



MAY 15 2025 | DENVER  
**RESILIENCE SUMMIT**

# RESILIENCE IN DENVER

# OUR SPEAKERS



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Executive Director  
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Waterway  
Resiliency  
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**Nita Gonzalez**

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Executive Director  
Spirit of the Sun



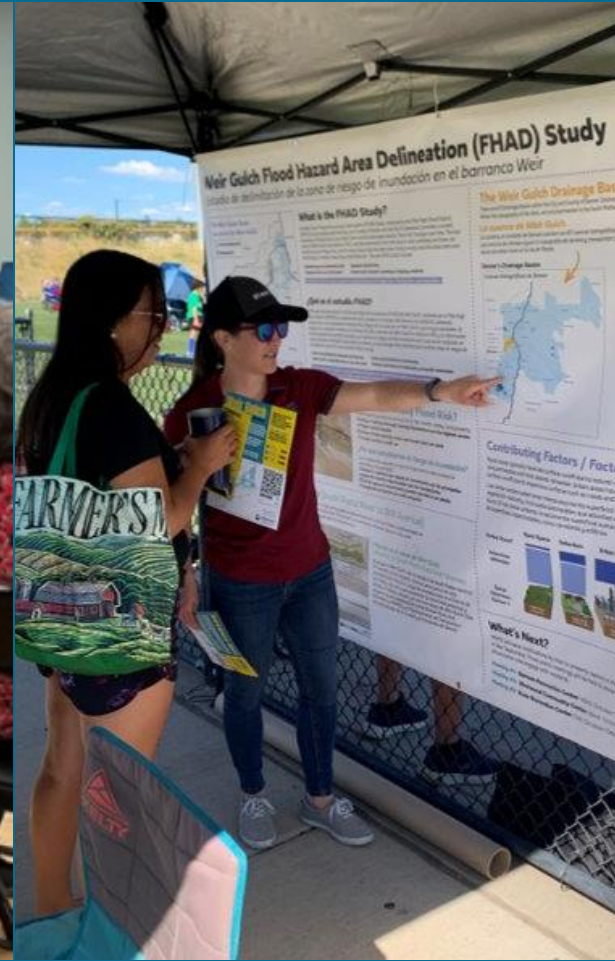
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Denver // May 12-14, 2025

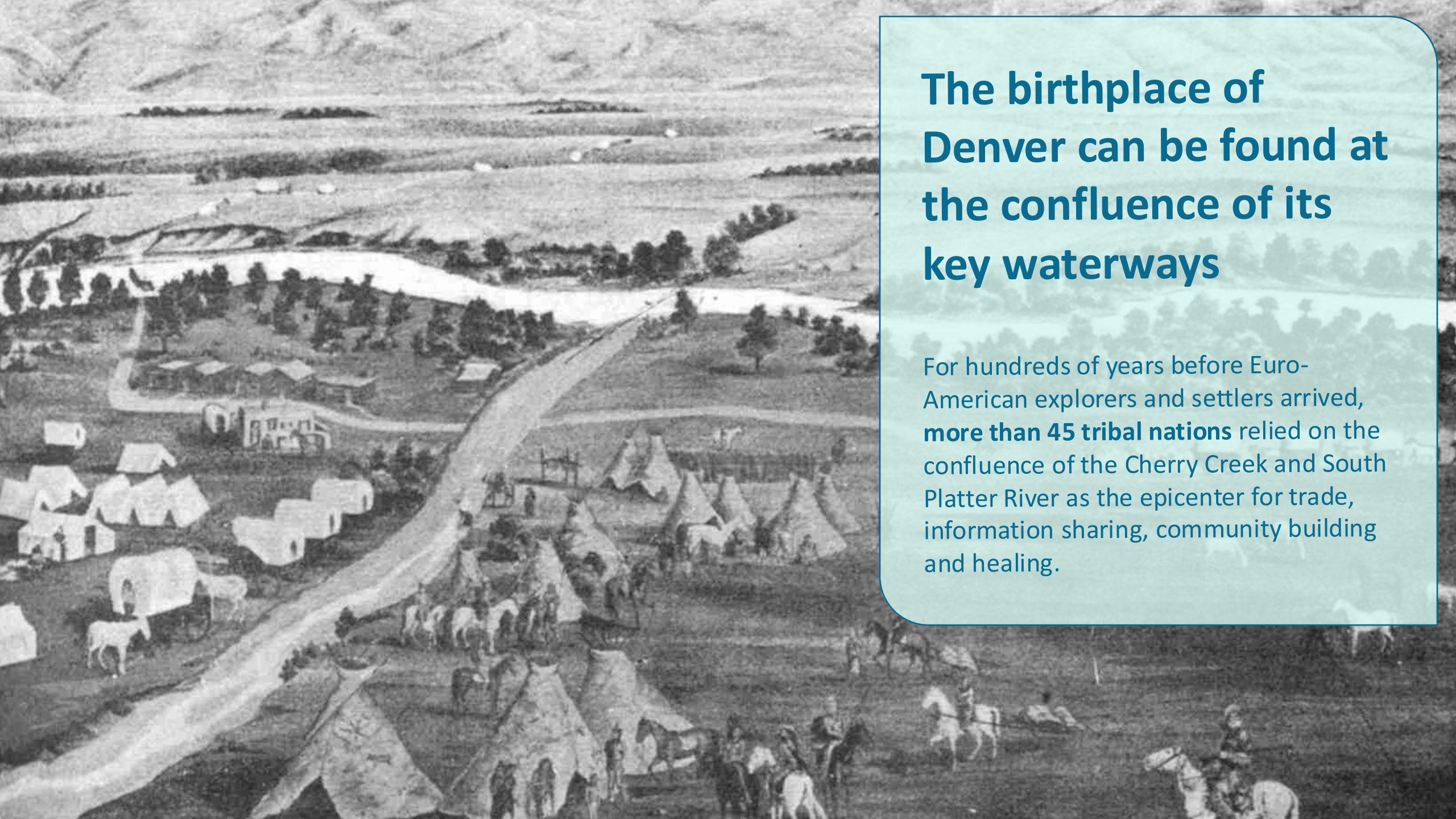


# Waterway Resiliency in Denver

Ashlee Grace, City and County of Denver  
Urban Land Institute | May 15, 2025





A historical illustration showing a Native American village at the confluence of two rivers. The village features several large, conical tipis and smaller dwellings. A group of people on horseback is gathered near the water. In the background, there are rolling hills and a larger body of water. The scene is depicted in a detailed, etched style.

## The birthplace of Denver can be found at the confluence of its key waterways

For hundreds of years before Euro-American explorers and settlers arrived, **more than 45 tribal nations** relied on the confluence of the Cherry Creek and South Platte River as the epicenter for trade, information sharing, community building and healing.



# DENVER

AND SUBURBS  
COLORADO

PUBLISHED BY  
HOTCHKISS MAP CO.  
DENVER, COLORADO

SCALE  
1" = 1 MILE

PLATTED  
BUT  
UNDEVELOPED

South Platte River

Weir Gulch

As Denver developed,  
it historically turned its  
back to waterways and  
the communities  
adjacent to them

## RESIDENTIAL SECURITY MAP

### LEGEND

- A FIRST GRADE
- B SECOND GRADE
- C THIRD GRADE
- D FOURTH GRADE
- SPARSELY BUILT UP

Denver Street Index

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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# South Platte River Flood of 1965







**Challenge:**

**Exclusive focus on flood  
control + urbanization**



**Degradation of our  
waterways for people  
and the environment**



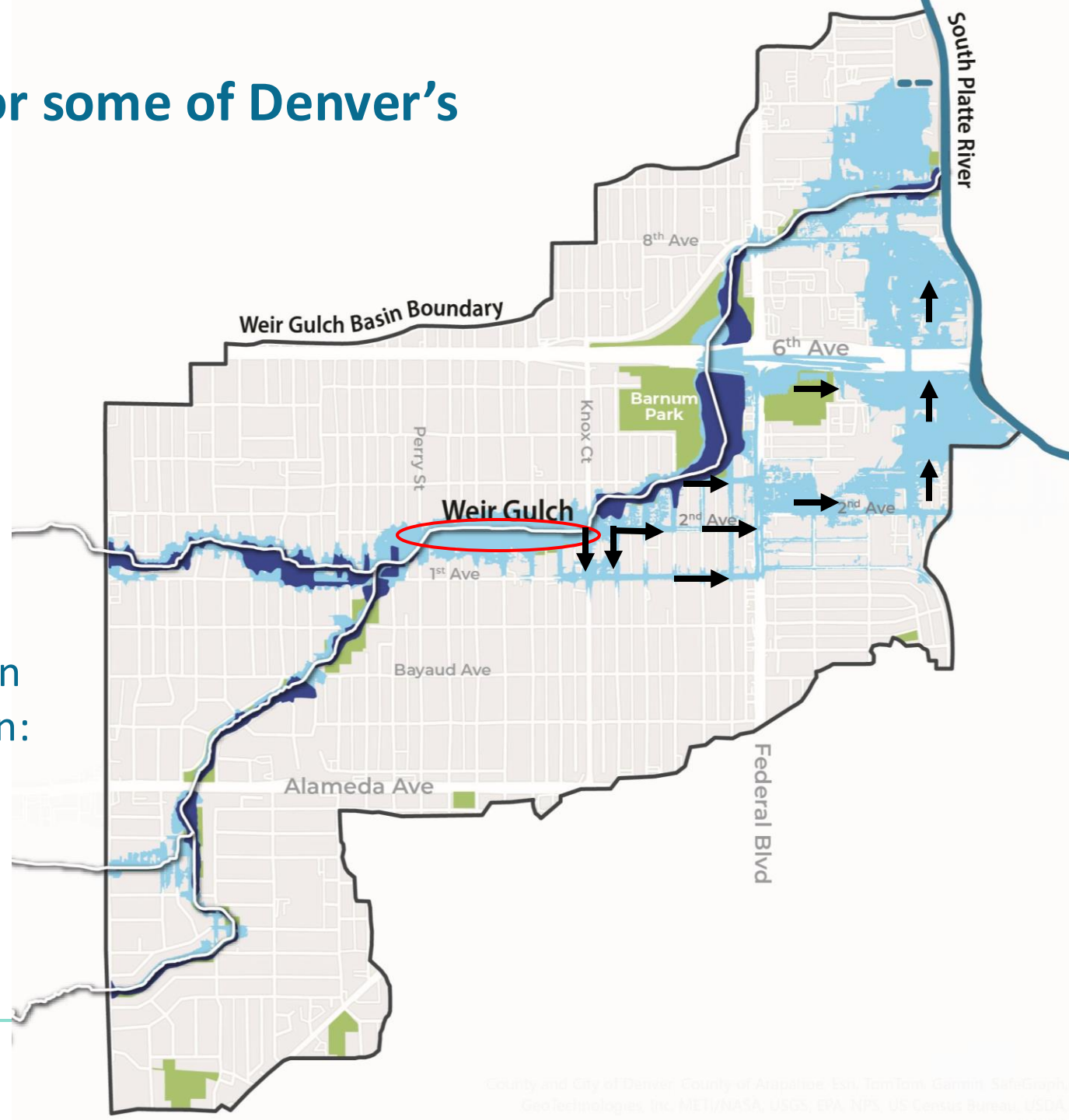
## Challenge: Significant flood risk for some of Denver's *most underserved communities*

### CAUSE:

- Increasing impervious surfaces
- Undersized infrastructure

**RESULT:** 100-yr floodplain now impacts 600+ buildings (400+ residential), **with potential depths ranging from 3-5 feet** in many parts of the floodplain, resulting in:

- Widespread hazardous and unsafe conditions
- Significant property impacts and potential financial burden



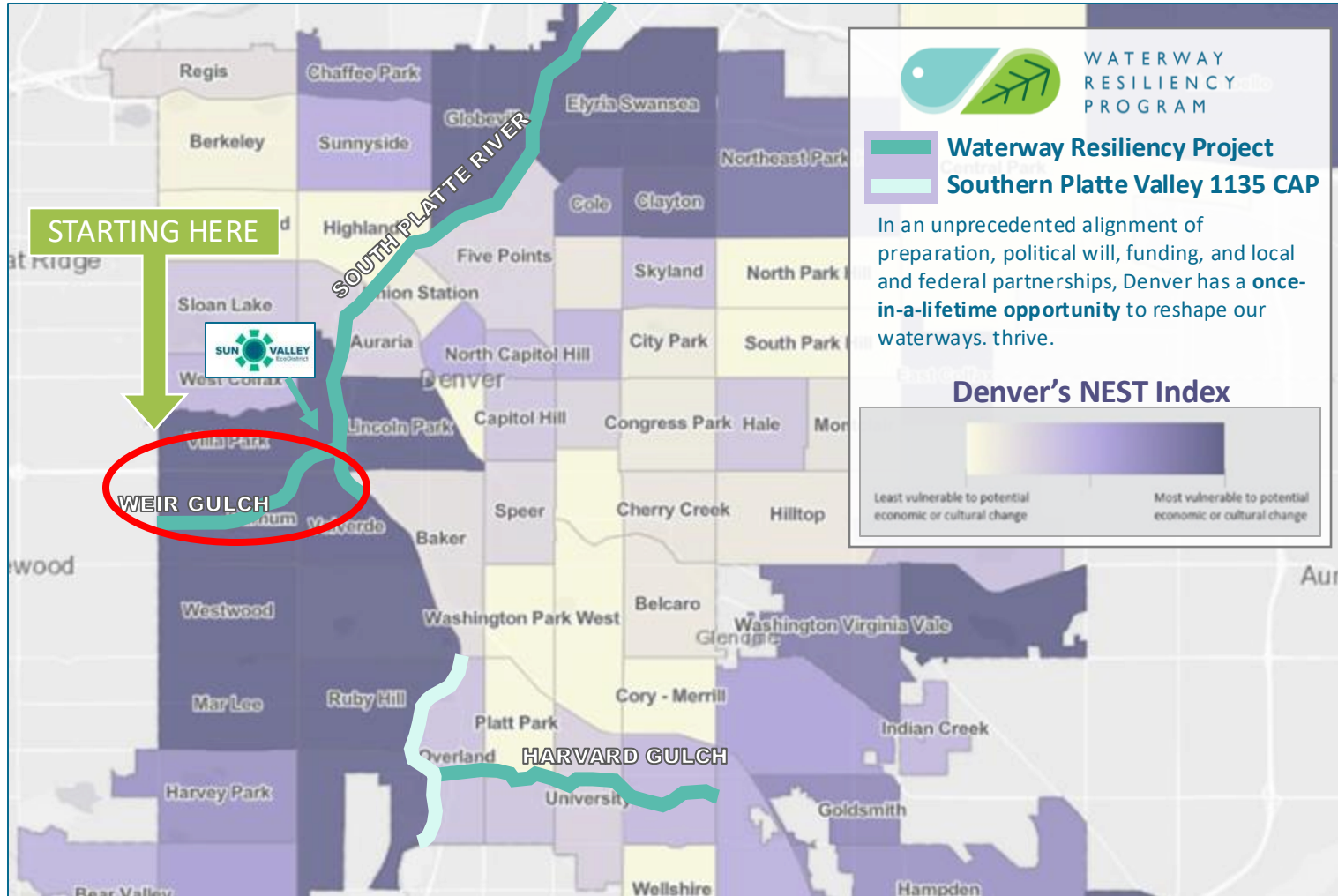




**In 2023, Denver and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed a **first-of-its-kind** agreement putting Denver in the driver seat for piloting an innovative delivery approach as part of the Revolutionize USACE Civil Works Initiative**



# WATERWAY RESILIENCY PROGRAM



Ecosystem restoration



Enhanced mobility



Prioritizing equity and environmental justice



Flood risk mitigation



Equitable access to recreational opportunities

**SOUTH PLATTE RIVER**  
Ecosystem Restoration & Flood Risk Management

**WEIR GULCH**  
Structural Flood Risk Management

**HARVARD GULCH**  
Non-Structural Flood Risk Management



# Weir Gulch Concept Design

Partnering with Mile High Flood District :

- Waterway expertise
- Urban Stream Assessment Process
  - incorporates Community Values into design and evaluation process

## URBAN STREAM FUNCTION ELEMENTS



## EXAMPLE SCORING MATRIX UTILIZING URBAN STREAM ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

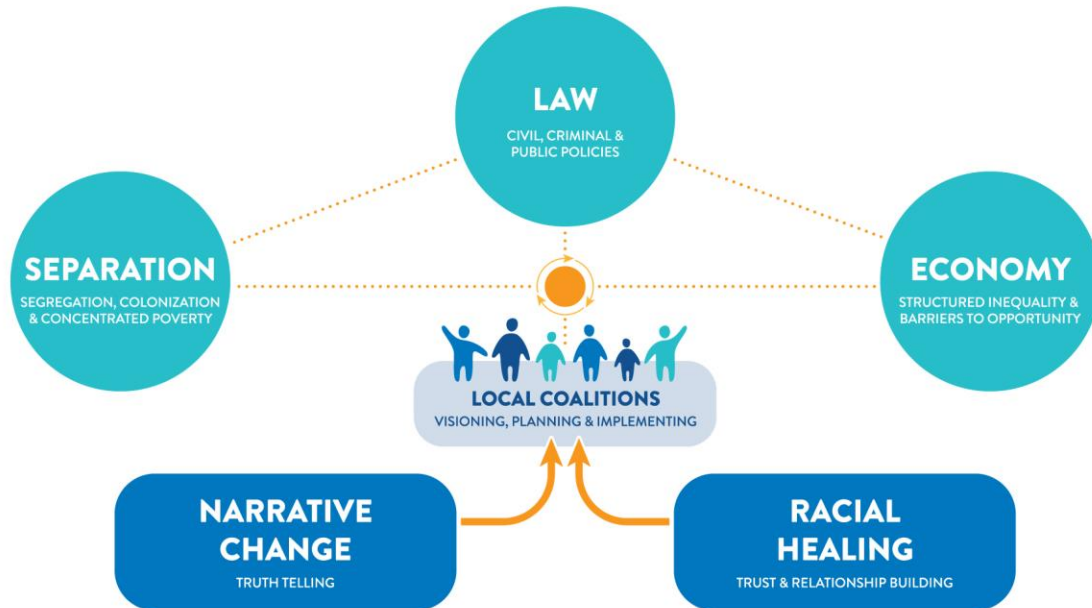
ELEMENT	INDICATOR	METRIC	REACH			
			1	2	3	4
COMMUNITY VALUES	ACCESS TO NATURE	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ACCESS TO NATURE	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ACCESS TO NATURE	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ACCESS TO NATURE	2	1	-	-
	VITALITY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH VITALITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH VITALITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH VITALITY	2	1	-	-
	ACCESS TO NATURE - SUM		7	3	0	0
	ECONOMICS	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ECONOMICS	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ECONOMICS	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ECONOMICS	2	1	-	-
	VITALITY - SUM		4	0	0	0
	ECONOMICS - SUM		0	0	0	0
	HUMAN CONNECTION - SUM		4	3	0	0
HYDROLOGY	RUNOFF PRODUCTION		2	0	0	0
	RUNOFF PRODUCTION - SUM		2	0	0	0
	FLOW REGIME	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW REGIME	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW REGIME	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW REGIME	2	1	-	-
	FLOW REGIME - SUM		6	3	0	0
	HYDROLOGY - SUM		8	3	0	0
HYDRAULICS	FLOOD/FLUVIAL HAZARDS	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOOD/FLUVIAL HAZARDS	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOOD/FLUVIAL HAZARDS	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOOD/FLUVIAL HAZARDS	2	1	-	-
	FLOOD AND FLUVIAL HAZARDS - SUM		6	3	0	0
	FLOW CONVEYANCE	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW CONVEYANCE	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW CONVEYANCE	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW CONVEYANCE	2	1	-	-
	FLOW CONVEYANCE - SUM		6	3	0	0
	FLOODPLAIN CONNECTIVITY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOODPLAIN CONNECTIVITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOODPLAIN CONNECTIVITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOODPLAIN CONNECTIVITY	2	1	-	-
	FLOODPLAIN CONNECTIVITY - SUM		6	3	0	0
	HYDRAULICS - SUM		8	0	0	0
GEOMORPHOLOGY	SEDIMENT REGIME	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH SEDIMENT REGIME	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH SEDIMENT REGIME	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH SEDIMENT REGIME	2	1	-	-
	SEDIMENT REGIME - SUM		6	3	0	0
	STABILITY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH STABILITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH STABILITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH STABILITY	2	1	-	-
	STABILITY - SUM		6	3	0	0
	MORPHOLOGY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH MORPHOLOGY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH MORPHOLOGY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH MORPHOLOGY	2	1	-	-
	MORPHOLOGY - SUM		6	3	0	0
	GEOMORPHOLOGY - SUM		12	0	0	0
VEGETATION	FLOW CONVEYANCE	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW CONVEYANCE	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW CONVEYANCE	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH FLOW CONVEYANCE	2	1	-	-
	FLOW CONVEYANCE - SUM		6	3	0	0
	DYNAMIC STABILITY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH DYNAMIC STABILITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH DYNAMIC STABILITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH DYNAMIC STABILITY	2	1	-	-
	DYNAMIC STABILITY - SUM		6	3	0	0
	RESILIENCY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH RESILIENCY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH RESILIENCY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH RESILIENCY	2	1	-	-
	RESILIENCY - SUM		6	3	0	0
	ADAPTABILITY	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ADAPTABILITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ADAPTABILITY	2	1	-	-
		PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AREAS WITH ADAPTABILITY	2	1	-	-
	ADAPTABILITY - SUM		6	3	0	0
	VEGETATION - SUM		12	0	0	0



# A new approach for understanding community values that inform concept development and design

“We cannot solve problems with the kind of thinking we employed when we came up with them.” – Albert Einstein

## Trust, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Framework



## Appreciative Inquiry



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[DENVERGOV.ORG/WATERWAYRESILIENCY](https://denvergov.org/waterwayresiliency)



*Heron Pond/Carpio-Sanguinetti on South Platte River*



*Weir Gulch precedence (39<sup>th</sup> Greenway in north Denver)*



WATERWAY  
RESILIENCY  
PROGRAM

WEIR GULCH • SOUTH PLATTE • HARVARD GULCH



# Q&A





# SHARE & WIN

Share your feedback on today's event and be entered to win a complimentary registration to the 2026 Resilience Summit!

