south platte river open space plan

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prepared for

City of Englewood
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Aerial view of South Platte River looking south, with Englewood Golf Course in foreground
plan overview

The South Platte River flows through the cities of Englewood and Sheridan, and through Arapahoe County, on its way from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi. For these communities, the river is a valued but underutilized resource. A slender trail for bikes and pedestrians traces the river’s course, but access to this trail remains difficult from either side. Heavy industrial uses and automobile storage yards flank the river, and from most points in the area the river is hidden from view. Redevelopment in the area is hampered by difficulty of access to parcels, a history of landfill uses, and inadequacy of utilities. Historically, the area’s patchwork of jurisdictions has not tended to facilitate positive responses to these challenges.

In a concerted effort to improve the South Platte River and vicinity, Englewood, Sheridan, and Arapahoe County recognized the need to pursue three broad goals for the river and surrounding areas:

1) Increase the recreational value of the corridor;
2) Preserve natural areas and protect water quality;
3) Encourage land uses that are compatible with recreational goals and that contribute to the economic well being of Englewood and Sheridan.

To this end, the City of Englewood retained a team of consultants to assist in developing a vision for the river corridor. Representatives of governmental, business, and community entities formed a Steering Committee that met regularly with the consultants to develop Goals and Objectives, Alternatives, and finally a Preferred Option for the Plan. Along the way, a series of Public Open House meetings was held to solicit comments and keep stakeholders and area landowners apprised of the proceedings of the Committee. The recommendations of this Plan are a synthesis of this community outreach process and a selective analysis of the study area.
The South Platte River near the Englewood/Littleton border
scope of the plan

The South Platte River Open Space Plan presents both a strategy for improvement of the South Platte River corridor over time, and identifies specific short term measures that will further the plan’s goals. It proposes significant new parks, trailheads, and trails; identifies areas for redevelopment; envisions a new “River Parkway” that would facilitate redevelopment; and demonstrates how the goals of redevelopment can complement those of open space planning.

planning process

The Plan is the result of a year-long planning process among representatives of the cities of Englewood and Sheridan and of other public agencies and private citizens concerned with the destiny of the South Platte corridor. These 16 representatives formed a core Steering Committee, which met monthly to share ideas and and to offer comments and criticism on aspects of the Plan as it evolved. This collaboration was structured around the following sequential framework:

1. Inventory and Assessment
2. Consensus Building (Goals and Objectives)
3. Development of Plan Alternatives
4. Development of Preferred Alternative
5. Implementation Tools and Strategies

In addition to the monthly Steering Committee meetings, three public meetings were held to inform area residents and solicit input regarding the plan. The meetings were held in the form of an open house with structured presentations and question/answer periods. Consultants gathered input to help further steer the plan’s focus.
**steering committee**

Representatives from the following organizations comprise the Steering Committee for the South Platte River Open Space Plan:

- City of Englewood
- City of Sheridan
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- South Suburban Parks and Recreation Department
- South Suburban Parks Foundation
- The Trust for Public Land
- Englewood Chamber of Commerce
- South Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Arapahoe County
- Sheridan Family Resource Center
- City and County of Denver
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control District

**goals and objectives**

The Steering Committee achieved consensus in defining goals and objectives that would steer the development of the Plan. As seen below, they address both the possibility of improving the health and amenity value of the river as well as the potential for economic enhancement of the South Platte Corridor. These themes continued to be strongly formative of the plan throughout the process.

**GOAL 1:**
Provide improved access and encourage a variety of recreational activities along the South Platte.

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Create new access points from surrounding streets, with parking and signage.
- Reduce conflicts between different uses, and explore additional uses where appropriate.
- Make access to water easier and safer; make the river more visible from surrounding areas.
- Improve safety along the trail.
GOAL 2:
Promote economic vitality in the Santa Fe Corridor.

OBJECTIVES:
- Improve access to existing businesses and potential development sites.
- Assure long term management and maintenance of publicly owned parks and open space.
- Support redevelopment for identified/potential sites near river; incorporate river access as a site amenity.
- Provide linkages to redeveloped areas and proposed transit-oriented development across South Santa Fe Drive.
- Study land acquisition, partnerships or other strategies to create areas attractive for development.
- Explore development strategies that complement the existing redevelopment plan.
- Explore ways to make existing land uses co-exist with open space and redevelopment along the corridor.

GOAL 3:
Preserve and enhance the environmental quality and the flood protection function of the South Platte River.

OBJECTIVES:
- Improve habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.
- Improve water quality.
- Enhance environmental education opportunities.
- Provide restoration of disturbed sites and vegetation management strategies.
- Preserve the flood capacity of the channel.
- Provide for ongoing restorative maintenance of the river channel.
- Identify specific segments for river corridor improvements.

GOAL 4:
Make the river a centerpiece for Englewood, Sheridan and the region.

OBJECTIVES:
- Collaborate with citizens, landowners and other stakeholders in redevelopment efforts.
- Create a significant place that celebrates the river.
- Make the river a "spine" of recreational activity and new development that builds on its unique open space and recreational qualities.
- Improve the aesthetic value of the corridor.
STUDY AREA

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
Includes parcels with significant portions within the following area:
- One-quarter mile west of South Platte River
- Within city limits of Englewood and Sheridan

SPECIAL STUDY AREA
This area under study for connections only
study area

In defining the study area boundary for the Plan, the consensus of the Steering Committee was to focus first on the river and the lands surrounding it, but also to acknowledge the importance of the Santa Fe Corridor to the river. Therefore, the study area consists primarily of the following land within Englewood, Sheridan and Arapahoe County (facing page):

1. The South Platte River itself;
2. Land within a quarter-mile of the west side of the river;
3. Land between the river and South Santa Fe Drive.

A distance of a quarter-mile was chosen on the west because this distance corresponds to a five-minute walk, a maximum distance that planners typically expect pedestrians to walk to their destination. The study area extends to Santa Fe Drive on the east because of the importance of this road in accessing the properties on that side of the river and the river itself. Since Santa Fe and the railroad form a barrier to any access to the Santa Fe corridor except along a few arterial streets, the Committee agreed to limit study of that area to the potential for connections only.
Aerial view of part of the study area looking south

In the south portion of the study area, the river has an expansive, natural quality
The character of the South Platte River corridor changes dramatically through the study area. South of Hampden Avenue, the river corridor has an expansive quality that contrasts sharply with the road-confined portion of the corridor north of Hampden. Whereas in the southern portion the trail winds through a park and a golf course, the trail in the northern third of the study area is confined by the roads that flank the river. This contrast suggests differing approaches to improvements in each segment.

The recent development of ballfields at Centennial Park has significantly increased recreational opportunities in the river corridor. However, unmet demand for additional facilities is evident. For example, there are very few places where kayakers and canoeists can reach the water without difficulty. In addition, use of the same eight-foot wide trail by bikers, joggers, and walkers can lead to conflict. Traffic and parking next to the trail in the north portion of the study area compromises the safety and utility of the trail.

In the southern portion of the study area, many streets dead-end into large parcels of industrial uses. Many of these uses are unsightly and inadequately screened from the Platte River trail. Water quality may also be adversely affected by the runoff from these extensive junkyards and storage facilities.

Many businesses thrive in the South Platte/Santa Fe corridor. In addition to the larger, land-intensive businesses mentioned, several office, retail, and light industrial uses occupy the corridor. For a description of general economic conditions in the area, see Appendix B, “review of Baseline Data.”
In the north end of the study area, the river is more urban and confined between roads.

New activities on the river present an unmet need for trailheads and facilities.

Construction debris and erodible soils at an old oxbow of the river.
South Platte River

For all of its length in the project area, the South Platte River flows in a channel designed to control flooding. A cross section of the river at any point in the channelized area would reveal a trapezoidal profile within which a 100-year flood can be contained, with the exception of an area near the golf course where floods can inundate a wooded habitat area.

The banks of this channel have been lined with rip-rap (large rocks) up to the level of the 100-year flood to provide bank stability. Since the installation of this material in 1985, trees such as Cottonwood, Willow and Siberian Elm have established themselves on the banks and can be seen growing through the rip-rap. Broadly speaking, the river is characterized by three channel types, as follows:

Littleton/Englewood border north to Oxford Avenue

In this reach, the river is flanked by heavy industrial uses such as the Waste Management transfer facility on the west and the Englewood Fire Training Facility on the east. Big Dry Creek enters the Platte just south of Union and a new bridge will soon link the Big Dry Creek Trail to the South Platte Trail. Further north, the City of Englewood has recently expanded Centennial Park with ballfields near the river. North of Centennial Park, the Oxford Recycling Site is home to a company that provides recycling services and products such as aggregate to the construction industry. Across the river to the east, auto salvage yards and a car-crusher cover a large acreage behind a screen fence.
Extensive auto parts yards and industrial facilities abut the river corridor

Access to the river is often blocked by dead-end streets

Thriving office and light industrial uses occupy more recent development
Oxford Avenue to Hampden Avenue

The river, though also channelized in this reach, is flanked for much of its length by the Englewood Golf Course and a natural area south of the Bear Creek confluence. Along the west side of the river, on U.S. 285, a small office complex occupies one of four parcels of land that were once used as landfill; the rest are vacant. Similar office uses are found just east of the river off of Hampden Avenue.

Reach C: Hampden Avenue to Denver

This reach is characterized by a much more constrained and "urban" cross-section than the other two. Industrial uses and roads flank the channel on both sides, and the existing trail is directly adjacent to the road in many places.

Access to River

South of Hampden Avenue, access to the river corridor from surrounding neighborhoods is limited to just two points: the parking lot at Centennial Park and the small trailhead parking lot on Oxford, just west of the river. Elsewhere in this reach, the golf course and extensive industrial properties effectively block any approach to the river from side streets. This situation contrasts with the reach north of Hampden, where the two sides of South Platte Drive open that entire reach of the river to road access. This confinement of the river and trail between roads results in an inadequate separation between road and trail uses, and has deleterious effects on riverine habitat as well. In contrast, the isolation of the south reach from surrounding streets makes the river corridor all but invisible to those parts of Englewood and Sheridan.
Three jurisdictions cover the study area: Englewood, Sheridan, and Arapahoe County. Denver and Littleton border the study area on the north and south, respectively. The Englewood Municipal Golf Course is owned by the City of Englewood, but is within the City of Sheridan.
EXISTING OPEN SPACE

- RIVERS & CREEKS
- GOLF COURSES
- PARKS
- LIGHT RAIL STATION

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER / SANTA FE CORRIDOR
OPEN SPACE PLAN
City of Englewood - City of Sheridan
existing open space resources

The existing spectrum of open space resources is shown at left. In general, the South Platte River Trail is a thin corridor with two major open space elements along it: The Englewood Golf Course and Centennial Park. The Bear Creek and Big Dry Creek trails connect to the South Platte Trail in the study area. A new bridge across the Platte at the mouth of Big Dry Creek is scheduled to be constructed in 2002; this will connect Bellevue Park to the South Platte River trail.

Sheridan Middle School, on Federal Boulevard, and nearby Chase Park are located near a drainage and utility easement that runs east-west between Federal Boulevard and the river. This easement may present an opportunity to link these open space resources to the river.

The extent and character of wildlife habitat varies in the study area. The largest areas of habitat occur within the golf course and along the river. A band of wetlands or riparian vegetation exits along the river in certain areas. Wetlands also occur at stormwater outfalls and along small ponds near the river. Riparian vegetation provides cover and serves as a migration corridor for wildlife both along the river and up tributaries. Wetlands provide important habitat for waterfowl and small mammals. Stands of shrubs and trees act as cover for a variety of wildlife. It is important that improvements to the trail system not adversely affect existing wildlife habitat.

Near the north end of the study area, a drainage easement links Cushing Park to the river. Pedestrian connections along this route are currently difficult and hazardous because of awkward road and trail alignment.
The South Platte River Open Space Plan is a long-range vision for the South Platte River and Santa Fe Corridor that recognizes the importance of open space resources and economic development to the livability of Englewood and Sheridan. New companies, for instance, are more likely to relocate to an area that can offer a higher quality of life than other areas. Parks and open space, along with quality schools, roads, libraries and the like, are primary contributors to the quality of life in a community. Conversely, parks and open space are directly dependent on a thriving local economy for their purchase and upkeep. This synergy forms the heart of this Plan. The Plan is composed of three primary components:

- Trails and Connections
- Open Space
- Redevelopment

Each of these components addresses the stated Goals and Objectives of the Plan through a series of principles which, in turn, suggest specific actions, such as the construction of a trail segment, or the purchase of a parcel for parkland. The components complement one another and together form the complete Plan.
the plan

Taken together, the three components of the Plan form the composite diagram shown at left. The major features of the Plan are as follows:

- Develop a “River Parkway” that creates greater opportunity for redevelopment on underused parcels;
- Expand the parks and open space system with major new community parks;
- Improve access to the trail network with new trailheads and other improved connections;
- Improve access to the river itself with new paths and water access points;
- Enhance and protect existing habitat in the river corridor;
- Link new development to the river corridor greenway with “green fingers” that encourage maximum use of the river resource by redevelopment.
TRAILS AND CONNECTIONS

EXISTING TRAILS

NEW TRAILS

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

PROVIDE SAFE BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO TRAIL NETWORK

1. Improve connection at Dartmouth and S. Platte Drive
2. Create Ped/Bike linkage along Oxford Street to areas east of Santa Fe Drive

PROVIDE DUAL TRAILS WHERE POSSIBLE

3. Convert portion of S. Platte Drive to trail north of Hampden
4. Obtain easement along existing parking lot south of Hampden Ave.
5. Extend trail along east side of river from Oxford to Bellevue

LINK TRAILS TO REDEVELOPMENT SITES

6. Create fingers of open space as part of redevelopment that connect to trail network

IMPROVE EXISTING TRAIL CONDITIONS

7. Reduce vehicle/trail conflicts
8. Discourage truck parking near trail
**Plan Recommendations**

**Trails and Connections**

The South Platte River Greenway is currently an eight-foot wide concrete trail running the length of the study area. The plan builds on the success of this trail by:

- Improving access to the trail along Dartmouth and Oxford;
- Increasing capacity of the trail network by creating a second trail through much of the study area;
- Linking the trail network to redevelopment sites.

Several of the actions shown on the plan can be pursued immediately. Stronger separation between trail and vehicular traffic (#7 on the plan at left) can be achieved with new grading, railings, planting, or other measures. The awkward intersection at Dartmouth and South Platte Drive can be improved. A consistent gravel shoulder for walkers and joggers can add capacity to the existing trail along its entire length. For recommended standards see River Edge Types, page 42-43.
OPEN SPACE

EXISTING OPEN SPACE
RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES
NEW PARKS AND TRAIL
AREAS TO BE PROTECTED
NEW TRAILHEADS
RIVER EDGE
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

INTEGRATE GREENWAY WITH REDEVELOPMENT
1. Extend “fingers” of open space from river to redevelopment

PROTECT EXISTING HABITAT
2. No trails through sensitive areas - keep human activity at a minimum
3. Prevent development on existing drainages and steep slopes

ENHANCE EXISTING RIVER CORRIDOR
4. Assure preservation of open space edge as part of development
5. Buffer current uses by enhancing plantings on both sides of river
6. Emphasize bio-engineering and “soft” approaches to bank stabilization
7. Encourage improvement of instream aquatic habitat

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FACILITY
Includes shelter and passive facilities, on recently acquired Parks Daps, land. Cooperate with golf course on planning and design

ENHANCE EXISTING RIVER CORRIDOR
8. Former landfill site
9. Expansion of Centennial Park Floodplain and landfill parcels
10. near Big Dry Creek
**Plan Recommendations**

**Parks and Open Space**

The open space component seeks to further the goals and objectives of the plan by creating new parks, enhancing the existing river corridor, and integrating the open space system with future redevelopment. Three sites are recommended for consideration as additions to the regional park system. These three sites were chosen as a result of one or more of the following factors:

- Presence of landfill on site
- Site is in 100-year floodplain
- Proximity to existing park
- Proximity to river
- Absence of ongoing uses that preclude park development

In addition to these park areas, the plan calls for four new trailheads at selected locations. Facilities at trailheads will include parking areas, restrooms, water fountains, trees, benches, and interpretative signage. Along the river itself, river access points will provide pedestrians with stairs, ramps, and platforms as a means of accessing the water's edge. Such areas can presently be seen at Confluence Park in Denver.

Finally, new open space within redevelopment areas will link those areas to the river network. Besides serving as links to the trail network, these "green fingers" can serve as swales that cleanse urban runoff before it flows into the South Platte. Such measures promote the goal of enhancing water quality in the river.
REDEVELOPMENT

- REDEVELOPMENT AREA
- AREA REQUIRING REMEDIATION
- EXISTING ARTERIAL STREETS
- RIVER PARKWAY

CREATE A RIVER PARKWAY
1. Utilize existing roads to extent possible
2. Align River Parkway along existing parcel boundaries
3. Convert portion of S. Platte Drive to trail; reroute connections to Dartmouth as part of Parkway development
4. New parkway segment provides access at Cinderella Drive-in site

PROVIDE REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
5. Areas with solid shading have a high potential for redevelopment with improved access
6. In areas shown hatched, ongoing uses and remediation requirements limit development opportunities to some degree

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER / SANTA FE CORRIDOR OPEN SPACE PLAN
City of Englewood - City of Sheridan
**Plan Recommendations**

**Redevelopment Areas**

The redevelopment component of the plan seeks to improve access to existing parcels, thereby enhancing their economic viability. The primary means of accomplishing this is the creation of a new River Parkway. This proposed road would provide a new way for transportation and utilities to access many of the parcels in the study area, making them more attractive for redevelopment.

The Parkway would be aligned along existing roads and parcel boundaries to minimize impact on area properties; however, some land purchase would inevitably be required. From Oxford Avenue north to Denver, most of the Parkway could be sited along existing roads. North of Hampden Avenue, the Parkway would replace the east side of Platte River Drive, and this existing road would become part of the trail system.

Redevelopment areas in the study area fall into one of two broad categories: those that are relatively free of the constraints already discussed, and those that would require some degree of remediation as part of their redevelopment. The degree of remediation required for a particular site will depend both on the hazards found there and on the use intended for the site. Note that where an “area requiring remediation” is particularly well situated for consideration as open space development, the open space component of the plan recommends that it be obtained for new parkland.
STATUS QUO TRAIL
As seen today, the river corridor consists of limited pedestrian/wildlife amenities and little or no river habitat enhancement.

ENHANCED CORRIDOR
Groupings of shade trees, improved corridor access, and trail amenities such as benches enhance trail user experience. Riverscape plantings and in-channel habitat improvements enhance the corridor's habitat value.

GREENWAY
Further development of the trail amenities and habitat improvements of the Enhanced Corridor. Includes enhanced trailheads and a trail on each side of the river.

RIVER ACCESS
At selected points, especially in the area adjacent to Centennial Park and where green corridors link to the river, walkways and more "urban" edges should be developed to allow access to the water's edge.

OPEN SPACE "FINGERS"
Green corridors should be extended from the river's edge into redeveloped areas.

MINIMUM TRAIL REQUIREMENT
20' minimum corridor width; 5' each side of trail for "dry space" and necessary trail elements such as lighting and signage, and a 10' paved trail.

GOLF COURSE
The capacity of a single trail can be enhanced by the addition of a 6' wide gravel or woodchip path for pedestrians and joggers.

RIVER EDGE TYPES
plan recommendations

RIVER EDGE TYPES

The heart of the South Platte River corridor remains the river itself. Though the river today lacks many of the meanders, oxbows, and sand bars characteristic of its wild past, remnants of that past and significant patches of habitat remain. Improvements of the river environment for human use must go hand in hand with improvements for wildlife habitat. Pictured at left are several types of improvements for various conditions along the trail.

The uppermost sketch at left depicts the condition to which the Army Corps of Engineers designed the channel of the South Platte for the purpose of flood control. Banks are surfaced with rip-rap and left unvegetated in order to control the channel’s hydraulic characteristics. Periodic removal of trees is required to maintain this condition, which is detrimental to the values of habitat and open space.

Although any alteration of this condition must be examined for how it affects flood flows in the channel, some enhancement of the channel to create habitat, provide shade and cover, and allow access to the water is necessary for the river corridor to fulfill multiple objectives.
Rafting and kayaking near Union Avenue
appendices

Appendix A: Overview of Possible Implementation Tools

Introduction

The plan for the South Platte River corridor contains a mix of elements to achieve the stated goals, and splits the corridor area almost evenly between proposed parks and open space land areas and targeted land areas with strong redevelopment potential that can complement the open space objectives. Given these overarching goals and the preferred physical plan, we have organized the possible implementation tools under two major categories:

- Riverfront parks and open space tools/approaches, and
- Economic vitality and redevelopment tools/approaches.

Under these major headings we discuss the following general categories of tools:

1. Planning, Education/Information, and Organization. The cities may want to consider additional and more focused plans, as well as education, outreach and information sharing, and volunteer programs to advance the South Platte River Plan goals.

2. Voluntary or Incentive-based Tools. Incentives may help entice the private-sector to work with the communities to achieve both the open space/park and redevelopment goals.

3. Programs. City-backed and/or funded participation in programs targeted to address issues unique to the South Platte corridor and help landowners, such as building renovation or landscaping programs, can help balance any new regulatory approaches and provide valuable education and resources to implement the Plan.

4. Acquisition. Purchasing open space property allows a city to have more control over uses and activities and to allow public access, however it is a costly approach.

5. Targeted Public Investment. Initial targeted public investment is one way for public agencies to take the lead and stimulate further private investment.
6. Regulatory. Cities may want to consider whether current regulations help or hinder the objectives of the plan, and consider new minimum standards for development that preserve and enhance the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the corridor, and that provide open space and park lands.

7. Financial Tools. Finding and assembling creative and diverse funding packages will help achieve the desired development and open space mix. To a large degree, the level of local funding commitment will shape the quality and extent of the plan's implementation.

Riverfront Parks and Open Space:

Overview of Possible Implementation Tools/Approaches
Planning, Education/Information, and Organization
Additional planning steps to consider are the following (the tools are not listed in any order of preference or priority):

1(A) - Prepare a Citywide Parks and Open Space Plan.
In addition to establishing citywide vision and goals, this will provide the background study and analysis necessary to establish legally-defensible land dedication standards or impact fees for parks and open space in the cities. Such plan will identify and assess the city's current inventory of open space and parks, calculate existing levels of service (e.g., how much park land is available per 1,000 residents), and provide a planning and policy basis for the legislative establishment of new levels of service (which may be greater than existing levels of service).

1(B) - Identify Criteria for "High Priority" Open Space Parcels.
Develop criteria to identify key project parcels that are "high priority" in terms of their ability to implement this Plan's open space or other objectives. For example, it will be helpful to the cities to have identified such parcels should the chance opportunity to acquire such parcel arise.

Suggested criteria for high priority parcels follow:
High priority parcels are those that:
(1) are adjacent to the South Platte River and included on this plan,
(2) are adjacent to other public parcels,
(3) are near high traffic development areas or near transit oriented development areas (such as City Center),
(4) are larger contiguous parcels (e.g., > 5 ac.),
(5) are under the control of a single owner,
(6) provide connection to the trails system, and
(7) are ecologically intact or contain little site disturbance; less disturbed parcels are preferred, etc.

Criteria could also help determine the feasibility of a project, as in the following questions:
- Is the parcel likely to be developed or converted to another use in the immediate future?
- Is the landowner motivated to explore creative financing options?
- Is the cost of acquisition reasonable (e.g., at or close to fair market value)?
- Is there an opportunity to leverage other funds or work with partners?
- Will acquiring the parcel create unusual costs or liabilities (e.g., prior use may require clean-up)?
1(C) - Identify Additional Partners.
Identify the full range of community partners (public and private) who may be able to assist the cities with planning, acquisition and assembly of parcels, restoration and river study projects, and maintenance and stewardship (e.g., land trusts, Corps of Engineers, Urban Drainage District, National Park Service - Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, local conservation trusts, river conservation groups, state wildlife and natural resource agencies, and private partners). See Appendix, below.

1(D) - Landowner Informational Programs.
Cities can provide education (or work with partners) to provide private landowners with information about, among other things, the advantages of stewardship toward the river, innovate storm management approaches, and donating land or easements (e.g., tax and estate planning benefits).

1(E) - Public Lands/Parks and Open Space Management.
To assure a coordinated management approach to this Plan’s implementation, the cities would take the lead in clarifying management responsibilities among the various public stakeholders with overlapping jurisdiction in the corridor. In addition, the cities may take the lead in improving and maintaining the river’s environmental quality and floodplain functions by considering the following actions:

- Conduct Riverfront Condition Assessments.
  Assess the natural conditions to determine best management strategies for public lands along the river. This may lead to the identification of management classifications or "zones" for recreation versus natural or habitat conservation areas. These two activities may be in conflict if zones are not clearly established.

- Designate Management Zones or Classifications.
  Clearly differentiate between recreation areas (i.e., areas for higher intensity of human use and full access) and natural areas (i.e., areas for lower intensity of human use and limited or no-access), and establish management policies that address acceptable activities in these "zones."

- Consider Stewardship: Volunteer Programs and Classes.
  Cities may want to establish volunteer programs and work with community volunteers to help manage (e.g., "adopt a trail," or "river stewards" programs, or trail building and tree planning). City can provide classes (or work with partners) as well as sponsor volunteer programs. Build on success of the existing Keep Englewood Beautiful program.

1(F) - Establish an Ongoing South Platte River Advisory Committee.
To assure that this Plan continues to have "legs" long after it is adopted, the cities might consider formation of a citizens advisory committee that would advise the city on planning and policy for the South Platte River Corridor in the future. For example, the committee could offer studied advice on code reform, public education efforts, and management issues. The current Plan Task Force might be an appropriate starting point to mine members for such a committee. The cities should consider, such as Englewood has done with other similar committees, assigning a staff person as a resource for the committee.

1(G) - Support Ongoing Public Education Programs.
There are a wide variety of public education programs that the cities might consider after the Plan is adopted, in order to promote the South Platte River as a community amenity and build a new
constituency. For example, the cities might initiate a "River Ranger" program in conjunction with the local school districts to sponsor chaperoned field trips and education programs about the river and its many functions.

1(H) - Create a New Staffed Position Dedicated to South Platte River Plan Implementation.

One effective mechanism to assure Plan implementation is to devote a city staff person to initiate, oversee, and coordinate the effort over time. Such staff position may even be shared and paid for by all three local jurisdictions in the corridor.

**Regulatory Tools**

2(A) - Establish Tailored Standards for Parkland Dedication and/or Impact Fees.

Regulatory approaches to acquisition of land along the river corridor, such as land dedications (or cash-in-lieu) or impact fees, would apply only when redevelopment begins to occur because land or fee exactions must be tied to (and triggered by) the impacts and demands created by such development activity. The cities may want to ensure that similar and appropriately tailored dedication requirements and standards are in place in their respective Land Development Codes. As discussed above, the cities should conduct the appropriate background studies, plans, and analysis to provide a legally defensible basis for tailored land dedications or fee exactions. In the interim, the cities might consider a "stop-gap" park land dedication standard that would allow the cities to determine on a case-by-case basis an appropriate amount of land dedication for new development.

2(B) - Zoning to Assure and Encourage Appropriate Uses and Intensities.

The cities' applicable zoning regulations should be revised as necessary to assure that the Plan-recommended mix of uses and intensities of development are enabled along the river corridor. Regulatory incentives (e.g., density bonuses) should be considered for projects that contain a mix of uses, that provide public access, or that preserve open areas above and beyond the minimum requirements of the zoning code.

2(C) - Regulations for Siting and Design of River Corridor Development.

The cities may also want to establish specific design and site planning standards to ensure adequate connections/access to the river and orientation of buildings to the river and adjacent public open space and trails.

2(D) - Develop and Adopt Standards for Greater Environmental Quality.

A critical review and update of the floodplain regulations, and the addition of limited slope standards and other environmental protection standards, such as tree protection and river buffer requirements, may be necessary to implement the Plan's objectives. The cities' stormwater management regulations should be reviewed to ensure that nonstructural solutions are given a preference over structural solutions and that multiple use of stormwater facilities is allowed and encouraged. Regulations might also address preservation of the river's multiple hydrological and ecological functions, including habitat protection (as appropriate) and preservation of existing significant vegetation/trees (e.g., through appropriate development setbacks). Again, regulatory incentives should be explored to encourage preservation and conservation beyond the minimum requirements. For example, full density credit could be offered for all land areas that, because of application of an environmental quality standard, become undevelopable (such as the river's edge or floodplain area). A "river corridor" overlay district may be the best way to apply the environmental regulations as well as any use, siting, and design criteria described above.
2(E) - Develop Standards and Specifications for Pedestrian and Bike Trails.
To facilitate Plan implementation, the cities should review construction standards and specifications for pedestrian and bike trails, including river crossings, and require developers to participate in cost sharing for public trails and sidewalks.

**Acquisition**
The cities may want to consider policies and programs to acquire properties in the corridor to advance the parks and open space goals.

3(A) - Acquire Fee Simple Interest in Park and Open Space Lands.
The ownership of property provides the most direct form of control of all lands for the greenway; however, it is expensive for the cities to buy land and to maintain it. Cities will need to identify dedicated local funding sources and other state and federal sources (see discussion below). City purchase/improvement of corridor parks and open space may serve as a catalyst for redevelopment projects because public land is an attractive amenity. As mentioned above, to achieve early success in the project, the cities may want to identify several critical parcels for immediate or priority acquisition.

3(B) - Encourage Private Conservation Easements.
Work with landowners to encourage donation of conservation easements for habitat conservation areas, either to the municipalities or to a land trust. Such easements may or may not allow public access. Cities may need an ordinance or resolution to authorize acceptance of donated conservation easements and trail/access easements (below), when the rare opportunities arise.

3(C) - Acquire Trail/Access Easements.
Where it is possible and appropriate to simply acquire a trail easement for public access and not an entire parcel, it may be more cost effective for the cities to do so.

Note: Cities should accept donations and acquire land only after environmental assessment and clean-up, as applicable, has occurred.

**Financial Tools**
The ability to finance plans and projects will, to a degree, determine which implementation tools the cities might choose and how quickly the plan is carried out.

4(A) - Establish Dedicated Local Funding Sources.
Future acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks and open space in the South Platte River corridor will largely be a function of the type and amount of available funding. Obviously, an ongoing and dedicated source of funding removes the vices of the annual appropriations alternative.

With its recent voter-approved general obligation bond issue to finance three new recreation projects, Englewood has a precedent for establishing a dedicated funding source, in this case a dedicated property tax, for specific projects or objectives. Other possible mechanisms for a dedicated source of funding include a voter-approved increase in the city's sales tax or earmarking of revenue from special taxes such as city use taxes or the waste transfer "tipping" taxes. According to the City of Englewood finance department, there is still capacity to increase the city's sales tax by up to 0.6 percent. An increase of 0.6 percent in Englewood's sales tax rate would
generate an additional $3,880,000 in annual revenues (based on 2001 annual taxable sales). The cities may want to consider polling voters to determine willingness to support a locally dedicated source of funding for this project or to provide general open space funding. A dedicated local funding source will also ensure that the cities have funds available to leverage other sources, described below.

Note: Arapahoe County considered pursuing a ¼-cent sales tax increase for the November 2002 ballot to finance open space purchases in the county, but the county recently decided to table the ballot proposal for this year.

4(B) - Annual Appropriations.
If the cities choose to not pursue dedicated funding, either for the project or for open space acquisition in general, they may opt to make annual appropriations, whereby funding decisions are made at each budget year and will only occur to the extent moneys are available from current receipts (i.e., no publicly issued debt occurs). One way to blend this approach with a dedicated funding approach, and to ensure that some funding is available for the project over time, is to dedicate a certain portion of general funds (through a capital improvements plan) each year for land acquisition and to leverage other funding sources.

4(C) - Pursue State and Federal Grants.
In recent years, state and federal funding sources have become widely available for a variety of different types of projects, both for capital and operational costs. The cities should consider pursuing grants to acquire land; restore river bank ecology and riparian areas; build recreation facilities such as trails; and for other seemingly less direct costs, such as to promote public health through outdoor physical activity and to provide outdoor art. The preeminent Colorado source of grants for parks and open space is, of course, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which provides grants for planning, land acquisitions, and facility development out of the state's lottery revenues. GOCO currently provides an annual appropriation of $300,000 to Englewood through the conservation trust fund for general parks and recreation programming and upgrades. Sources of federal grant money might include the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency. Federal and state funds typically require a local match - usually at least 30% of the financial cost, or "in-kind" matches, such as staff and volunteer labor. (Note: Rigorous federal and state acquisition guidelines may apply when using such funds to acquire land).

4(D) - Identify Private Grants and Partners.
Some foundations and non-profit organizations provide funding as well as technical assistance to put public land projects together. For example, the South Suburban Park and Recreation District has established the South Suburban Foundation to help fund projects related to, but not directly fundable under the district's mission. Since the District is responsible for much of the physical maintenance of the South Platte River trail system, a request from Englewood and/or Sheridan for grants to extend the trail/greenway may meet with some favor.

4(E) - Pursue Other Public Partners.
There are a wide variety of public entities with a stake in the continued health and functioning of the South Platte River, who may be interested in the economies of scale achievable through creative partnerships. The cities should consider a dialogue with such potential partners, including but not limited to the Urban Drainage District and the Cities of Denver and Littleton, to explore joint efforts to secure funding for compatible park, open space, and environmental quality goals along the river. A model for such efforts is the ongoing GOCO legacy grant to Adams County and the City of Denver their planning and restoration efforts along the more northern parts of the South Platte River.
Economic Vitality and Redevelopment Tools:

Overview of Possible Implementation Tools/Approaches

Planning, Education/Information, and Organization

Additional redevelopment planning steps to consider are the following:

5(A) - Update City Comprehensive Plan Elements.
Plans should include the South Platte River Corridor Plan as elements.

5(B) - Conduct More Detailed Existing Conditions and Constraints Study.
Either on a corridor-basis or more parcel-specific basis, the cities may front the costs of more specifically identifying, confirming, assessing, analyzing, and mapping existing parcel ownership, existing condition of sites and buildings, extent and limits of public infrastructure and services, and constraints posed by known environmental conditions (such as old landfills and other contamination). Such studies may be helpful to encourage redevelopment by reducing uncertainty on the part of the private marketplace.

Such analysis could be segued into a study to determine whether the area qualifies as a “blighted area,” as defined by state statutes (CRS §31-25-103). If the area is found to contain conditions of blight, the local urban renewal or redevelopment authority may prepare an Urban Renewal or Redevelopment Plan. This then enables local jurisdictions to:

1) finance and facilitate public improvements through bonds and tax increment financing (TIF);
2) acquire, assemble and transfer property;
3) use condemnation proceedings if necessary (but only if the jurisdictions choose to exercise this authority--many cities choose not to do so); and,
4) prepare relocation plans for local businesses (again, only if the jurisdictions choose to pursue this option). C.R.S. §31-25-107(9)(a). It is important to note the members of the Task Force and corridor landowners have indicated that redevelopment should be market-based, so condemnation and relocation may not be appropriate tools, but T.I.F. can be a useful financial tool and one that the city is implementing at the General Iron Works redevelopment site.

5(C) - Redevelopment in Later Phases of Project.
To date, support for redevelopment along the corridor appears to be based on a market-driven approach. Thus, it is most likely that the redevelopment efforts will occur subsequent to much of the regional open space and park formation. As with parks and open spaces, it would be prudent for the cities to develop criteria that rank parcels in terms of priority for redevelopment in light of this Plan’s objectives. The difference being that redevelopment is likely to occur across a much longer time frame. Consensus appears to support a ranking system that would identify highest priority areas near existing or planned activity or transit centers, such as the Englewood City Center/TOD center, and near the Oxford/Santa Fe Drive interchange/future TOD, and near existing or planned major parks such as Centennial Park and the Englewood City Golf Course.

5(D) - Increase Communication with Property Owners and Businesses.
Continuing to work with corridor property owners and businesses to identify their needs and plans may help the cities identify additional ways to incite private investment. Communications could be in the form of a formal survey or regularly scheduled informal discussions.
Note: We encourage the cities to seriously consider residential redevelopment as part of any proposed future mix of uses along the corridor, for the following reasons: (1) a mixed-use redevelopment pattern may better support other city planning goals, and may make the area more dynamic and attractive for redevelopment as well as recreation use; and (2) strong, established planning and legal bases tie park and open space land dedications and/or fee exactions to residential development, which could enable the cities to accomplish the Plan’s open space goals without having to directly purchase as much land.

5(E) - Intergovernmental Agreements ("IGAs").
Local governments are authorized to contract with one another to do joint planning, provide infrastructure, and share revenues. Cities may want to establish IGAs, in particular to address infrastructure planning issues, joint development review criteria, and establishment of service districts.

Incentive-Based Redevelopment Tools
To encourage voluntary private investment in the redevelopment area, the cities may want to consider the following tools to provide incentives for developers in return for projects that fit plan objectives and to ensure that projects do meet objectives.

6(A) - Development Incentives.
Cities have used a variety of developer incentives to achieve community objectives. Expedited review process is one such incentive, whereby the review process is shorter in the redevelopment area. Rezoning to permit the preferred uses and mix of uses "by right," rather than as conditional uses that would require a longer, more involved public hearing process, is a way to expedite the process. Expedited review does not require cash outlay from the cities, but does require commitment of staff time. Another type of incentive is to provide "bonus" density to a development site in return for additional public benefits, such as public access to the riverfront, additional park land dedications, or environmental protection efforts beyond the minimum requirements. Fee waivers are another incentive used, where a city forgoes the one-time revenues and provides financial relief to a developer.

6(B) - Development Agreements.
If cities opt for negotiated process to address access, aesthetic controls, and other quality issues, development agreements will be necessary to lock in the negotiated terms with a developer. Accordingly, the cities should spell out guidelines and procedures for the use of development agreements to ensure important elements are not overlooked.

Regulatory Tools
Preceding a redevelopment phase, the cities may want to consider the following options:

7(A) - Reform Zoning Codes to Enable/Encourage Redevelopment.
Cities should review existing zoning codes to ensure they advance the Plan’s ultimate redevelopment goals, especially in terms of permitted uses, densities, and intensities of development. Cities may also consider regulatory incentives to facilitate and encourage redevelopment (e.g., additional densities/FAR; streamlined review process; reduced fees; narrower street section and parking requirements, modification of applicable standards; and the like).

7(B) - Develop Design Standards for Aesthetic Quality.
The cities may want to consider building design standards or guidelines to improve the appearance of the area, such as requirements for landscaping, uniform signage, attractive fencing, and
screening of storage materials and service areas. Such standards could also encourage or require "rear entries" or breaks in buildings to provide access to the river, and provide "view corridors" or visual access to and from the river and the mountain backdrop. Standards should be clear as to their applicability to redevelopment and expansions of existing uses, as well as to new development.

7(C) - Develop Standards for River Access-Physical and Visual. Cities may want to audit existing standards to determine whether requirements for pedestrian connections are adequate when applied along the South Platte river corridor. New non-residential development should provide sidewalk connections to and from the river through their properties as necessary to assure adequate public access, along new "parkways" and internal street systems, as well as a their proportionate share of the greenway "sidewalk" along the east side of the South Platte River, as shown on the preferred plan alternative.

7(D) - Establish an "Enhancement Overlay District." The cities may consider establishing an "Enhancement Overlay District," to set forth new aesthetic controls, open space dedication requirements, incentive options, and access requirements all in a single set of zoning standards for the area.

PROGRAMS

8(A) - Brownfield Development Loan Program. For example, the City of Englewood currently provides loans for private sector investment, including a "brownfields" revolving loan program.

8(B) - Business Recruitment/Retention Programs. The cities could consider carrying out such programs, with elements of financial assistance, regulatory assistance, or marketing. TIF proceeds might be used to help finance incentives.

8(C) - Building Renovation Program. Cities may want to consider a program to encourage reinvestment in private properties within the corridor planning area. For example, matching grants or loans might be available for exterior building painting, upgraded fencing materials, or additional on-site landscaping materials. Englewood has a similar façade renovation matching loan program for businesses along the South Broadway corridor. Such a program could also be designed as a maintenance program.

8(D) - Streets and Streetscape Program. A streetscape program would be similar to a building renovation program, where the city may provide funds to do streetscape improvements on private property, such as sidewalk repair or the planting of street trees. The cities may want to require such improvements through regulatory standards as well.

8(E) - Sponsor Special Events. The cities may also want to sponsor special events to attract people and businesses to the river corridor areas and promote the plan and its progress.

TARGETED PUBLIC INVESTMENT
The cities may also want to consider the following tools:

9(A) - Roads and Utilities/Signature Project - Public Investment. The cities could participate in financing a significant project, including critical infrastructure expansions and roads, within the corridor. Such projects are often accomplished as a joint venture
project with private sector involvement. Targeted public investments such as these is typically done to serve as a catalyst for additional investment. Public investment in the redevelopment areas could include city funding for proposed new roads, public parks, streetscape and pedestrian amenities, storm drainage, utilities, neighborhood "gateways", performing arts centers, or other civic facilities.

9(B) - Assemble Land Parcels.
Many of the individual parcels in the corridor area are relatively small to accomplish the city's redevelopment goals for this area. Accordingly, the cities could aid in the assemblage of multiple parcels for future development. One avenue might be to sell the assembled parcels for private development. Resale might be at the same price, a higher price, or a lower price. This tool might be used with or without using the cities' eminent domain powers. It may also be used broadly, or for "hold-out" properties that would otherwise inhibit significant assemblages.

9(C) - Brownfield Rehabilitation.
The cities may participate in any brownfield rehabilitation efforts at key sites along the corridor. Note: Cities typically require private clean-up of brownfield sites before acquisition (i.e., Phase I Environmental Study must be completed) to avoid environmental liability in the future as owners.

Financial Tools
Creating a variety of financial tools gives the cities the ability to invest in projects or infrastructure that will help to attract private investors to the area.

10(A) - Establish Local Dedicated Sources: Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
Tax increment revenues are used to pay for interest on bonds, loans, advances, and other debt incurred in an urban renewal area to finance construction of a project—such as streetscape or parkland improvements. Remaining taxes go to the municipality after the debt service is paid. Tax increment financing may include property taxes, municipal sales tax, or both. The increase in assessed valuation of real and personal property and sales tax growth from new development that occurs in the project area are the sources of tax increment revenue, unless other funds, public or private, are also pledged, directly or on a contingent basis. The assessed value in effect at the time an a plan or tax allocation is adopted is used to determine the base year for calculating how much, if any, revenue can be used to pay debt. Assessment occurs each year.

10(B) - Special Improvements District (SID).
The cities could form an SID in the redevelopment area, which would involve a mill levy increase to generate revenues for capital improvements and/or operations and maintenance costs that directly benefit the tax-paying properties.

10(C) - Target State and Federal Grants.
As discussed under the possible open space tools/approaches, state and federal funds can help to stretch local revenues. A few redevelopment grants that the cities should target are: Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants, EPA Brownfields grants, and Federal Transit Agency (FTA) to fund pedestrian and bicycle improvements (See Appendix).

10(D) - Pursue Joint Development Projects.
The public and private sectors could share development risk and rewards in the area through joint development projects. The City of Englewood is undertaking its City Center redevelopment as a joint private-public development project.

10(E) - Pursue Other Public Partners.
As stated above, there are a wide variety of public entities with a stake in the continued health and
functioning of the South Platte River, who may be interested in the economies of scale achievable through creative partnerships and joint developments. The cities should consider a dialogue with such potential partners, including but not limited to the Urban Drainage District, other utilities and service providers, and the Cities of Denver and Littleton, to explore joint efforts to secure funding for compatible redevelopment goals along the river.

Appendix

GRANTS
Several good sources of grant information are: National Recreation and Park Association, Grant Information with links to "great links for grants" (www.nrpa.org), and "Restoring Riverfronts: A Guide to Selected Federal Funding Sources," by American Rivers (www.AmericanRivers.org).

Some common grant sources include the following:

State:
- Great Outdoors Colorado - open space, planning, wildlife, trails, parks and recreation funds – and CDOT,

Federal:
- Transportation Department, TEA 21 - provision for facilities for pedestrians and bicycles (administered through state);
- Interior Department - Land and Water Conservation Fund (obtained with congressional support) and National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA);
- EPA - clean water and restoration grants, Brownfield grants and superfund redevelopment initiative (www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/recycle).

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Arapahoe County
Urban Drainage and Flood District, L. Scott Tucker, Executive Director
South Suburban Park and Recreation District, David Lorenz, Executive Director
The Greenway Foundation, Jeff Shoemaker, Executive Director
City and County of Denver
Arapahoe County, Julio I.
Public Service Company of Colorado
Inter-Neighborhood Corporation
Colorado Chapter - American Society of Landscape Architects
Gates Family Foundation
Clean Water Action, Myrna Poticha
Audubon Society of Greater Denver
Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter
Denver Environmental Health
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8
U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region
U.S. National Park Service Intermountain Region and R.T.C.A.
South Metro Land Conservancy
River Heritage Society, Greg Pratt, Exec. Director
Neighborhood Groups?
Youth Conservation Corps
Local businesses
LOCAL RIVERFRONT PARK AND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

CONTACT INFORMATION:
(Can be used as models for the South Platte River Corridor Plan implementation)

Denver South Platte River Project
Bar Chadwick, Parks Department, (303) 964-2500

St. Vrain Greenway, Longmont
Paula Fitzgerald, City of Longmont, Parks, (303) 651-8448

Sand Creek Regional Partnership
Amy Pulver, Executive Director, (303) 393-7700
(Multi-jurisdictional project that involves Aurora, Adams Co., Arapahoe Co., Stapleton Redevelopment Corp.)

Aurora Parks and Recreation
Linda Strand, (303) 739-7160

Commerce City
Tom Acer, (303) 289-3758

Denver Parks and Recreation
Dick Gannon, (303) 964-2500

Stapleton Redevelopment Authority
Dennis Piper, (303) 892-5725

Mary Carter Greenway
Littleton

Estes Park Urban Renewal Authority
Art Anderson

OTHER CONTACTS:

American Rivers Watersheds Program
Betsey Otto, Sr. Director
(202) 347-7550 x3033
botto@amrivers.org
Bob Searnes re: Pueblo, Trinidad and Mary Carter Greenway.
Bill Woodcock, South Suburban Parks and Recreation
www.conservationfund.org
Appendices

Appendix B: Review of Baseline Data

Following is a summary of reports pertaining to the study area of the South Platte River corridor in Englewood and Sheridan. Contact the agencies listed to obtain more information.

Englewood Community Indicators
By: Development Research Partners
For: Community Development Department, City of Englewood

This study examines ten key indicators, such as home sales, wages, and acres of open space, in an assessment of the quality-of-life and economic climate of Englewood. The purpose of this analysis is to set planning priorities for the City and identify deficiencies. The study focuses on three primary areas: Housing, Parks, and Economic Development.

Generally the study finds that most indicators are trending favorably; for example, home prices are increasing yet still affordable, the number of jobs is increasing, and the City enjoys more open space per capita than comparable "first ring" suburban towns such as Wheat Ridge and Northglenn. The only warning trend seen is that the number of businesses in town has decreased slightly; this is thought to be offset by the fact that the remaining businesses are larger and employ more people. The study points out that Englewood is strongest in the services, retail trade, and health services sectors, and that the City has a relatively high concentration of wholesale, manufacturing, and construction businesses. One area in which Englewood has relatively little economic participation is the so-called Convergence industry (high-tech sector).

The open space component of the study acknowledges the positive influence that parks, open space and recreational facilities have on the City's ability to attract economic growth. New businesses are attracted to areas where they can offer their employees the quality of life that comes with having parks and open space close at hand. Two points in the study are particularly interesting. One, parks and trails are the most-used form of recreation in Englewood (ahead of ball fields, golf, and swimming facilities for example). Two, if the Englewood Golf Course is removed from the "parks and open space" category, the amount of open space in Englewood is about the same as that in Wheat Ridge or Northglenn. In sum, Englewood would likely benefit from adding acreage to trails and open space.
This study is an overview of the economic and geographic opportunities and advantages Englewood enjoys, along with some of the challenges the City faces. Among Englewood's primary advantages it lists the new and expanding light rail system, the City's proximity to employment centers, and the "untapped amenity" of the South Platte River. The study cites a "lack of regional destination attractions" as one of Englewood's current weaknesses, but recognizes an opportunity to convert the South Platte/Santa Fe Corridor from a "back door" to a "front door". The study recognizes a strong possibility that housing development near transit will attract a demographic thus far under represented in Englewood, that of young and middle-aged professionals in search of affordable urban housing. New residents and businesses in moderate to high-density development will help to diversify the City's economic base, while costing the city relatively little in infrastructure. Taken together, these constraints and opportunities argue for a stronger link between improved open space near the South Platte and future residential development near the transit nodes along the Santa Fe corridor.

The study also critically reviews two studies of the positive impacts of rail transit lines on property values in other metropolitan areas such as Dallas, Washington, D.C., and the Bay Area. Though there is no guarantee that rail lines will generate higher property values nearby, the literature indicates that the odds certainly favor it.

This study is an inventory of the recreational facilities of the City of Englewood, together with an assessment of present and anticipated future demand. It identifies the following characteristics of the demand for facilities:

- Relatively slow population growth (less than 2%) for foreseeable future due to City's "buildout"
- City is under-served in soccer/softball fields but lacks land for them
- Shrinking demand for tennis and racquetball facilities
- Increased interest in inline skating, skateboarding, and roller hockey

Of interest to our study is the recommendation in this analysis for a new skate park in the northeast corner of Centennial Park, at an estimated cost of $725,000. It should be noted that since the analysis was published, the expansion of Centennial Park, including the new Rockies baseball field, has gotten underway. That project will add a baseball field, a softball field, and a soccer field to the Park.