

# Southmoor Station

## Transit-Oriented Development

### TAP Report



Report from a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)  
of ULI Colorado  
June 8-9, 2017

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Supported by the City and County of Denver



**Urban Land  
Institute**

**Colorado**



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### Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs)

*Technical Advisory Panels bring Urban Land Institute (ULI) Colorado expertise directly into communities to help solve tough real estate problems. TAPs provide advisory panels composed of ULI Colorado members who volunteer their time to offer unbiased, disinterested professional advice. Each are leading experts in their fields.*

*Since 2004, ULI Colorado has been invited to conduct more than 60 TAPs throughout Colorado.*



*Councilwoman Kendra Black provides an overview of the Southmoor Station area to the TAP panelists in June 2017.*

## I. Overview & Problem Statement

Southeast Denver is where the suburbs meet the city. Longtime residents and new families of Southmoor in southeast Denver value its safe, stable and comfortable suburban-like residential neighborhoods, high-performing schools, abundance of green space and trails, and central location. What residents say the area is missing, however, is any sort of main street or community gathering place. Outside of its high-quality neighborhoods, southeast Denver is car-oriented and dominated by major commercial corridors and strip malls. Community members want more pedestrian-friendly streets, improved restaurants and retail, and a main street or plaza that serves as a gathering space for residents.

The immediate area around the Southmoor Light Rail Station could be the ideal location to create this type of space. There has been interest in redeveloping this site over the years, but so far no one has been willing to take on the various challenges—including the site's configuration, diverse ownership, a homeowners association (HOA) that has the legal right to approve or deny development proposals, a mountain view ordinance, and lack of community planning—and overcome the obstacles.

Councilwoman Kendra Black, who represents District 4 on Denver City Council, asked Denver Community Planning and Development (CPD) to partner with the community to create an area plan for Southmoor. CPD sponsored this ULI Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) as a first step. The purpose of the TAP is to address the problem statement below and to inspire the community, developers, and CPD to come together to create a new gathering place for the people of southeast Denver.



*The Southmoor Station in Denver services three light rail lines and four bus routes.*



*Councilwoman Black provides information about the Southmoor Station area during the TAP.*

### Problem Statement:

The immediate area around the Southmoor Light Rail Station presents significant potential for development and use, but its current configuration is ill-disposed to the kind of public space that neighborhood residents say they would like in the area. Between the Station's Park-n-Ride lot, the nearby movie theater's large parking lot, and the King Soopers' strip mall, a relatively large amount of land (approximately 17 acres) is reserved for surface parking, precluding easy pedestrian or bike access to the Station. The area is situated at the confluence of significant transportation routes, including the light rail stop. It is adjacent to Hampden Avenue (a major commercial corridor), as well as to single family residential neighborhoods and multi-family buildings. A functional and effective development plan could stimulate positive land use that would activate the area, satisfy the placemaking desires of the community, provide housing opportunities, improve pedestrian and cyclist access, promote RTD ridership and energize the local economy.

The following questions were posed to the TAP panelists:

1. How can we reconcile conflicting neighborhood visions? How might this fit in with the best use of the land? Are there particular features that could please all stakeholders? (Some neighbors oppose change and development while others want community-oriented spaces, restaurants and retail.)
2. How might multiple property owners be brought together in considering development to agree upon a strategic vision? What might motivate them to work together towards a consensus?
3. How can we increase community ridership?
4. Who can or should lead this effort? The city? A developer? RTD? Another party or configuration?
5. How can we connect to neighborhoods and corridors outside the TOD? (Including the Hampden corridor, the area west of I-25, and the first/last mile.)



## II. Key Findings



TAP panelists discuss possibilities for the site.

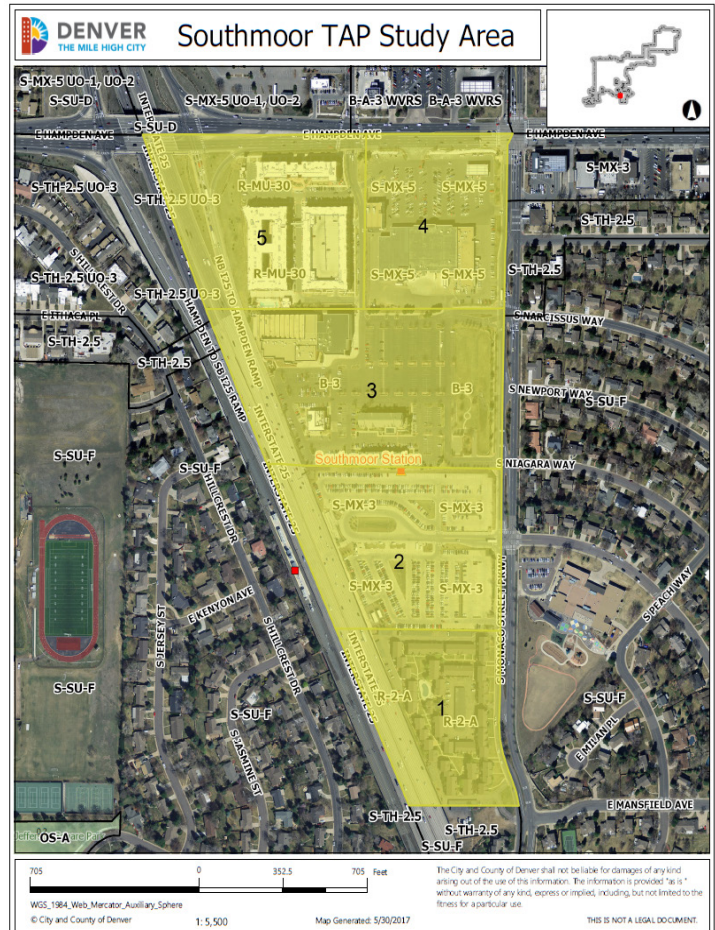
On June 8-9, 2017, the Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado) convened a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to study the potential for future development in the 35-acre site surrounding Southmoor Station (see Appendix B for a detailed description of the site). At Councilwoman Black's invitation, the ULI TAP assembled seven land use experts who volunteered to offer objective advice. For the two-day study, the panel reviewed a detailed advance packet of planning and demographic data, toured the site, and interviewed local stakeholders, including city officials and longtime property and business owners (for a list of the stakeholder groups interviewed, see "Key Findings from the Interviews" on page 4).

The TAP panelists found that Southmoor has many assets, committed community members, and involved leadership. They found that leveraging these assets to redevelop the site around Southmoor Station as a community gathering place would require overcoming some of the following challenges.

### Challenges to Redevelopment:

**The diverse land uses and property owners within the site.** Redevelopment of the site would be complicated with such diverse ownership and zoning of its parcels, since land assembly is expensive, time consuming, and requires cooperation from all property owners.

Councilwoman Black's team divided the site into five sections, as pictured in the map above. Each section has different land uses and ownership. For more details on each



The Southmoor TAP study area divided into 5 sections.

section, including individual maps, property uses and owners, see Appendix B.

**The Southmoor Park Mountain View Ordinance** passed by Denver City Council in 1982 restricts development heights to 42 feet above grade, which translates to about four stories. In 2002, the Southmoor Park East Homeowners Association and the City & County of Denver successfully sued the owner/developer of Section 5, Landmark Land and Harsh Investment Corp., over the proposed building heights in the development of Section 5, which is now The District (see Appendix A for more information). The Mountain View Ordinance and legal action has scared off some developers and prevents higher-density development in the future.

**In 1997, Gart Properties and Southmoor Park East Homeowners Association (SPEHA) signed a 50-year**

**development agreement** and special declaration of covenants, conditions and restrictions for the United Artists Theater project. There are 30 years left of the agreement, which requires SPEHA approval for any changes to Section 3, no matter who owns the property (for more information about the agreement, see Appendix A). Many of the same people have served on the SPEHA Board since the 1990s and have opposed a variety of development proposals to the site and its surrounding area.

**Transportation within the site is limited** due to the large number of surface parking lots and lack of connectivity between them. Southmoor Station currently has an 800 space Park-n-Ride surface parking lot, though the only direct street connection is from Monaco Parkway. The station is not accessible directly from Hampden Avenue since there is a graded grassy area owned by RTD blocking access between the movie theater’s parking lot and the RTD Park-n-Ride. Furthermore, there is no way to access the station from the area west of I-25 without crossing on Hampden, which is a U.S. highway. Thomas Jefferson High School, for example, is a short distance from the station, but students must walk over a mile to board the train. All attempts by the developers of The District and other property owners in Section 3 to make Locust Street a through street or to include pedestrian and bike access to the Southmoor Station have failed. While pedestrians and cyclists are allowed free passage through the parking lots of Sections 3 and 5, due to a 2006 easement agreement, there are very few sidewalks and little shade.

**Key Findings from the Interviews:**

TAP panelists interviewed stakeholders from the following groups during the TAP: The City and County of Denver, the Regional Transportation District (RTD), Southmoor Park East Homeowners Association (SPEHA; located southeast of the Hampden Avenue and Monaco Parkway intersection), Southmoor Park Homeowners Association (known as Southmoor Park West; located west of I-25), as well as other residents of Southmoor and commercial property owners within the site.

Key takeaways from the interviews include:

- Residents say the movie theater is a primary community amenity
- People feel unsafe walking along and crossing Hampden Avenue
- People have safety concerns about walking through the Southmoor Station tunnel, especially at night
- People want more unique, local restaurants, but some restaurants have failed and left
- The area is lacking a cohesive community vision and plan
- The history of conflict over development plans has resulted in the city stepping back from planning in the area



*TAP panelists interview key stakeholders of the Southmoor Station area.*



When asked what they want in the community, almost all interviewees said:

- Cool, local restaurants with table service, in addition to the fast-casual chains that currently dominate the area
- Walkability, bikeability and connectivity
- Traffic calming along Hampden Avenue
- A community gathering place with unique, quality design

All interviewees said they would be amenable to high-quality residential and office development with family-oriented amenities and retail. SPEHA board members said they did not want low-income housing or high-density development in the area, but that they thought the density and design of The District development in the area is palatable.. SPEHA members were also concerned about reducing the traffic turning onto the neighborhood's residential streets. Many interviewees said they wanted more neighborhood amenities, like a local coffee shop or craft brewery that they could walk or bike to on trails that connected throughout the neighborhood. They suggested consolidating the site's parking lots, upgrading the design of the King Soopers, and adding to the density and mix of uses around the station.



Second Street District in downtown Austin, Texas, provides an example of walkable mixed-use development. Photo by Casey Dunn Photography.

While members of the Southmoor Park East and the Southmoor Park West HOAs seemed to disagree about the urgency of the need for change on the site, they agreed on almost everything else. Many came away from the interviews saying that it would be beneficial to talk to each other more often so that they can hear one another's perspectives and potentially develop consensus on future decisions.



The District Apartments, in the northwest corner of the study area, opened in 2004 with ground level retail. Due to the Mountain View Ordinance, The District was limited to four stories. Photo courtesy of Mark De La Torre.

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### III. Recommendations

At the opening of his interview, Casey Funk, President of the SPEHA board, stated, “the status quo would be okay with me.” Upon considering this statement, the TAP panelists discussed what would happen if the community did nothing. They came to the conclusion that this “status quo” would not allow the community to remain the same. Instead, it could lead to stagnation and decline.



The Regal Theater parking lot. Photo courtesy of Councilwoman Black.

Preventing new development from coming in and upgrading the community’s amenities would allow current amenities, like the movie theater, to deteriorate over time and could have a negative impact on businesses and property values. Without further investment, infrastructure will decline, rents will decrease as a result, and lower-quality tenants will move in. Since auto-oriented communities have been going out of fashion over the last few decades, status quo Southmoor will fall behind market trends and fail to

meet market demands. As a result, people will increasingly choose to live in communities that better suit their needs. Economic and physical decline will ultimately have safety implications for the neighborhood and its current residents.

Proactive planning that addresses the community’s needs can help to prevent decline and invite the kind of development that the community wants. Based on information gathered during the interviews and throughout the TAP, the panelists came up with the following recommendations for the area around Southmoor Station.

*Proactive planning that addresses the community’s needs can help to prevent decline and invite the kind of development that the community wants.*

#### Recommendations from the TAP:

1. **Invest in and stabilize strong community assets:** The panelists recommended reinvesting in the site’s existing assets, such as the movie theater and its surrounding area, the grocery store, and the light rail station. By financially supporting and continuing to upgrade these community amenities, property owners can help prevent further economic and physical decline and the community will be better able to leverage these assets to create a community gathering place with high-quality restaurants and retail.
2. **Create a unique Southmoor identity for the study area:** Southmoor could utilize a distinctive community brand that would enhance the community’s pride and feelings of ownership for the site. Panelists



TAP panelists tour the site, discussing the potential for the area around the Regal Theater.





The Streets at Southpoint, a shopping center in Durham, North Carolina, is an example of a community gathering place. Photo courtesy of the Streets at Southpoint.

recommended creating a village center within the site that has attractive placemaking features and community gathering places. They suggested developing design standards to promote high-quality design across the site.

- 3. Improve connectivity:** To better leverage the light rail station and its existing infrastructure, multi-modal connectivity within and outside of the study area could be enhanced. This could be accomplished by adding sidewalks and bike lanes throughout the site, especially along Locust Street, S. Narcissus Way, and S. Magnolia Way. Traffic calming measures, such as textured crosswalks at intersections, could help to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists as they enter and travel through the site.



Hampden Avenue, east of Monaco Parkway, is up to 120 feet and 9 lanes wide. A U.S. highway, it is difficult and unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.

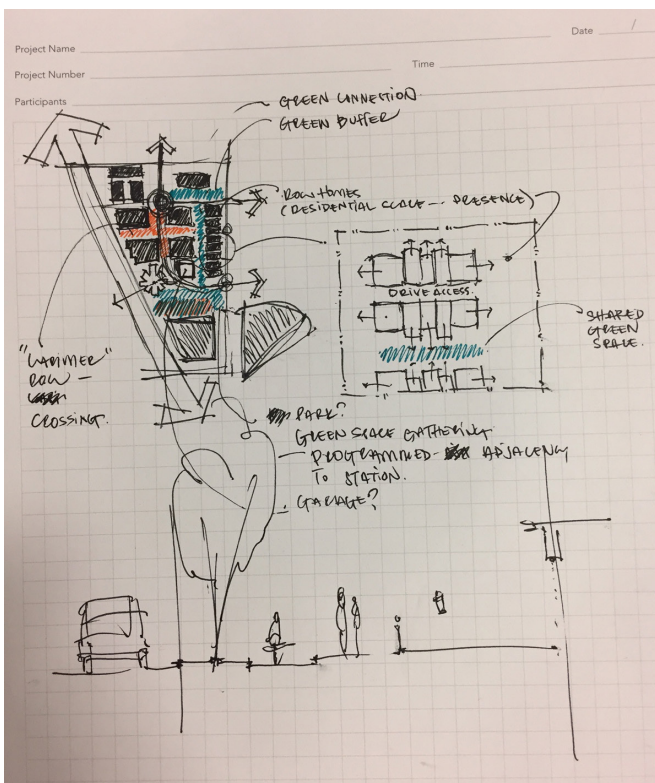
- 4. Master planning:** As the problem statement for this TAP states, “A functional and effective development plan could stimulate positive land use that would activate the area, satisfy the placemaking desires of the community, provide housing opportunities, improve pedestrian and cyclist access, promote RTD ridership and energize the local economy.” The TAP panelists agreed. To overcome the various challenges of the site, the panelists suggested forming a Steering Committee of key community stakeholders, such as those who were interviewed for the TAP, as well as all of the property owners on the site. This Steering Committee could work with the community and the city to develop a new vision for the site.

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TAP panelists develop recommendations for the Southmoor Station area.

The Steering Committee could potentially acquire funding from the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the City and County of Denver, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for master planning. Currently, DRCOG is allocating Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding to assist local governments as they develop smaller area plans for station areas and urban centers. Although Denver CPD staff have largely stayed away from the site following the community’s reaction to their 2008 TOD concept (Appendix A), current staff members said that they would work with a locally led community planning effort. Also, at the request of Councilwoman Black and in cooperation with CDOT, the City and County of Denver has engaged CH2M Hill to conduct a Hampden safety study in 2017, with the goal of constructing safety and streetscaping improvements like enhanced crosswalks, medians and bulb outs along Hampden Avenue by 2019.



Sketch of the study area and street design by panelist Mark De La Torre.

Down the line, there is the potential to create a Business Improvement District (BID), through which local businesses would voluntarily pay fees for area improvements such as safety, cleanliness, and design. A BID would be more successful once there’s a plan in place for the site, and then it can help to fund business district upgrades.

Methods for moving forward with a community planning process could include:

1. Codify the Steering Committee intent with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together to develop a master plan for the site. The MOU will define the goals of the Steering Committee, the time period in which the Steering Committee will work together, and the activities the Steering Committee will undertake to create a master plan.
  2. Councilwoman Black’s office could serve as fiscal agent for the Steering Committee as it seeks funding for the development and implementation of the master plan.
  3. Approval of the master plan by City Council. Once a master plan is developed, it must be officially approved by City Council to be implemented.
  4. If it is necessary to amend the development agreement between SPEHA and the property owners within Section 3 to implement the master plan, it will likely be easier to make amendments once a plan is in place. Then SPEHA and the relevant property owners will know what the amendments will be used for within the plan.
- 5. Potential catalysts for future development of the site:** Since the master plan will most likely need to be implemented in phases, the movie theater—identified as a key community amenity—could be leveraged to catalyze further development of the surrounding site. One option could be to build high-end restaurants around the existing movie theater to further ignite development around the site. Another option would be to rebuild the movie theater with more modern features along with high-end restaurants around it so that it is better situated within the site and has pedestrian-facing amenities and uses integrated into its design. For either option to take place, property and business owners would need to be engaged as partners in the redevelopment plans.



TAP panelists consider options for the Regal Theater.



6. **Ideas for the future development of the site as a community gathering place for Southmoor:** While a master plan will ultimately identify how new uses and designs could best transform the site into a community gathering place, the TAP panelists offered the following ideas for redevelopment to accomplish this goal.



Map of panelist recommendations for the study area. Key: V is for vehicular access, P is for pedestrian corridor, and M is for multi-modal access.

- **Limit vehicular turns onto neighborhood streets east of South Monaco Parkway.** Since some residents are concerned about traffic entering residential streets, medians along Monaco could be further used to limit vehicular turns onto neighborhood streets. Well-designed medians can restrict access points and prevent cut-throughs.
- **Utilize Locust Street as a main entry point to the site.** Although Locust Street is currently a private street, the owner of The District—who maintains the street—originally wanted it to be public. Making the street a public right-of-way and adding pedestrian and bicycle amenities will best leverage the street’s connection throughout the site. Locust Street has

the benefit of a streetlight at its intersection with Hampden, making it an obvious entry point for all forms of traffic into the site.

- **Activate development along South Monaco Parkway.** Monaco, which is already an attractive corridor with sidewalks, medians and street trees, extends along the entirety of the site, allowing for visibility and access to the development. Additionally, two vacant land parcels—owned by Gart Properties and Dr. John Hargreaves—sit along Monaco and could be activated with mixed-use development that serves the community, such as a beer garden, coffee shop and restaurants. Hargreaves has said he would like to develop a small apartment building and Gart has stated that they are interested in developing an income-generating property, both of which are compatible with a mixed-use development. A pop-up beer garden, which is relatively low-cost, could be set up along Monaco in Section 3 to test the potential for the site.
- **Add regional pedestrian and bicycle paths** to improve neighborhood connectivity and access to Southmoor Station. A regional system of paths will increase the community’s walkability, reduce traffic and increase transit ridership.



The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Pop-Up Garden at South Street in Philadelphia is an example of a temporary beer garden that has activated a site. Photo courtesy of Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

- **Consider future redevelopment of the RTD Park-n-Ride and King Soopers strip mall** after the rest of site is activated with development. Currently, RTD is focusing their resources on completing FasTracks and does not have plans for capital improvements

to the site. RTD was open to redevelopment of the Park-n-Ride in 2000, but required the developer to construct a parking garage to replace lost parking spaces, which is why Gart Properties decided not to proceed with the plan. Southmoor Center Co.—now run by the widow and daughter of Bill Nelson, the original owner/developer of Section 4—is receiving decent cash flow from the site and currently lacks incentive to redevelop. They did say, however, that they are open to ideas for the site and may be

willing to sell in the future. Once the rest of the site is redeveloped, these sites may see the case for redevelopment to take advantage of increased foot traffic.

- **Study the market potential for hotels, office, residential and retail uses in the area.** Market analysis during the master planning phase will be important to help identify the most appropriate uses within the site.



Panelists review details of the site to generate recommendations.



Councilwoman Black shows the King Soopers site to the TAP panelists.

*Southmoor has a unique opportunity to leverage its assets and take advantage of underutilized lots to develop a community gathering place that serves its surrounding neighborhoods.*

## IV. Next Steps

This ULI TAP made it clear that everything is constantly changing regardless of the status quo. Southmoor has a unique opportunity to leverage its assets and take advantage of underutilized lots to develop a community gathering place that serves its surrounding neighborhoods. Without

proactive planning, however, these underperforming spaces could lead to future decline. The TAP panel recommends seizing this opportunity to come together as a community, especially with its engaged leadership, to create a common vision and plan for Southmoor.



## V. Overview of ULI Colorado Advisory Services

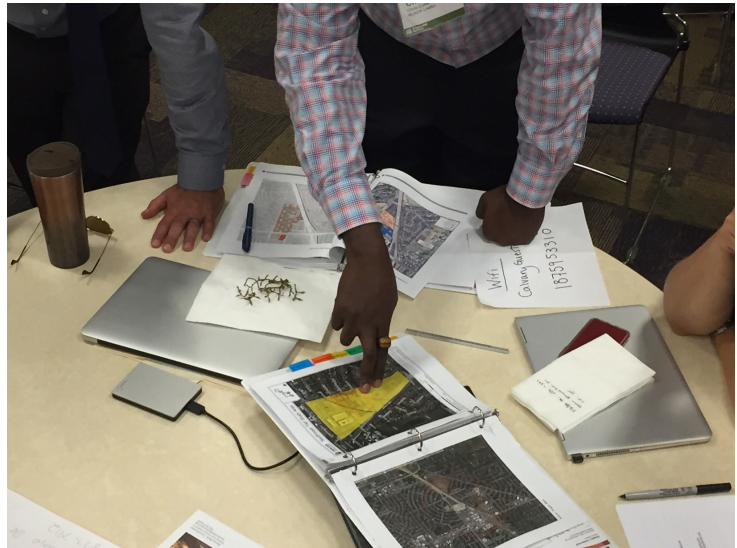


Since 1947, the national ULI Advisory Services program has assembled 400+ ULI-member teams to help sponsors find solutions for issues including downtown redevelopment, community revitalization, and affordable housing, among other matters. In Colorado, ULI Advisory Services have provided solutions for such key sites as the Colorado Convention Center, Coors Field, Fitzsimons, and the Denver Justice Center.

ULI Colorado's Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) offer the same expertise at the local level. Each panel is composed of qualified and unbiased professionals who volunteer their time. Panel chairs are respected ULI members with previous panel experience. Since 2003, ULI Colorado has completed more than 60 TAPs leading to positive policy changes and built projects. Panelists are drawn from ULI Colorado's 1,400 members representing 26 different land-use professions, from architect to zoning attorney.

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## VI. ULI Volunteer Panelists



**Chris Coble** co-founded and serves as Managing Director of BLACK LABEL, a Denver-based urban commercial brokerage and consulting firm. Through Mr. Coble's leadership, BLACK LABEL is currently managing several large-scale TOD projects by providing asset repositioning, investment analysis, TOD implementation and transaction management. Mr. Coble has a diverse background of experience in real estate development, transit oriented development (TOD), corporate real estate and economic development. Mr. Coble led the transit oriented development department for the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Denver, Colorado. In economic development, and as an appointed official representing the Denver Mayor's Office, Mr. Coble played a key role in Denver's Focus Neighborhood Initiative, a municipal program set on igniting private investment in Denver's most needed urban communities. As a commercial broker with CBRE, Mr. Coble led an urban land transaction business practice focused on transit-served properties across the Denver metro area, and worked as a landlord representative for Forest City Stapleton at Northfield in Denver. Mr. Coble additionally served as the Managing Member of Alliance Development Solutions (ADS) based in Denver providing management of development projects as well as development services to a myriad of clients. He is a co-founder of ULI Colorado's TAPs program and has served as a ULI mentor and executive committee member.

**Mark De La Torre** pulls from a range of academic and professional experience in the design professions. Taking notes from architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and real estate development practices, Mark has strived to engage the community as the primary stakeholders in every design process. His focus has largely revolved around the graphic representation of the design process, from concept to synthesis and through execution, illustrating to colleagues, investors and the community, the power of a good design. Before moving to Denver, Mark worked as an urban and architectural designer in the Southwest, primarily focused on the urban extension of downtown Tucson. As a project manager at MIG in Denver works on projects across the country, from streetscape designs to comprehensive master plans. He holds a bachelor degree in architecture, and a graduate degree in landscape architecture.



**Richard Epstein, AIA, LEED AP** has more than 20 years of urban design, master planning, and architecture experience providing a well-rounded and integrated perspective to all of his projects. He is the principal and founder of re:architecture based in Boulder, Colorado. re:architecture is involved in a broad array of projects including the re-planning of the former 8.8-acre hospital site in Boulder, co-housing in Longmont, institutional, retail and mixed use projects. Rick has a passion for sustainability applied to projects at all scales. He has worked in a broad range of professional settings including his own firm and medium and large inter-disciplinary firms and taught both architecture and urban design at CU Boulder and Denver. He is active in civic affairs including the past president of AIA Colorado North Section. He is on the CU Design Review Board and has been on the Belmar Design Review Board since its inception and was formerly on the Boulder Planning Board and Boulder Urban Renewal Authority. He received his Master's in Architecture from MIT with coursework in Urban Design and Landscape Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 1984 he was recipient of the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship for which he completed a year-long study of traditional architecture in the Mediterranean and the Orient.

**M Chris Fasching, PE, PTOE** is a Principal at Felsburg Holt & Ullevig and leads FHU's Traffic Engineering practice. With 31 years of experience in traffic engineering, Chris has worked with public- and private-sector clients to develop multimodal transportation solutions for cities, counties, and state agencies as they plan for future mobility needs and respond to growth and development. Chris has been extensively involved in the development of the transportation networks ranging from individual parcels, to corridor, municipal, and regional or state-level systems. His transportation operations expertise has aided hubs of developments such as the Fitzsimons medical campus, numerous Rocky Mountain resort communities, as well as key state corridors, such as US 85, US 34, E-470, and I-225. Chris has likewise supported numerous infill and redevelopment efforts across the Front Range, helping to guide smart comprehensive transportation infrastructure decisions to advance and promote the socioeconomic vitality of communities and commerce alike.







**Amy Hansen** is a shareholder with Polsinelli, an AMLAW 100 law firm, and practices in the real estate department. Amy assists clients who are developing raw land or underutilized properties to transform them into vibrant places. Her work includes both vertical development and land development, ranging from large scale master planned communities to mixed-use projects in urban and resort locations, including acquisitions, entitlements, local incentives and formation of property owners associations. Amy’s work includes purchase and sale transactions, leasing, joint ventures and all other matters related to acquisition, disposition, financing, and development. Amy currently sits on the board of Downtown Denver Partnership and Colorado BUILDS and has been actively engaged in the construction defect litigation reform efforts in Colorado.

**David Larson**, a Denver native and one of the founders of Legend Partners, helped launch the firm in October 2000 as the next logical step in a long and successful retail brokerage career. Beginning in 1982, David began his retail brokerage as the Vice President at Sullivan Hayes Companies. In 1990, he and fellow Legend Partner Rick Will, formed EquiVentures Inc., a full service commercial real estate firm. Three years after the sale of EquiVentures to Mile High Properties LLC, David joined Trammell Crow Company as the Vice President of their national retail services network. Throughout his career, David has represented virtually every type of retail project as well an extensive variety of retailers. His predominate focus has been on national retailers ranging from small restaurants to large box tenants. He has represented retailers entering the Colorado market for the first time as well as specialty venues such as theatres, health clubs and regional single store concepts. He holds a BSBA in Real Estate and Construction Management from the University of Denver.



**Brian J. Levitt, MRECM, LEED AP**, is a commercial real estate developer who specializes in sustainable, mixed-use, urban projects with an entertainment focus. He has managed the development of more than 4MM SF of retail, multi-family and mixed-use space from the ground-up and hands on, including the 1st LEED Certified Mall in the United States for Forest City: Northfield Stapleton. Brian has also advised on an additional \$2B of real estate assets for various clients managing all aspects of the real estate development process. Brian is currently President and co-founder of NAVA Real Estate Development. NAVA Real Estate Development Limited Partnership (“NAVA”) was founded in 2013 by Trevor M. Hines and Brian J. Levitt to develop architecturally significant buildings in prime locations that are sensitive to the environment and its inhabitants. NAVA’s projects will be designed and constructed to achieve LEED or WELL Certification. On e-percent (1%) of our profits will go to a socially responsible cause of choice.

### *Special thanks to*

*Al Colussy, LaDonna Baertlein, and Andrew Knudtsen, ULI Colorado TAP committee chairs,  
and to the exceptional hospitality and organization of Councilwoman Kendra Black and her team.  
Special thanks to the City and County of Denver for supporting this TAP.*

## Appendices:

Information provided by Councilwoman Black.

### APPENDIX A

#### History & Description of the Study Area

**Southeast Denver (Council District 4)** is the far southeastern section of the City & County of Denver, bordering Aurora, Greenwood Village, Cherry Hills Village and Englewood. Most of southeast Denver was developed in the late 1950s–1970s. The area is dominated by stable residential neighborhoods and car-oriented, major commercial corridors. Despite being conveniently and centrally located in the metro area—and being home to five light rail stations—the area has seen little development. There are closed storefronts in strip malls and a high vacancy rate in the 3-5 story office buildings outside of the DTC.

**The Southmoor Station** is located along the Hampden Avenue (US Highway 285) and Interstate 25 corridors. It is between the Yale and Belleview Stations. It is approximately 2.0 miles from the I-25/I-225 interchange. The study area is about 20 minutes by car or light rail from downtown Denver. **The immediate station area (5 sections as described in Appendix B) consists of approximately 35 acres.** The entire study area, as shown on the map on page 4, covers about 500 acres within a half-mile radius of the station, including commercial, residential, transit and educational spaces. The station serves the E, F, and H light rail lines—which run northwest toward downtown, southeast along I-25 toward Centennial, and east toward Aurora—along with four bus lines. Southmoor Station straddles I-25 with the Park-n-Ride on the east side and the station platform on the west. However, there is no neighborhood access on the west side. Hampden Avenue and Monaco Parkway are the main roads adjacent to the station.

A 650-acre property on the southwest corner of Monaco and Hampden, was purchased in 1958 by Southmoor Center Co. and was annexed into Denver in the early 60's. The Southmoor Center, which includes the King Soopers, was built in 1968 and has stayed in the same configuration. Part of the property to the west was developed into a Howard Johnson's. In 2006, it was redeveloped into The District Apartments. The property to the south was sold to Gart Properties where the Continental theater is located. Southmoor Center Co. gave the state property adjacent to Hampden to widen the road from two-lanes to what it is today.

Over the years, there has been interest in redeveloping the Southmoor area. In 1994, Gart Properties (GP) acquired the entirety of Section 3 which consisted of the Continental Theater and the Alpine Skating Rink. GP planned to tear down the theater and skating rink and build a super sporting goods store. The Southmoor Park East HOA (SPEHA) objected. In 1997, Councilwoman Joyce Foster worked with GP and SPEHA to write a 50-year covenant that requires SPEHA approval for any changes to Section 3, no matter who owns the property. Since then, SPEHA approved the expansion of the theater into a multiplex, the construction of the Towne Place Suites by Marriott (1997), Chili's (2001), and the dentist's office (2013). Many of the same people have served on the SPEHA Board since the 1990s. In 2011, SPEHA also opposed medians on Hampden that CDOT proposed to decrease car crashes.

In 2001, when FasTracks was being planned, the Southmoor Park West neighborhood (on the west side of I-25) successfully opposed light rail access to their neighborhood, despite the fact that the stop is actually on the west side of I-25. As a result, people who live west of I-25—and Thomas Jefferson High School students—must walk more than a mile to board the train.

In 2000—before the completion of FasTracks—Gart Properties (GP) created a master plan. According to Mark Sidell, president of GP, GP and RTD discussed the redevelopment of the Park-n-Ride. RTD was open to the idea, but required GP to construct a parking garage to replace lost parking spaces. This was not financially feasible, so GP did not proceed, and sold off all of the parcels in this section except for one which they still own today.

In 2004, The District apartments and mixed-use retail opened. Initially, Southmoor Park East HOA opposed the development because it violated the Mountain View Plane Ordinance for Southmoor Park, which was adopted by the Denver City Council in 1982. After the City and County of Denver and SPEHA sued the developer, Landmark Land and Harsh Investment Corp., regarding the height of the planned buildings in 2002, the developer presented a revised plan complying with the view plane.

In 2008, Peter Park, then executive director of Denver Community Planning and Development, presented TOD concept drawings to the community. At the time, the City was unaware of the private agreement with SPEHA. Hundreds of community



members attended the meeting and strongly objected to the concept. It is possible that the promotion and management of the meeting was mishandled and resulted in misunderstandings. Many community members objected to the proposed density and to “public housing,” which was not part of the proposal. Since then, the area has not received much attention from the city.

In 2011, CDOT came to the community with plans to add medians on Hampden to improve traffic and pedestrian safety. CDOT presented their plan for medians at two public meetings. More than 50 business owners and SPEHA neighbors attended to protest the proposed plan. The opposition was so strong that CDOT pulled the project.

### Southmoor Area Today

Today, the population of the area is turning over with younger families moving to southeast Denver. They are attracted to the suburban-style neighborhoods, 3-4 bedroom houses, big backyards, high quality schools and the central location. Since Councilwoman Black took office, community members have participated in surveys and an extensive visioning process. Overwhelmingly, residents desire a main street or plaza-type gathering place, more restaurants and retail, and improved walkability and bikeability. The Southmoor Station area was suggested by many as a possible location for a gathering place with restaurants and retail. Community members serve on four work groups to promote the district’s community wide goals: Restaurants & Retail, Arts & Culture, Mobility & Streetscapes, and Parks, Trails & Golf.

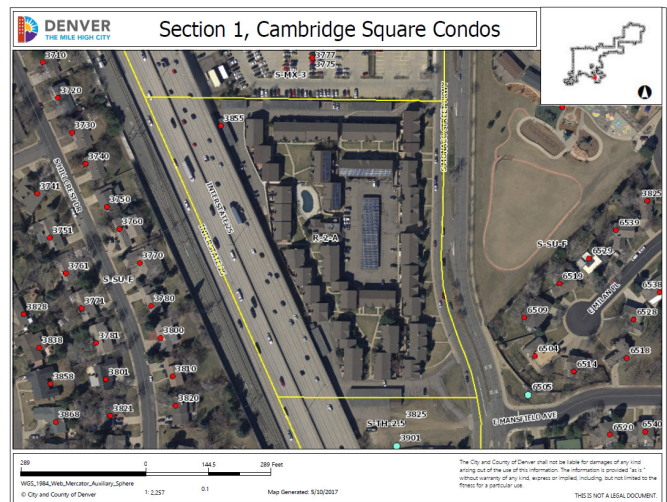
## APPENDIX B

### Site Land Uses & Property Owners

For purposes of this TAP, the immediate Southmoor Station area has been identified in five sections as detailed below.

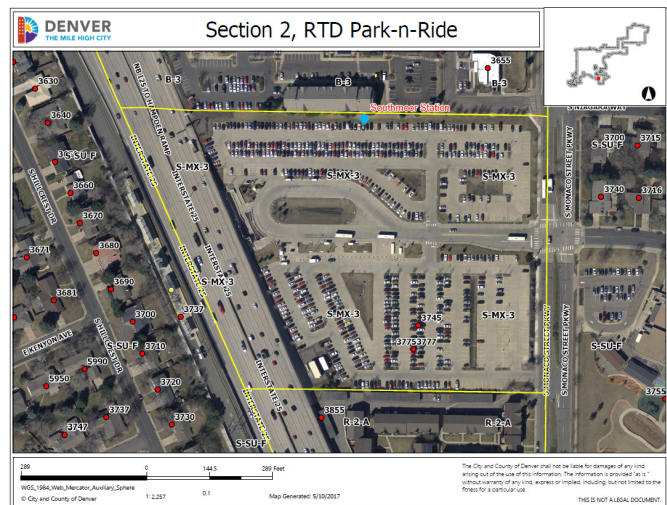
#### Section 1: Cambridge Square Condos

The 101 condominium units, built in 1968 on 0.5 acres, are individually owned. The median sale price of the condos is \$195,000.



#### Section 2: RTD Park-n-Ride

Southmoor Station and the adjoining Park-n-Ride area cover 7 acres and are owned by the Regional Transportation District (RTD). The RTD Park-n-Ride was built in the 70’s as a bus Park-n-Ride and the Light Rail Station opened in 2006. The Park-n-Ride includes approximately 800 parking spots and, according to RTD, it is around 85% full daily. Between Monday and Thursday, around 6,154 people ride transit from Southmoor (data from January-April 2016). To get to the light rail boarding area on the west side of the highway, riders must go through an underpass from the Park-n-Ride on the east side of the highway.



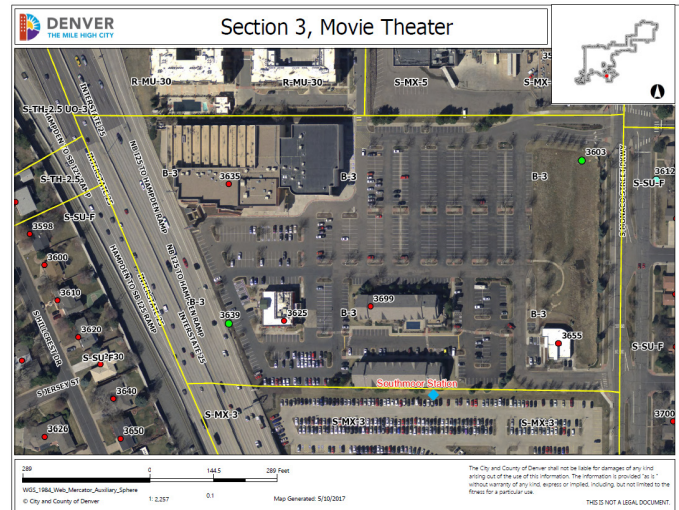
### Section 3: Movie Theater, Towne Place Suites by Marriott, and Vacant Lots

Property owners in Section 3 include:

- Realty Income Group, headquartered in San Diego, owns the Regal Theater property. The big-screen Continental movie theater was built in 1967. In 1997, the theater was redeveloped by Gart Properties into a large multi-screen theater. This involved the demolition of the Alpine Skating Rink, which was built in 1969.
- Brinker Restaurant Corp. owns the Chili’s property. Chili’s acquired its pad in 1998 and built its own improvements.
- BRE Avalanche Property Owners LLC owns Towne Place Suites by Marriott – Denver Southeast. It was built in 1999 and is operated by Sage Hospitality. There are 112 rooms.
- Cherry Creek Dental (Dr. John Hargreaves) owns the dental building and vacant land immediately to the north. The dental office was built in 2013. The dentist also owns 27,046 sq. feet of undeveloped land and wants to build a small apartment building.
- Gart Properties owns a small undeveloped parcel to the north of the dentist (61,721 sq. feet).

This area is a single zone lot of approximately 12 acres (Zoning: B-3). A Planned Building Group (PBG), a legally binding covenant/agreement with the Southmoor Park East Neighborhood Association (1997) and a Southmoor Park View Plane ordinance (1984) have severely limited potential redevelopment.

There is no road or pedestrian access from Monaco or Hampden to the Chili’s, movie theater, or hotel. Instead, cars, pedestrians and cyclists must navigate through the large parking lot. Without sidewalks or pedestrian pathways, this section inhibits pedestrian access to the Southmoor Station from Hampden.



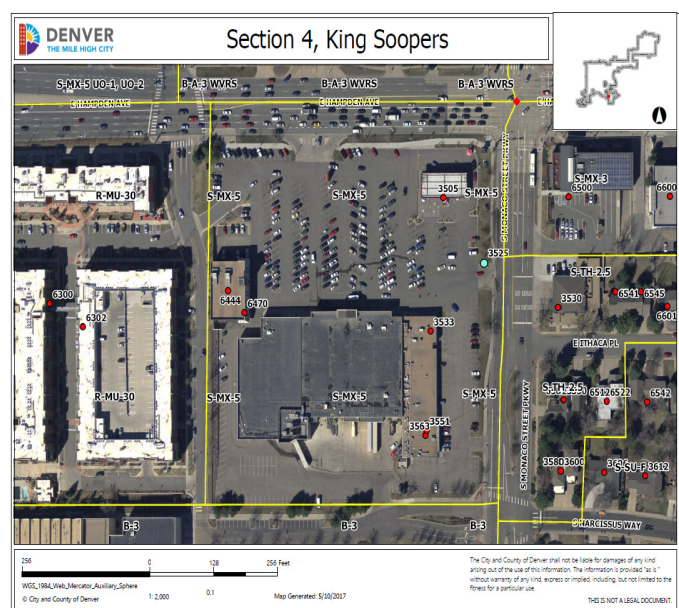
### Section 4: King Soopers and Strip Mall

Southmoor Center Co. owns the entire strip mall and office building in Section 4. In 2017, the original owner, Mr. William (Bill) Nelson, died. His estate, currently run by his widow and daughter, now owns Southmoor Center Co. Buildings in this section, built in 1968, include the King Soopers and strip mall, fueling center and an office building. The approximately 8 acre site has mixed-use zoning (MX, M-GMX, S-MX-5).

Tenants include:

- King Soopers
- Piccolo restaurant, which neighborhood residents love
- Other tenants: dry cleaner, nail spa, and liquor store
- In 2009, a gas station was constructed in the parking lot
- An office building (approximately 17,332 square feet) is on the east side of the parking lot. Tenants include Onsite Computer consulting, and Mutual Driving School, State Farm

The owner fought city improvements (like sidewalks) over the years. In 2010, the City installed sidewalks with Better Denver Bond funding. Hampden is 9 lanes wide there. The Hampden/Monaco intersection is very dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists on their way to shopping or the Station. There is a high rate of car crashes.



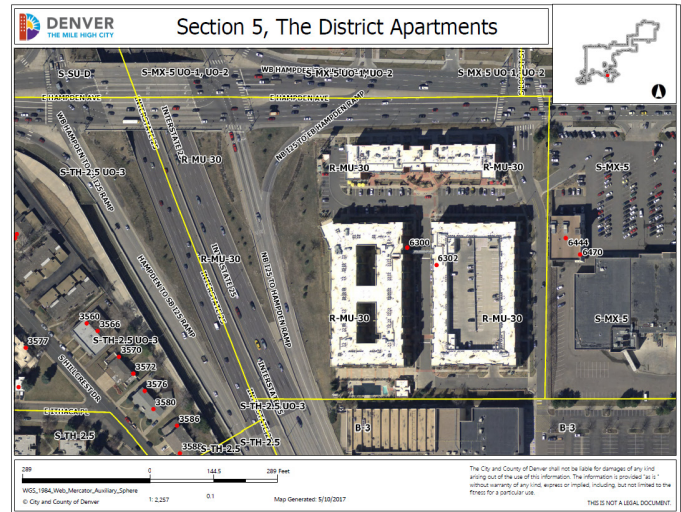


### Section 5: The District Apartments

General Investment & Development Co. of Boston owns The District at Southmoor, which is a 7 acre Planned Development Group (PBG). Originally a Howard Johnson’s motel and restaurant, The District was successfully redeveloped in 2004 as a 3- and 4-story, mixed-use, multi-family apartment development with 276 units and street-level retail space, including Noodles and Co., Jimmy John’s, Wahoo’s Fish Tacos, and others (zoned R-MU-30). In 2006, The District won a Mayor’s Design Award in the category of Density by Design.

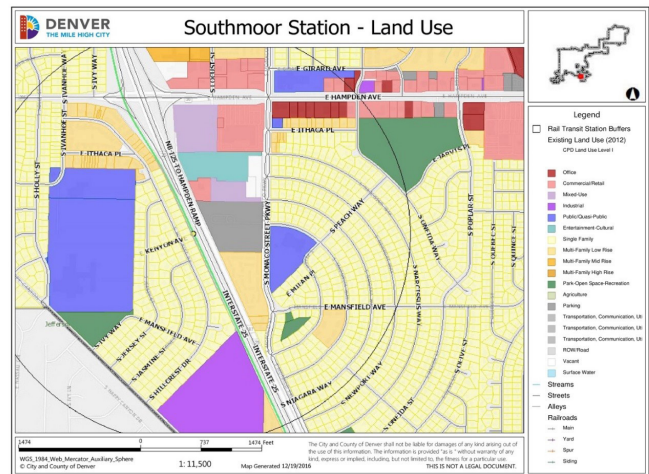
In 2002, the Southmoor Park East HOA (SPEHA) and the City and County of Denver successfully sued the developer regarding the height of the planned buildings in relation to the Mountain View Plane Ordinance for Southmoor Park (NEED LINK?) adopted by Denver City Council in 1982. In 2003, the developer presented a revised plan with only 3-4 stories to the SPEHA, which was supported by the board, even though SPEHA had no authority over this section.

Locust Street is a private street that runs south from Hampden on the east side of The District and ends at the north edge of the movie theater property. All attempts by the developers of The District and other property owners in Section 3 to make this a through-street and to add pedestrian/bike access to the Southmoor Station have failed.



### Surrounding areas:

- Southmoor Park East:** Covenant-controlled 630 single family homes; Median home price = \$590,000; 2 parks; Top-rated Southmoor Elementary School; Zoning: S-SU-F.
- Southmoor Park West:** Median home price = \$642,500; This neighborhood is on the west side of the Station and I-25, although the actual boarding area is on the west. Riders must go through a tunnel to board the train. 160 single family homes built in the 1960s. Thomas Jefferson High School is in this neighborhood, as well as two synagogues. Many students walk to the area for lunch and to use the train. They must walk along Hampden, through parking lots and over a grassy slope to get to the station. Zoning: S-SU-F.
- North of Hampden** is commercial and residential development including:
  - Strip mall anchored by Goodwill on the northwest corner of Hampden and Monaco. The Bagel Deli is very popular and well-known citywide. Zoning: B-A-3.
  - North of the Goodwill strip mall are Monaco Place condominiums and apartments, built in the 1970s. Zoning: B-A-3 (with waivers).
  - In 2010, a 1970s-era Marriott, at Hampden and I-25, was demolished. Three developments replaced it: The Shoppes at Highpointe, a strip mall dominated by chain and fast-casual restaurants, the Veranda apartments (362 units) and High Point Senior Living. Zoning: S-MX-5 UO-1, UO-2.
  - Holly Ridge, a 1970s single family neighborhood, with 307 homes north of the Veranda. Median home price = \$330,000; Zoning: S-SU-F.
- Hampden Avenue**, east of Monaco, is up to 120 feet and 9 lanes wide. It is not safe or comfortable to access the station. The development is dominated by 1970s, 2-4 story office and retail that includes a church, gas stations, a tire store, McDonalds, Walgreens, Target and Whole Foods. Zoning: S-MX-2, B-1, S-MX-3, S-MX-5.





*TAP panelists envisioned activating the vacant lots in the Southmoor Station area with quick-win uses, like a pop-up beer garden. Photo courtesy of Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.*

## ULI Colorado Leadership in Responsible Land Use

ULI Colorado is the 1,400-member District Council of the global Urban Land Institute. ULI Colorado consists of a four-person staff, 25-member executive committee, and 15 committees with more than 250 volunteers. More than 40 programs a year include advisory panels, leadership and mentoring programs, panels, project tours, publications, and community service. ULI is a non-lobbying educational and research institute supported by its members, sponsors, and foundations. Key issues include affordable housing, healthy communities, transit-oriented development, and sustainable design and planning.

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