin final design. The implementation of the sidewalk extension requires: preparation of construction documents, refinements of cost estimates, bid, selection of contractor and construction.

#### **Scranton Parkway**

Scranton Parkway, directly south of the future Fitzsimons Station, provides a catalytic opportunity to create a distinct sense of place and serve as a centerpiece of the redevelopment area. A landscaped, pedestrian-friendly parkway is envisioned to enhance the environment and

improve health and well-being while also promoting economic development in the surrounding area.

Enhanced streetscapes add value to surrounding uses, create a more sustainable environment and generate more economic activity than conventional streets. Research studies have demonstrated that enhanced street designs can spur private investment and increase sales tax revenue. An enhanced Scranton Parkway would provide the station area with an open space amenity and potentially generate more development activity.

Approximately nine blocks within the station area front Scranton Parkway, including residential land uses, innovation office uses, and flex office/residential uses. Future redevelopment of blocks adjacent to Scranton Parkway will benefit from the enhanced streetscape. Property taxes from development can offset the cost of the initial infrastructure investments.

### **Scranton Parkway Implementation**

For project implementation to occur, additional traffic analysis and design refinement will be needed. Traffic analysis should address and clarify potential improvements including:

- Access modifications at key intersections, in particular requirements for a right-in and right-out intersection at Fitzsimons Parkway and a new signal at Montview Boulevard
- Design refinement of the parkway segment adjacent to the Post Chapel north of Montview Boulevard
- Potential for a Fitzsimons Station elevated pedestrian and bicycle crossing located at the Scranton Parkway and Fitzsimons Parkway intersection
- A detailed design concept for the street along with the identification of the funding sources.

### **Montview Boulevard Enhancements**

The City of Aurora will work with stakeholders from the FRA, Anschutz Medical Campus and hospitals to design and fund the Montview Boulevard enhancements including road widening, widened sidewalks, a dedicated turn lane and signal improvements. Implementation will require additional study and design refinements including:

- The design of off-street protected bike lanes on each side of the street and bikeway pavement markings at intersections
- Additional traffic analysis to locate additional traffic signals at Racine Street, Scranton Parkway, Ursula Street and Victor Street
- Final implementation steps such as preparation of construction documents, refinement of cost estimates, bid, contractor selection, and construction.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**The Fitzsimons Station Area Plan was the result of a collaborative effort with members of the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, the Steering Committee and the community. We thank all the participants for their generous contributions of time and insight.**

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