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4.1 *Socio-Economics and Community*

This section describes the land use, social, economic, and community characteristics of the project area. The consequences (both positive and adverse) that the system alternatives, which include System Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative, would have on the local area, and measures identified to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts are also presented.

The socio-economic characteristics of the project area have been evaluated using a variety of available information sources including:

- Site visits
- Maps and aerial photographs
- Zoning information and land use data
- U.S. Census Bureau data
- Regional, City, and neighborhood plans
- Regional and local employment and population data
- Published directories
- Assessors records

These information sources have been used as a starting point for detailed discussions with a wide range of knowledgeable individuals and groups including:

- City and County of Denver staff and elected officials
- Resource agency staff
- Local neighborhood and business groups
- Local non-profit and advocacy groups
- Local residents
- Local business owners

Further information regarding public and agency discussions is provided in **Chapter 6 *Public Involvement***. Additional detail is provided in **Appendix A *Agency Coordination*** and **Appendix B *Public Coordination***.

The information sources and discussions have provided a basis for identification of the consequences, both beneficial and adverse, of the system alternatives on the local community. In addition, these discussions have provided valuable input regarding mitigation measures to address adverse impacts.

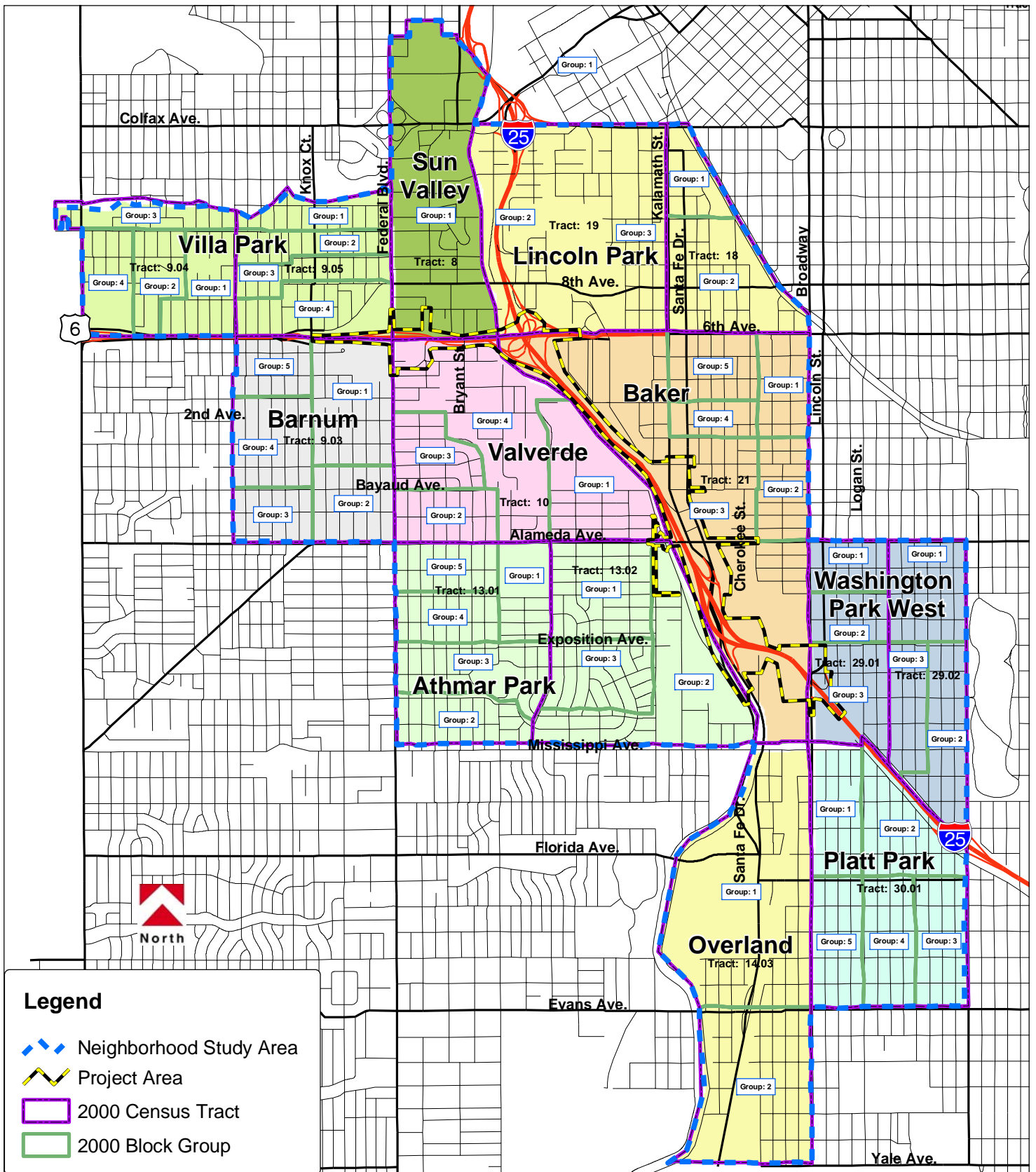
The consequences of the system alternatives have been considered throughout the alternatives development process and identification of the Preferred Alternative, and strong efforts have been made to avoid adverse effects. This is in keeping with CDOT and FHWA policy and guidance, and recognizes the important role that transportation systems have in supporting and maintaining vibrant and livable communities.

4.1.1 Current Conditions

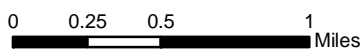
The project is located entirely within the City and County of Denver. A Neighborhood Study Area has been identified (see **Figure 4.1-1**) to provide a basis for discussion of affected environment and potential impacts. The Neighborhood Study Area includes the following Denver neighborhoods adjacent or close to the project area:

- Villa Park – a mostly residential neighborhood with limited commercial and industrial areas
- Sun Valley – a neighborhood containing commercial and industrial areas, public facilities, and public housing
- Lincoln Park – a neighborhood containing primarily industrial areas in the western half and a mixture of residential, commercial, and school uses in the eastern half
- Barnum – a mostly residential neighborhood with commercial areas along the eastern and southern edges
- Valverde – a neighborhood containing residential areas on the west and south, and industrial areas in the north and east
- Baker – a neighborhood containing a historic residential area, commercial and industrial areas, and emerging transit oriented development areas
- Athmar Park – a mostly residential neighborhood with a commercial/industrial area on the east side and a shopping center considered a candidate for redevelopment on the north side
- West Washington Park – a mostly residential neighborhood with some commercial use on the western and northern edges
- Overland – a neighborhood containing residential areas, commercial/industrial areas, and a large public golf course
- Platt Park – a mostly residential neighborhood with some commercial use and an emerging transit oriented development area at the northern end

The identification of this Neighborhood Study Area allows focus on the areas most likely to be affected by the system alternatives. Where appropriate, information regarding the City and County of Denver and/or State of Colorado as a whole has been included for comparison.



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Neighborhood Study Area

Figure 4.1-1

4.1.1.1 CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

Figure 4.1-2 shows existing land use within the Neighborhood Study Area, based on information provided by the City and County of Denver. As shown on **Figure 4.1-2**, the Neighborhood Study Area includes a wide range of land uses. Industrial and commercial are the predominant land uses bordering the project area. Several parks and the South Platte River also border the project area.

The properties along the South Platte River corridor tend to be industrial in use and have a mix of new and old properties of varying character, size, and specific industrial use. These industrial areas are located primarily along the central axis of the Neighborhood Study Area, effectively bisecting the area. Main arterial thoroughfares tend to be lined with commercial or light industrial uses. Existing right-of-way for I-25, US 6, LRT lines, and railroads are also central to the Neighborhood Study Area.

Residential areas within the Neighborhood Study Area are generally separated from the existing highways, railroad corridor, and system alternatives by the land uses described above. The residential areas are generally older, established neighborhoods developed between the late 1890s and 1950s, with some localized later development or redevelopment such as multi-family units in some locations.

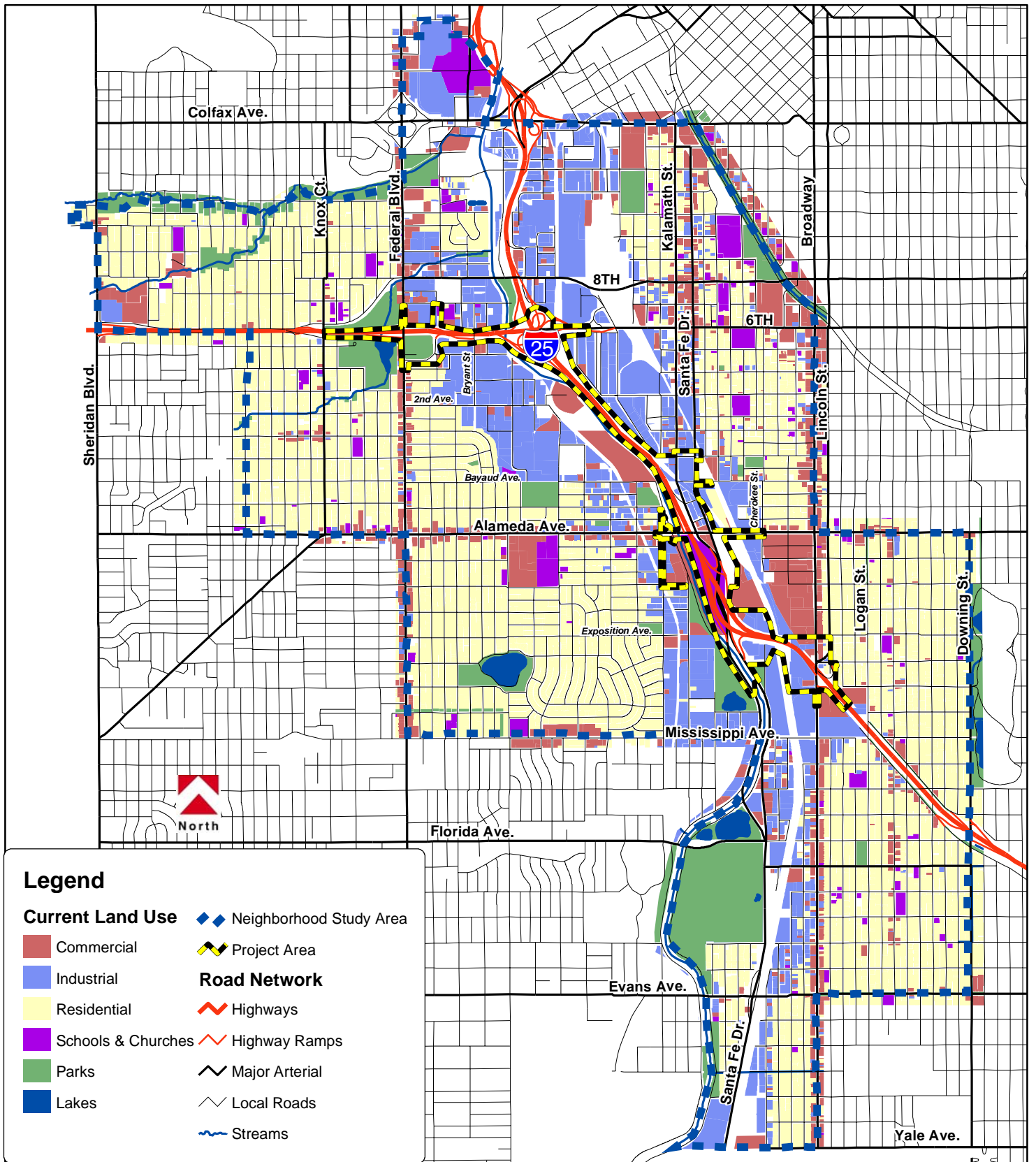
Residential properties are located adjacent or very close to the project area in the following limited areas:

- Along the south side of US 6 near Knox Court, at the western end of the project area
- Along west Short Place, just east of Federal Boulevard and south of the existing on-ramp to US 6 from Federal Boulevard
- On west Ellsworth Avenue between Kalamath Street and Santa Fe Drive
- West of Lipan Street, one block north of Alameda Avenue
- Along the north side of Alameda Avenue, east of Cherokee Street
- Along Lincoln Street, north of I-25

Commercial properties are located adjacent or very close to the project area in the following areas:

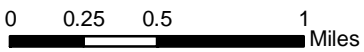
- In the northeast quadrant of US 6 and Federal Boulevard
- Along Bryant Street just north and south of US 6
- Along Alameda Avenue both east and west of I-25
- Along Santa Fe Drive and Kalamath Street, interspersed with industrial properties
- Along Broadway both north and south of I-25

The existing land use is generally consistent with the existing zoning, as shown on **Figure 4.1-3**.



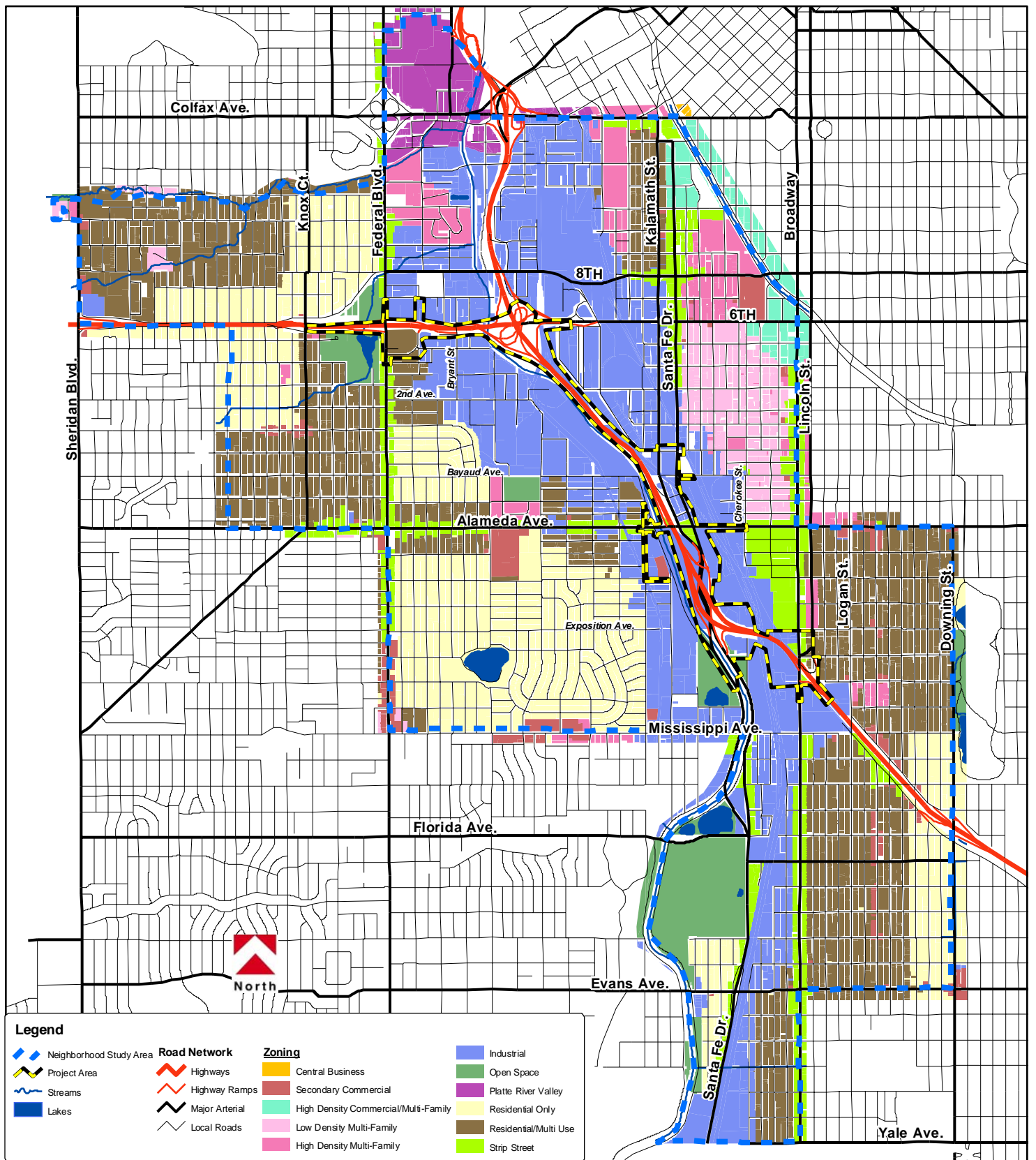
Source: City and County of Denver, 2004

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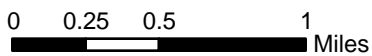
Existing Land Use-Generalized

Figure 4.1-2



Source: City and County of Denver, 2004c

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Existing Zoning

Figure 4.1-3

4.1.1.2 FUTURE PLANNED LAND USE

City and County of Denver Land Use Planning

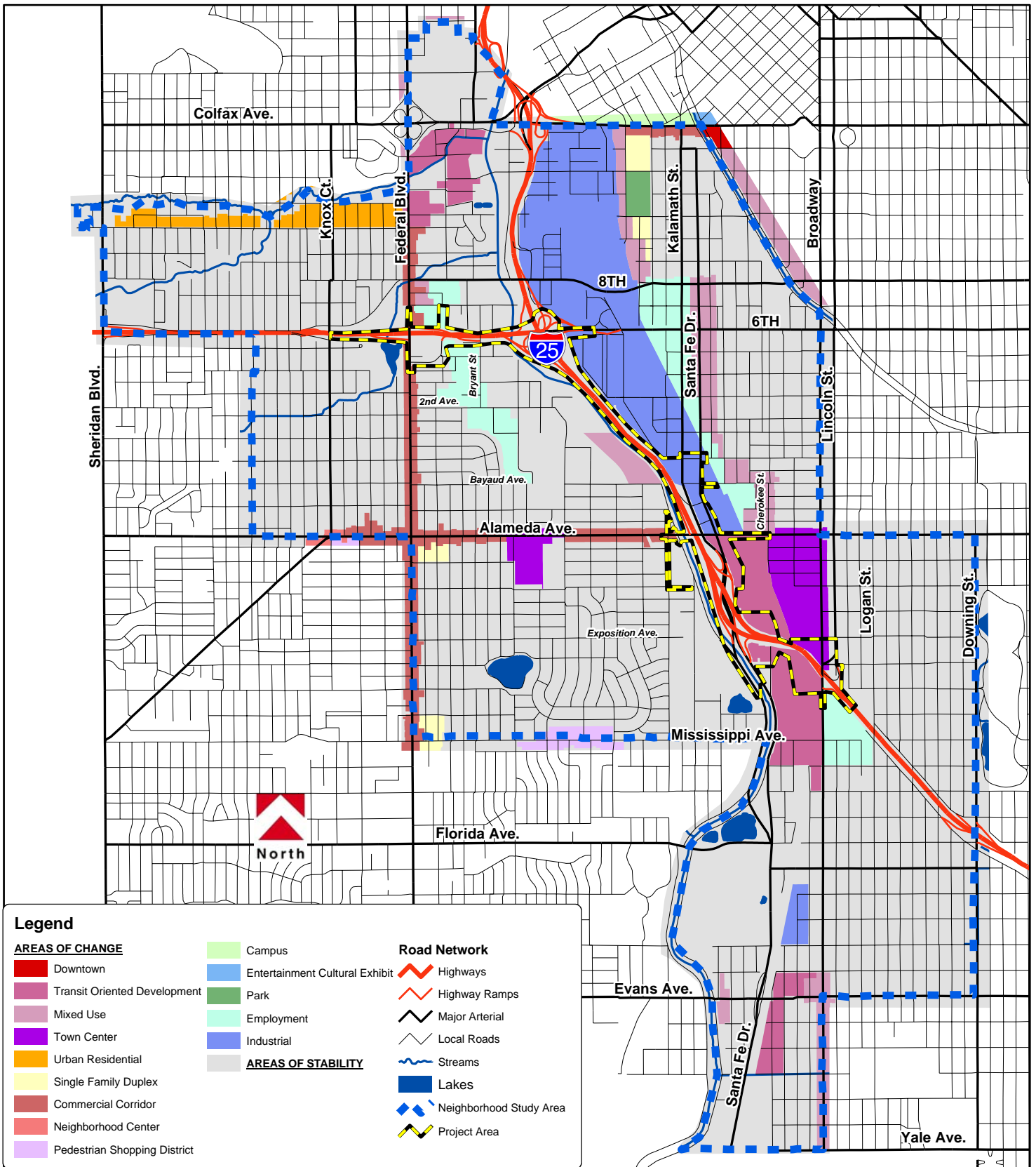
The City and County of Denver recently undertook a comprehensive planning effort to provide a vision for integrated future land use and transportation within the city. This vision, known as *Blueprint Denver* (City and County of Denver, 2002c), is an adopted Denver plan and is a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan (City and County of Denver, 2000b). *Blueprint Denver* “encourages and promotes more efficient use of transportation systems, expanded transportation choices, appropriate and mixed land use, and the revitalization of declining neighborhoods – all of which will ultimately improve our quality of life”. *Blueprint Denver* seeks to further the principles of *Metro Vision 2020* (DRCOG, 2000), the plan for the Denver metropolitan region.

Blueprint Denver identified all areas of Denver as either Areas of Stability or Areas of Change. According to *Blueprint Denver*, Areas of Stability include primarily stable residential neighborhoods and their associated commercial areas, where limited change is expected during the next 20 years. The goal for an Area of Stability is to identify and maintain the character of the area while accommodating some new development and redevelopment.

Blueprint Denver also identifies Areas of Change, which represent those areas of Denver where change is either underway or desirable. These Areas of Change are primarily older industrial districts, major arterial corridors, and areas adjacent to existing or planned transit facilities. *Blueprint Denver* seeks to distribute forecasted growth to Areas of Change, where it will be most beneficial and away from Areas of Stability, where it may have some negative consequences.

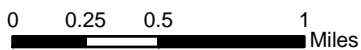
Figure 4.1-4 shows the Areas of Stability and Change identified by *Blueprint Denver* within the Neighborhood Study Area. As shown on **Figure 4.1-4**, much of the industrial and commercial land adjacent to the project area has been identified as an Area of Change. **Figure 4.1-5** shows Denver’s future concept land use, combining the future land uses for the Areas of Stability and Change. Comparison of **Figure 4.1-5** with **Figure 4.1-2** (*Existing Land Use-Generalized*) highlights the planned emergence of transit oriented development, mixed use, town center, and pedestrian shopping district land uses, modifying or replacing some existing industrial and commercial uses.

Blueprint Denver emphasizes the advantages of and recommends a process for developing small area plans which are consistent with and complement citywide planning. *The Baker Neighborhood Plan* (City and County of Denver, 2003b) provides additional detail regarding future land use within the Baker neighborhood. **Figure 4.1-6** shows the proposed land use identified in the *Baker Neighborhood Plan*. The proposed land use generally emphasizes transit oriented development in the vicinity of the Broadway and Alameda LRT stations. Industrial/commercial and residential/office Areas of Change are identified north of Alameda Avenue and east of the LRT line, while continued industrial use is anticipated north of Alameda Avenue and west of the LRT line.

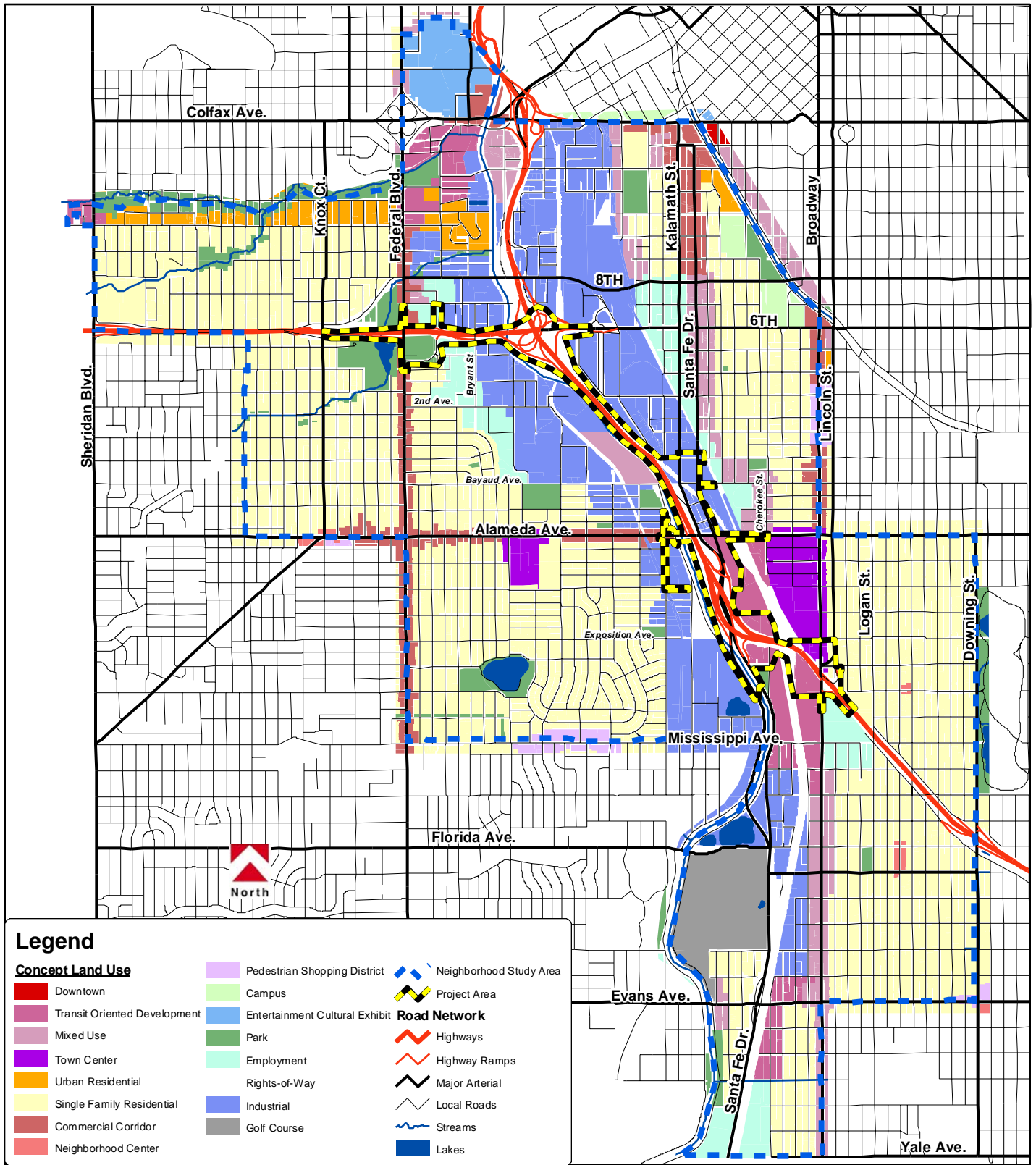


Source: Blueprint Denver Land Use & Transportation and Land Use Plan, 2002

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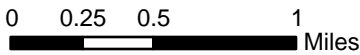


Areas of Stability and Change



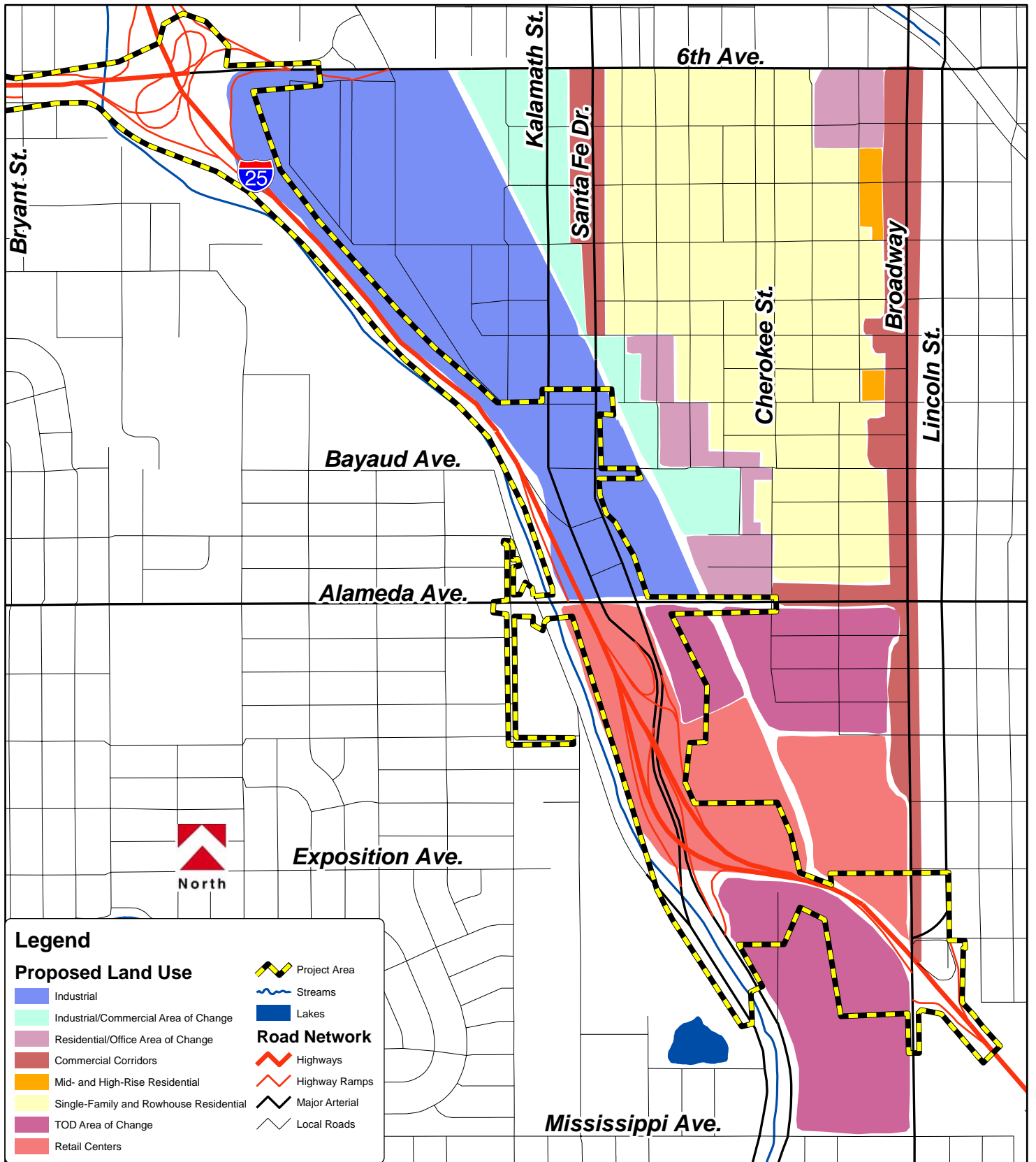
Source: CCD, Blueprint Denver Land Use & Transportation Plan, 2002c

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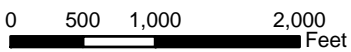
Future Concept Land Use

Figure 4.1-5



Source: Baker Neighborhood Plan, 2003

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Baker Neighborhood Proposed Land Use

The *Baker Neighborhood Plan* is most relevant to the Valley Highway Project because many of the transportation improvements being considered are within that neighborhood. Other neighborhood plans developed within the Neighborhood Study Area include the *Athmar Park Neighborhood Plan* (City and County of Denver, 2000c), and the *Villa Park Neighborhood Plan* (City and County of Denver, 1991).

Gates / Cherokee Redevelopment

The former Gates Rubber Company site, located south of I-25 and on both sides of Broadway, is currently in the planning stages for redevelopment as transit oriented mixed use. Gates currently retains the portion east of Broadway (the East Campus; approximately 28 acres) but has sold the portions west of Broadway to Cherokee Denver LLC (approximately 50 acres). The status and plans for the East Campus and Cherokee Denver sites are summarized below.

Cherokee Denver Site

Cherokee Denver is in the process of redeveloping the former Gates factory area located between Santa Fe Drive and Broadway. Cherokee Denver rezoned the property to Transit Mixed Use-30 (TMU-30) in 2002, and has initiated planning and environmental clean-up in preparation for redevelopment. **Figure 4.1-7** shows the master plan for Cherokee Denver site.

Gates East Campus

The Gates East Campus was located on the east side of Broadway, bounded by I-25 and the new T-REX LRT alignment to the north and east, and Arizona Avenue to the south. Gates owned most, but not all, of the property between Mississippi and Arizona Avenues.

Prior to selling the property, Gates received city approval of a change of zoning consistent with mixed-use transit oriented development of the site. The rezoning includes TMU-30 north of Mississippi Avenue, and a mixture of Residential Mixed Use-30 (RMU-30), RMU-20 and R-2 (Residential) south of Mississippi Avenue. In 2005, Gates sold the East Campus to a master developer, Lionstone Group. Lionstone Group subsequently sold the portion of the property south of Mississippi Avenue to McStain Homes.



SOURCE: Cherokee Denver, 2002



Cherokee Denver Transit Oriented Development Plan

4.1.1.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

Community Facilities

Community facilities and public services are important factors in maintaining communities. This section describes the existing community facilities and public services within the Neighborhood Study Area, and identifies factors that may contribute to or hinder community development and cohesion.

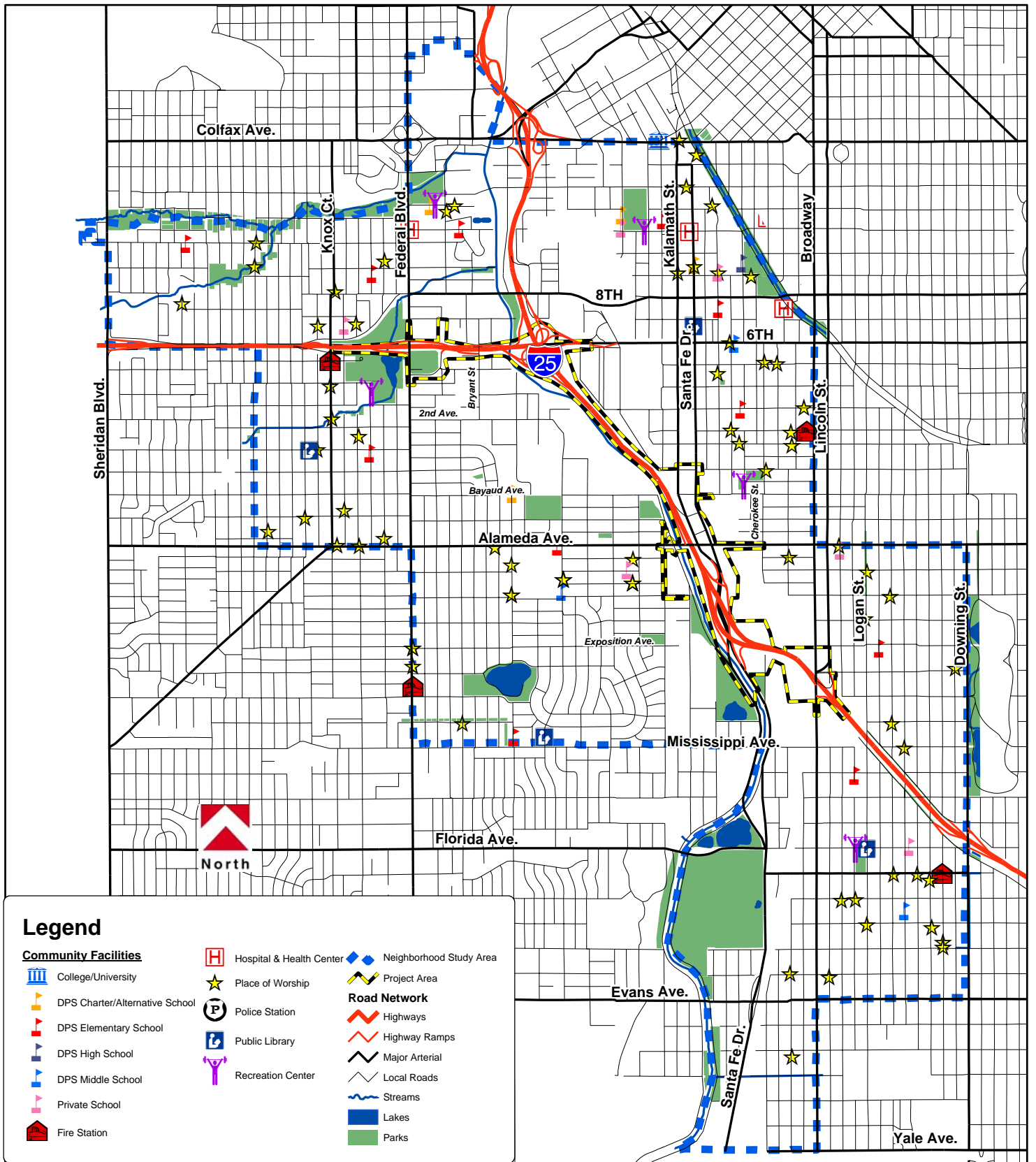
Figure 4.1-8 shows the type of public and community facilities within the Neighborhood Study Area. Key community facilities include:

- Several public parks (these are further described in **Section 4.3 Parks and Recreation**)
- Five public recreation centers
- Four public libraries
- Numerous public, charter and private schools
- Many places of worship

Four fire stations are located within the Neighborhood Study Area. No police stations are located within the Neighborhood Study Area, but the area is served by police stations located in adjacent areas. The Neighborhood Study Area includes three hospitals/health centers, and is served by additional hospital/health providers located in the adjacent area.

In general, the neighborhoods in the vicinity of the project area are relatively well served by public facilities. Neighborhood residents typically have access to public facilities in their neighborhood or adjacent neighborhood (as in the case of the Valverde neighborhood, whose residents access schools, a recreation center, and libraries in the adjacent Barnum and Athmar Park neighborhood).

The general availability of community facilities is consistent with the urban residential nature of the neighborhoods, and the long-standing commitment of the City and County of Denver to provide such facilities to its residents. The City and County of Denver recently reinforced its emphasis on community facilities by establishing the Focus Neighborhoods Initiative. The initiative seeks to improve public facilities in neighborhoods that may have seen underinvestment in public facilities in the past. Within the Neighborhood Study Area, the Baker, Valverde, Lincoln Park, Sun Valley, and Villa Park neighborhoods are included in the Focus Neighborhoods Initiative. Examples of improvement projects undertaken under this initiative include new and improved playgrounds, alley reconstruction, neighborhood beautification, and several other programs (City and County of Denver, 2003e).



Source: Piton Foundation, 2004.
 Additional information, data and maps are available at: www.piton.org.

Valley Highway, 02-069, 10/27/2004

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Public and Community Facilities

Community Service Providers

Several organizations serving groups or populations with specific needs are located within the Neighborhood Study Area. These include:

- **Altantis Community**: This is a residential and resource center serving physically disabled people throughout Metro Denver. Located at 201 S. Cherokee Street, this central facility includes an apartment complex and offices in separate buildings. Service providers also travel out from this location by car to visit clients located throughout the Metro area.
- **Bayaud Industries**: Bayaud Industries, located at 333 W. Bayaud, is a work center and training facility, primarily serving individuals that have experienced mental illness and are returning to work. The facility serves clients from throughout the Metro area.
- **Shalom**: Shalom, located at 2498 W. 2nd Avenue, is a work and training center serving developmentally disabled individuals from throughout the Metro area.
- **Platte River Industries**: Platte River Industries is located at 490 Bryant Street and provides work and training for disabled individuals from throughout the Metro area.
- **The Bridge Project at Columbine Homes**: The Bridge Project is a community outreach initiative of the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work that has teamed with the Denver Housing Authority. Located at the Denver Housing Authority Columbine Homes development at 2390 W. Cedar Avenue, the Bridge Project provides mentoring, tutoring, teaching and youth development programs to children and families.
- **City Church Youth Center**: This organization is located at 135 S. Kalamath Street. A sign on the facility indicates that the organization serves pregnant teens. Several attempts have been made over a number of months to contact the organization to confirm its mission and obtain additional information, but these attempts have been unsuccessful.
- **Mi Casa Resource Center for Women**: The Mi Casa Resource Center for Women is located at 360 Acoma Street and provides a number of programs to promote self-sufficiency for primarily low-income Hispanic women and youth.
- **Santa Fe Drive Redevelopment District (NEWSSED)**: NEWSSED promotes and develops economic and community programs to raise the income, educational, and political levels of West Denver residents. NEWSSED sponsors the annual *El Grito de la Independencia* Festival along Santa Fe Drive and works to revitalize businesses along Santa Fe Drive. NEWSSED is located at 1029 Santa Fe Drive.
- **Making Connections – Denver**: Making Connections is an initiative to improve life for residents in the Baker, La Alma/Lincoln Park, Sun Valley, and Cole neighborhoods. Located at 370 17th Street, Making Connections provides training, funding, and technical support for community organizing efforts.
- **Metro Organizations for People**: The Metro Organizations for People supports local communities and assists with the community organizing process. The organization is located at 1980 Dahlia Street but is involved in organizing the Valverde Neighborhood Association.

Neighborhood Cohesion

Many factors affect the cohesion and vitality of neighborhoods. The presence of the public facilities and service providers identified above are positive factors that contribute to a sense of community. The vitality of local business and employment opportunities also exert a strong influence on community cohesion.

The neighborhoods within the Neighborhood Study Area generally exhibit relatively high cohesion. There is a strong sense of community. This is supported by the City and County of Denver's emphasis on neighborhood support and development, and through Denver's comprehensive planning initiatives described in **Section 4.1.1.2**.

Transportation facilities can be both positive and negative factors. These facilities provide vital links enabling residents to access goods, services, employment, and travel to other areas of the city. However, major transportation facilities can also act as a barrier that hinders cross travel (particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists) and can detract from cohesion and sense of community.

Within the Neighborhood Study Area, the following highway and majority arterials hinder, to a greater or lesser degree, cross travel between or within neighborhoods:

- **I-25:** I-25 combined with the largely parceled South Platte River and rail corridors restrict east-west travel across the area. However, this corridor also provides key north-south mobility for transit riders on the LRT line, bicyclists traveling along the South Platte River trail, as well as for motorists.
- **US 6:** This east-west freeway restricts north-south travel in the area west of I-25.
- **City Arterials:** There are several major arterials present in the area. These provide mobility throughout the area, but may hinder pedestrian and bicycle cross travel and the connection between adjacent areas. Major east-west arterials near the project area include 8th Avenue and Alameda Avenue. Major north-south arterials include Federal Boulevard, Santa Fe Drive, Kalamath Street, Broadway, and Lincoln Street.

4.1.1.4 DEMOGRAPHICS AND EMPLOYMENT

The Neighborhood Study Area includes a diverse community with a broad range of racial and ethnic backgrounds represented. The racial and ethnic diversity reflects the population within the City and County of Denver, which is generally more diverse than within the state of Colorado as a whole. This section summarizes the demographic character of the individual neighborhoods that make up the Neighborhood Study Area, based primarily on census data from 2000.

Year 2000 demographic information for the Neighborhood Study Area is summarized in **Table 4.1-1**.

Table 4.1-1 Demographics of the Neighborhood Study Area – 2000

Area	Race/Ethnicity (%)				
	(Non-Latino) White ¹	Black or African American	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino
State of Colorado	74.5	3.7	0.7	2.2	17.1
City and County of Denver	51.9	10.8	0.7	2.7	31.7
<i>By Neighborhood</i>					
Villa Park	15.7	1.4	0.9	1.1	79.9
Sun Valley	10.1	17.3	1.9	13.5	52.6
Lincoln Park ²	32.4	7.2	1.5	4.0	52.5
Barnum	20.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	75.8
Valverde	18.2	2.5	1.4	2.1	74.6
Baker	39.7	2.9	1.2	0.7	53.7
Athmar Park	29.5	0.8	0.4	3.2	65.2
Washington Park West	87.0	1.1	0.7	1.4	8.5
Overland	64.3	2.1	1.0	1.5	29.6
Platt Park	86.9	1.2	0.7	1.0	8.5

Source: Piton Foundation compilation of U.S. Census Bureau Year 2000 data

Note: Unaccounted percentages were for the census categories of "Some Other Race" or "Two or More Races." Percentages shown will not add up to 100%.

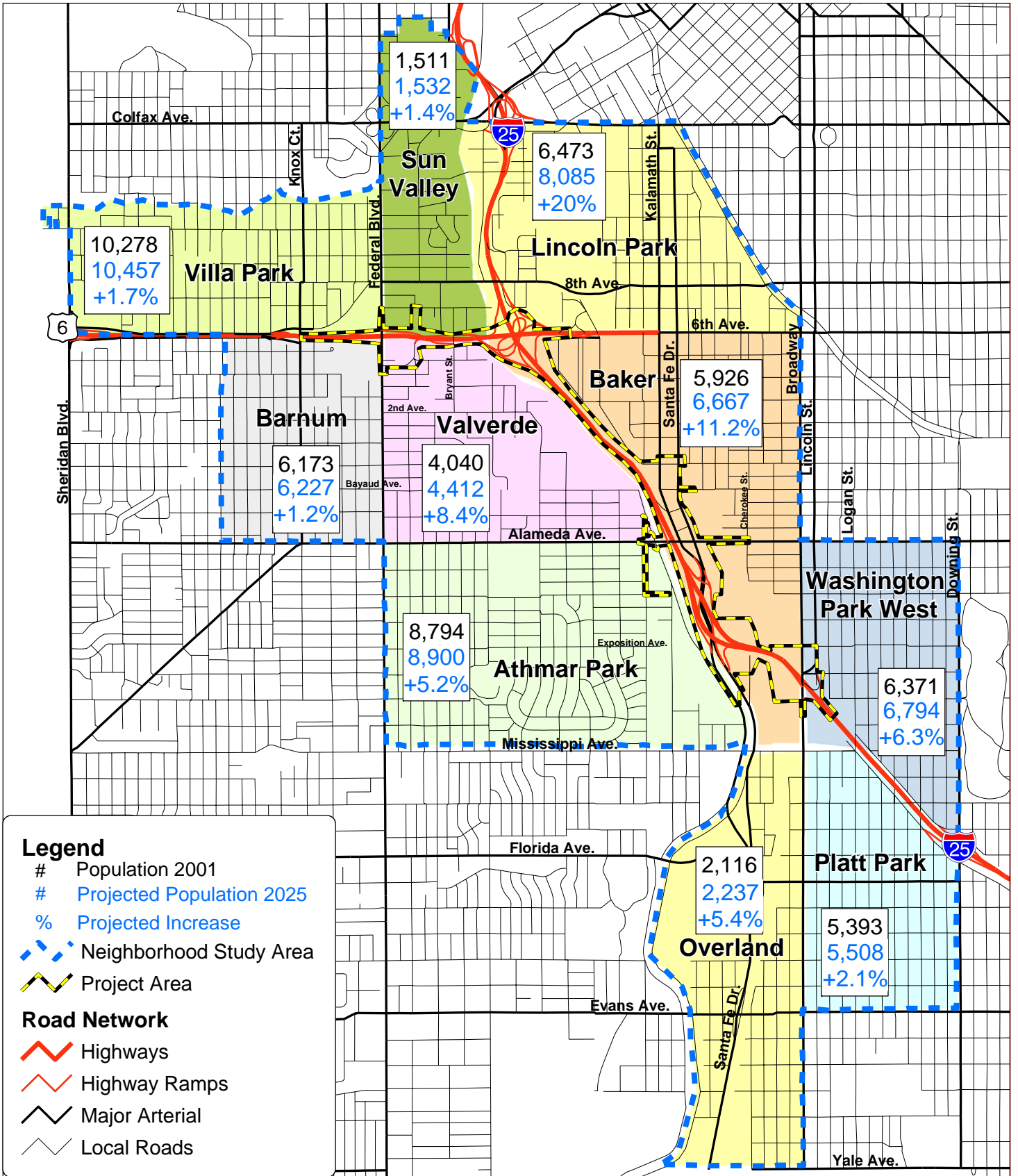
¹ "Non-Latino White" percentages of less than 50% imply a minority population of greater than 50%, thus indicating a "Minority Population" according to guidance from the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (established by Executive Order 12898).

² Data shown are for Auraria-Lincoln Park.

Figure 4.1-9 shows population projections for each neighborhood for the year 2025. Projected population increases range from a low of 1.2 percent in Barnum to a high of 20 percent in Lincoln Park. The higher projected population increases for Lincoln Park and Baker are largely the result of a projected increase in available residential units due to development.

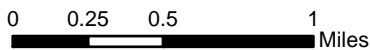
The racial and ethnic distribution within the Neighborhood Study Area is presented on the following figures, by comparing census block data with the City and County of Denver averages:

- **Figure 4.1-10:** Racial Minority Population (includes African American, Asian American and Native American)
- **Figure 4.1-11:** African American Population
- **Figure 4.1-12:** Asian American Population
- **Figure 4.1-13:** Native American Population
- **Figure 4.1-14:** Hispanic Population (Hispanic origin/ethnicity of any race)



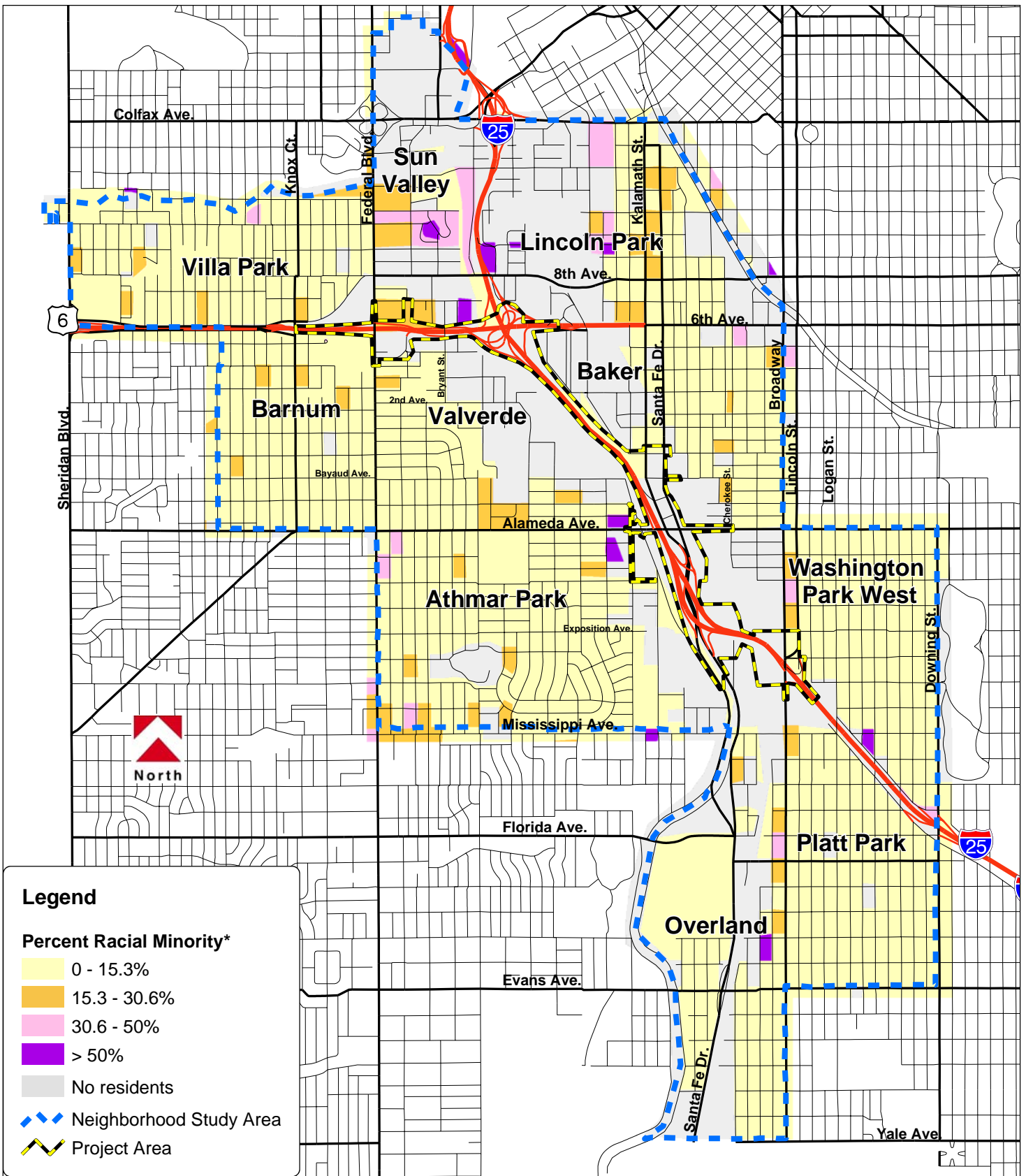
Source: DRCOG, 2002

Valley Highway, 02-069, 10/27/2004



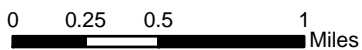
Population by Neighborhood

Figure 4.1-9

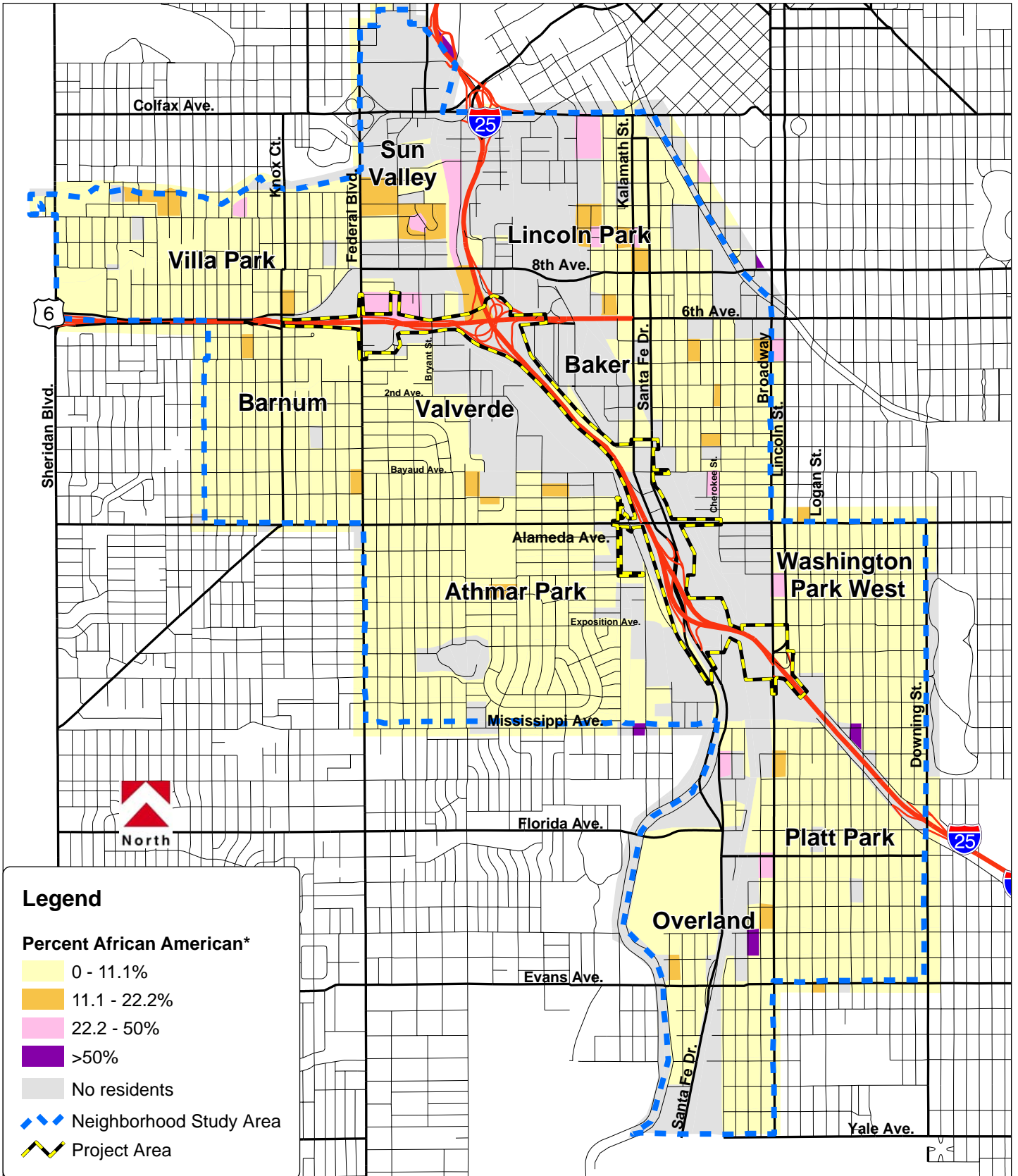


U.S. Census 2000
 * City and County of Denver Average = 15.3%

Valley Highway, 02-069, 10/27/2004



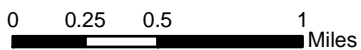
Racial Minority Population by Census Block



U.S. Census, 2000

* City and County of Denver Average = 11.1%

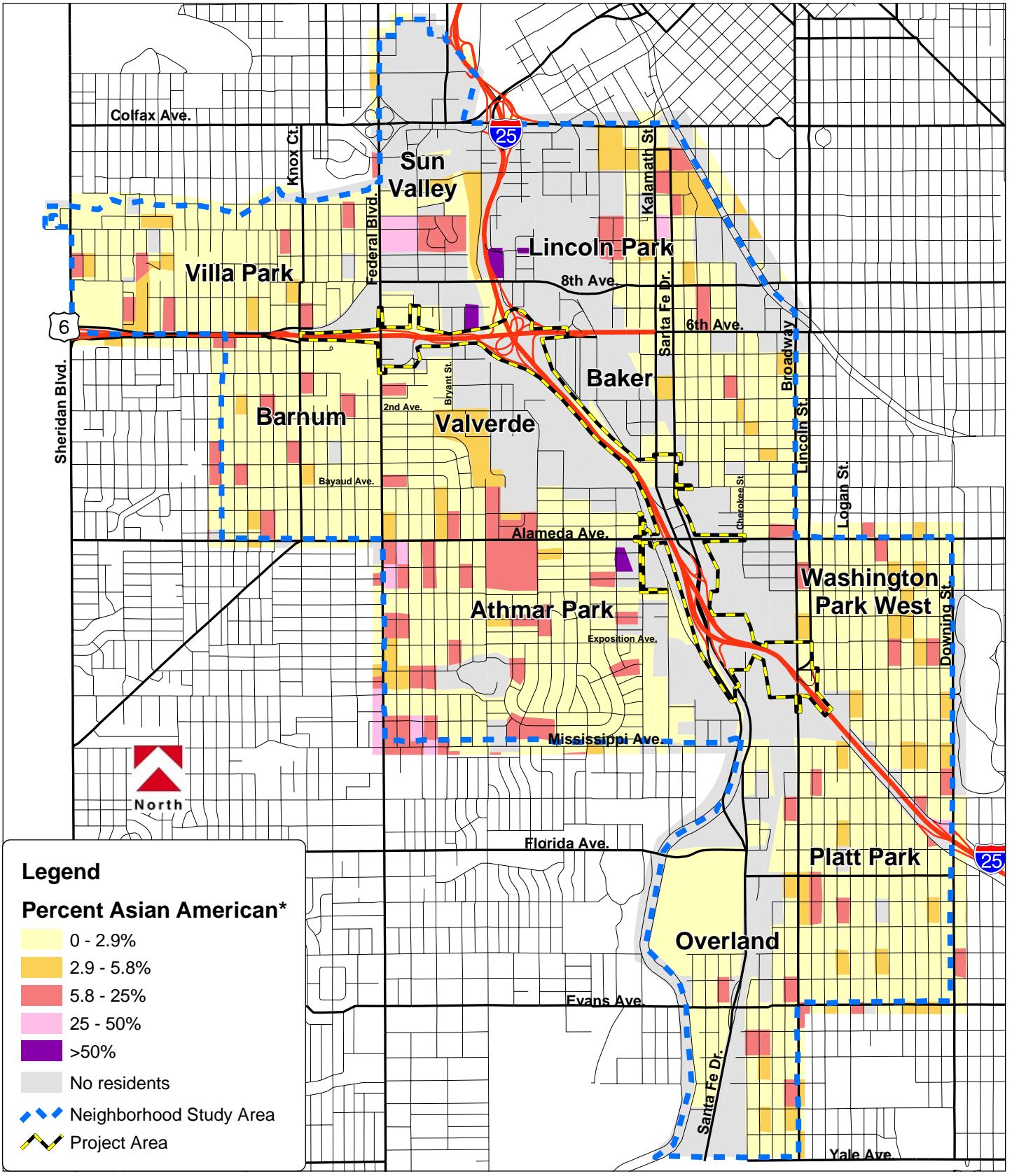
Valley Highway, 02-069, 10/27/2004



African American Population by Census Block



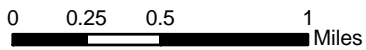
Figure 4.1-11



U.S. Census, 2000

* City and County of Denver Average = 2.9%

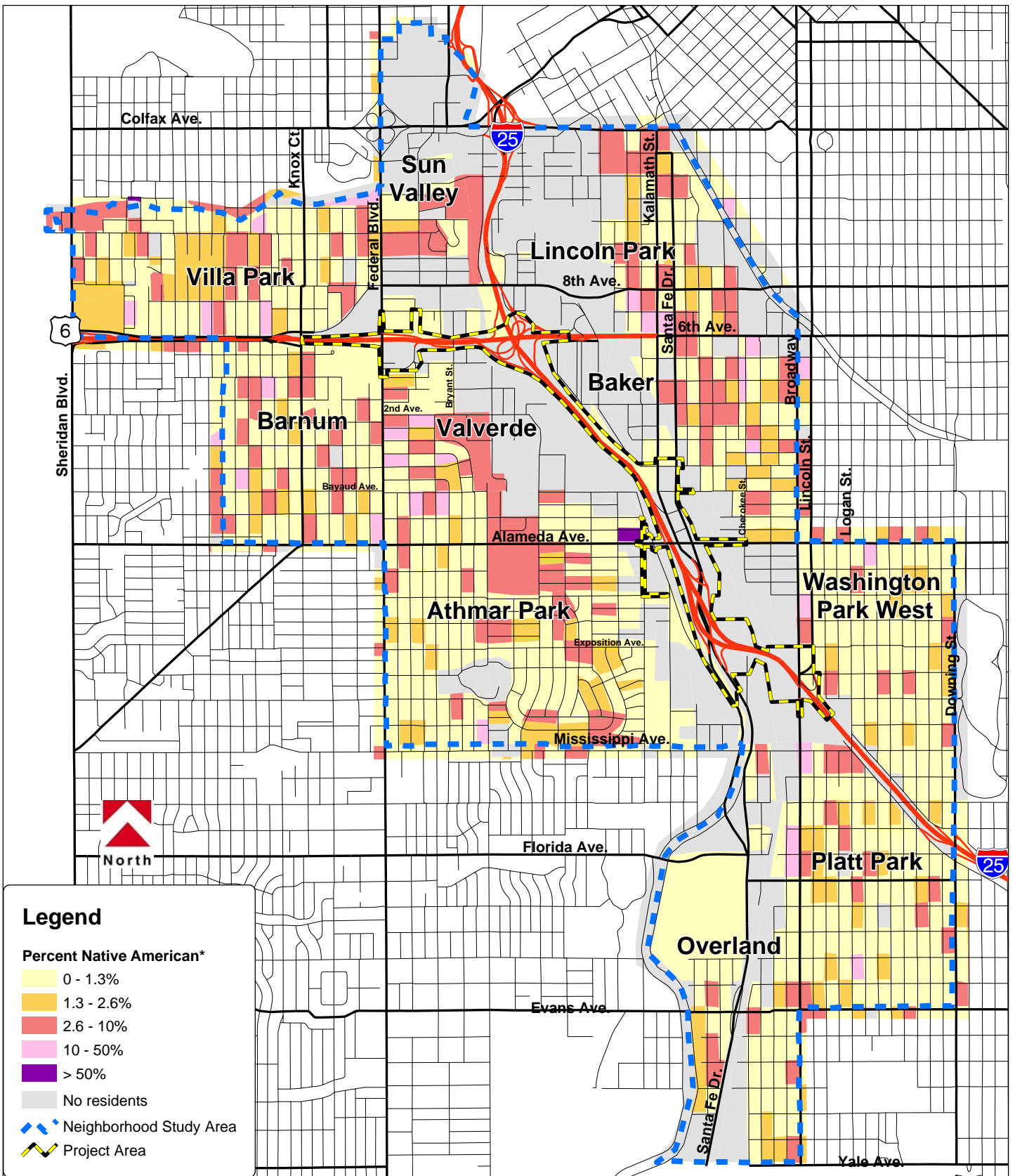
Valley Highway, 02-069, 10/27/2004



Asian American Population by Census Block



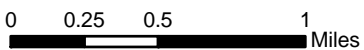
Figure 4.1-12



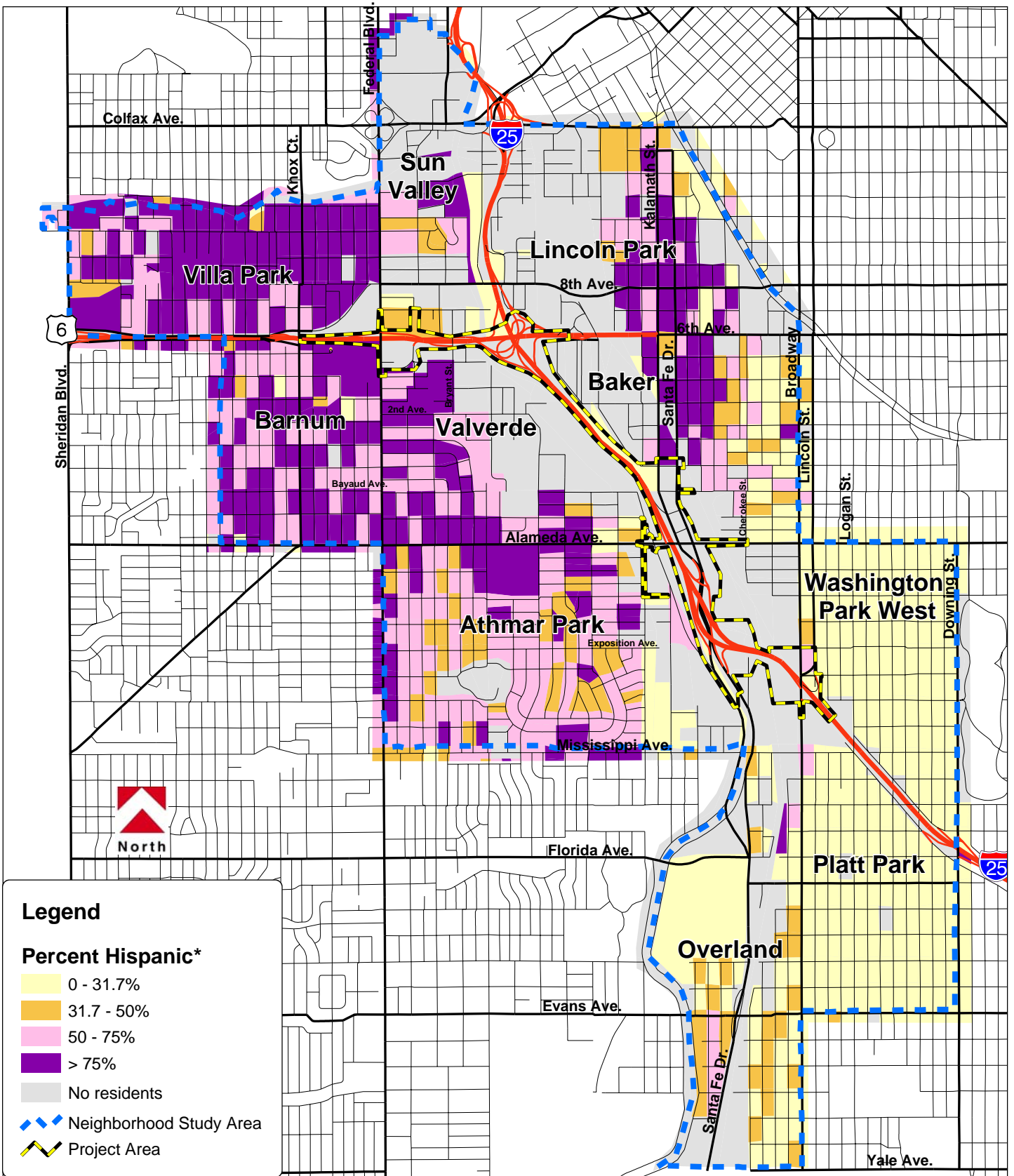
U.S. Census, 2000

* City and County of Denver Average = 1.3%

Valley Highway, 02-069, 09/29/2004



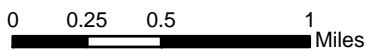
Native American Population by Census Block



U.S. Census, 2000

* City and County of Denver Average = 31.7%

Valley Highway, 02-069, 10/27/2004



Hispanic Population by Census Block

A range of employment opportunities and income levels are represented within the Neighborhood Study Area. **Table 4.1-2** compares neighborhood employment and income data with City and County of Denver averages.

Table 4.1-2 Employment and Income within the Neighborhood Study Area – 2000

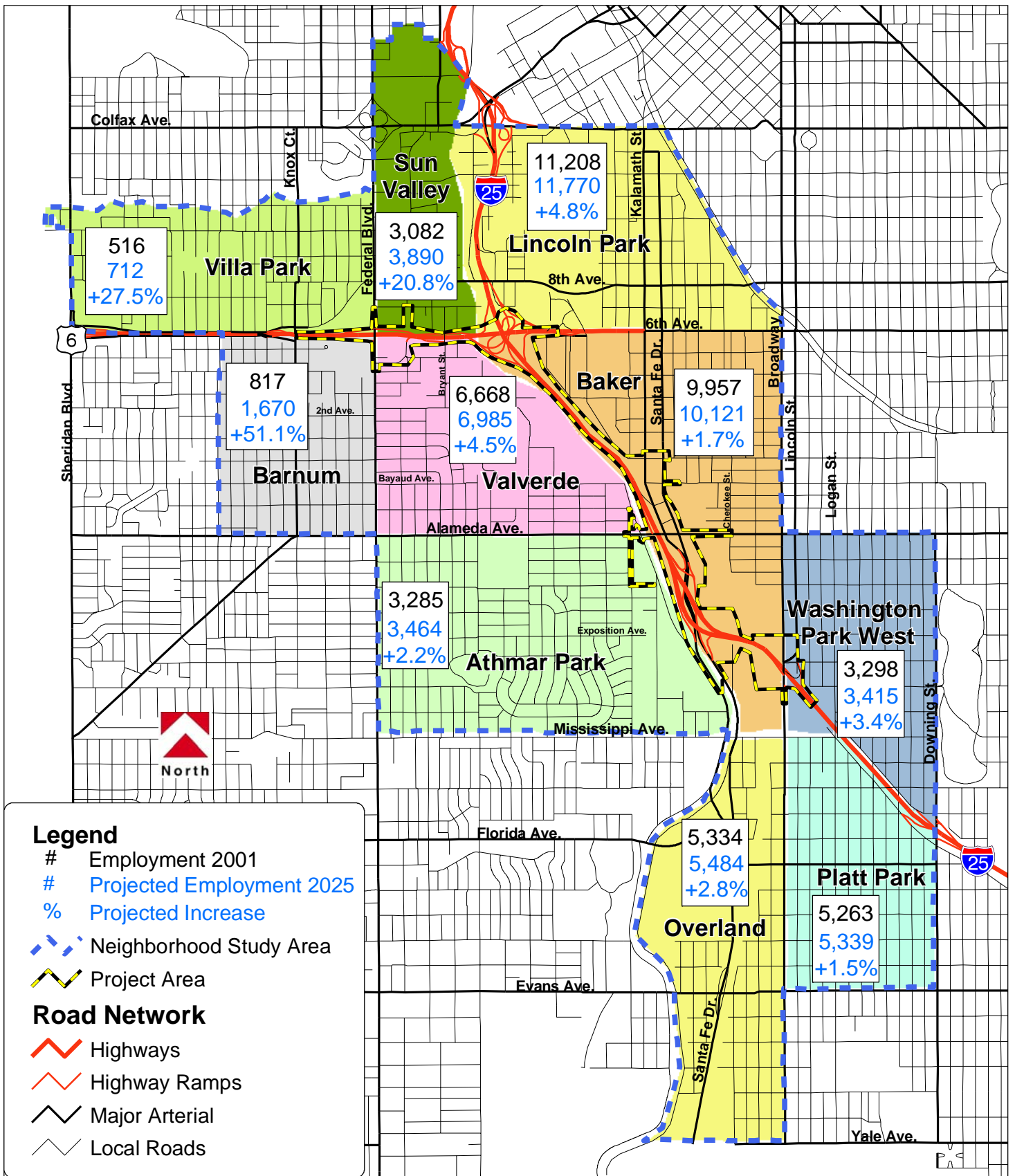
Area	Average Household Income (\$)	Persons in Poverty (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)
City and County of Denver	55,129	14.3	5.7
<i>By Neighborhood</i>			
Villa Park	40,468	19.7	8.8
Sun Valley	12,434	71.5	18.0
Lincoln Park ¹	38,481	37.7	10.6
Barnum	41,185	13.4	6.9
Valverde	35,918	27.7	7.4
Baker	42,603	24.3	4.5
Athmar Park	47,932	12.6	5.7
Washington Park West	69,444	6.8	2.9
Overland	44,649	11.1	9.4
Platt Park	63,588	6.1	4.0

Source: Piton Foundation, compilation of U.S. Census Bureau Year 2000 data

¹ Data shown are for Auraria-Lincoln Park.

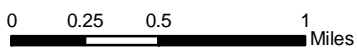
Figure 4.1-15 shows projected employment for the year 2025. These data do not currently include additional employment due to development of the Gates and Cherokee sites, which is expected to further increase employment in the Platt Park and Baker neighborhoods.

Figure 4.1-16 shows the low-income population by census block group, in comparison with City and the County of Denver average. **Figure 4.1-17** shows the extent of the Denver Enterprise Zone within Neighborhood Study Area. The Denver Enterprise Zone is one of several enterprise zones established by the State of Colorado to provide tax incentives for the purpose of encouraging business investment in economically disadvantaged areas.



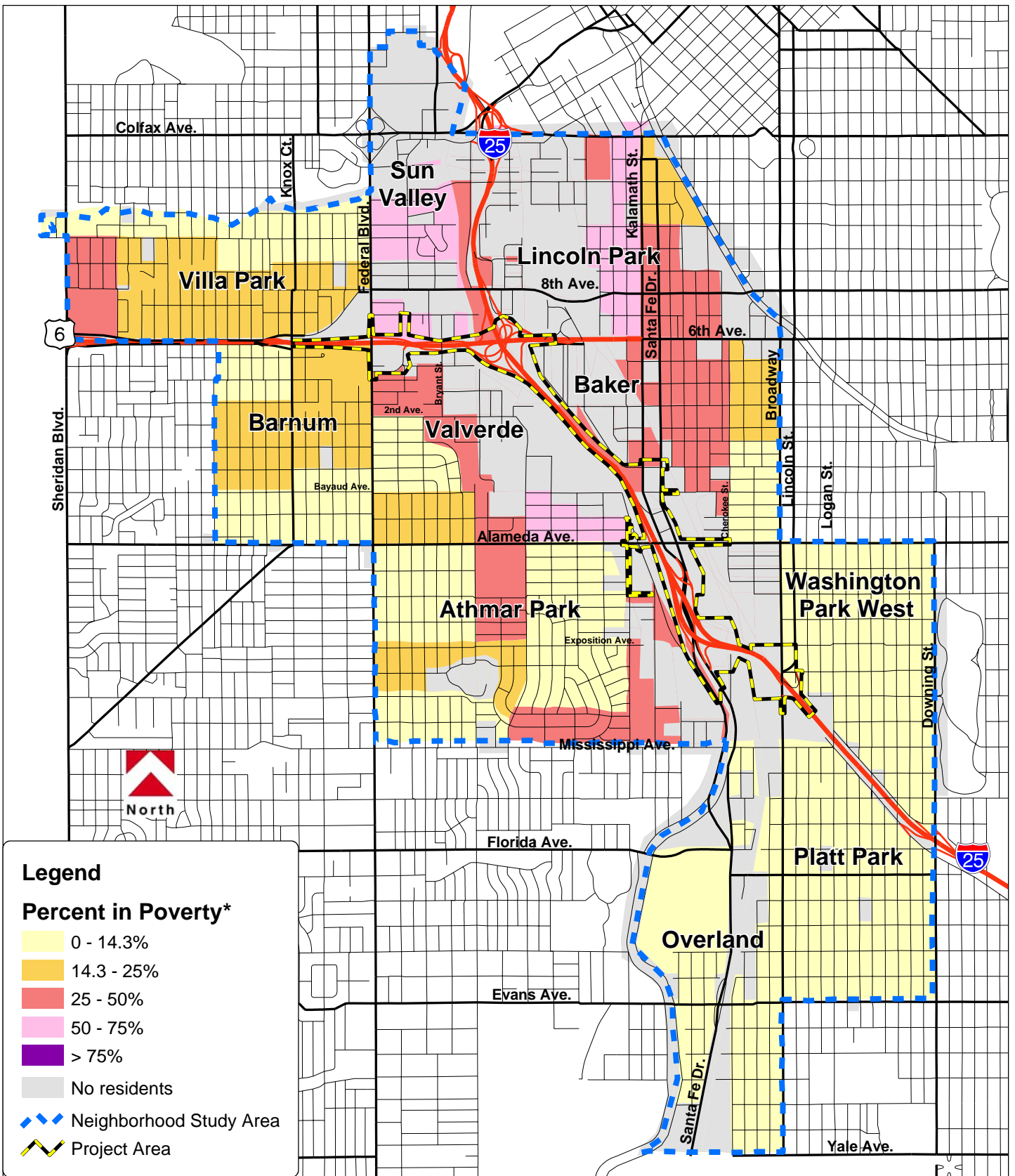
Source: DRCOG, 2002

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Employment by Neighborhood

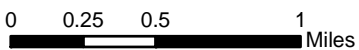
Figure 4.1-15



U.S. Census, 2000

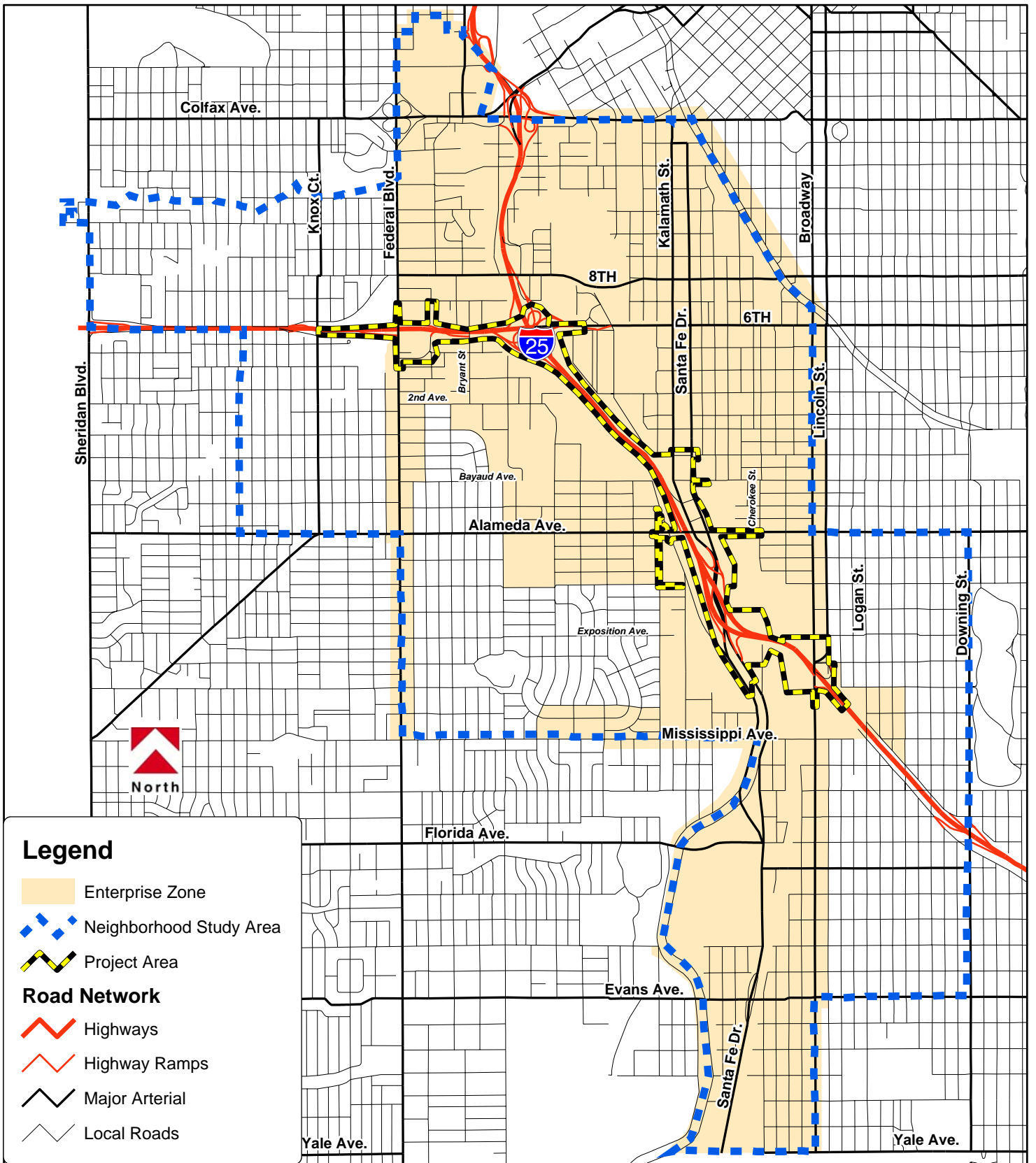
* City and County of Denver Average = 14.3%

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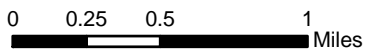
Low-Income Population by Census Block Group

Figure 4.1-16



Source: City and County of Denver, 2004

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Denver Enterprise Zone



Figure 4.1-17

4.1.2 Consequences of the Alternatives

Implementing improvements included in the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would address identified needs and provide substantial benefits for both local residents and those traveling through the area. Many of these benefits were detailed in **Chapter 2 Alternatives** and **Chapter 3 Transportation Analysis**, and include the following:

- Improvements providing lane continuity/balance and correcting roadway deficiencies would improve safety and reduce delays for motorists accessing and traveling on the highway system. These improvements would also increase the reliability of the transportation system.
- Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities would improve mobility across the corridor and also improve connectivity between transportation modes.
- Grade separation of the Consolidated Main Line railroad from Santa Fe Drive and Kalamath Street would increase safety and reduce delays associated with the current at-grade crossing.

These benefits would not be provided by the No Action Alternative.

The remainder of this section discusses specific effects of the No Action Alternative, System Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative on land use, community facilities, and the local socio-economic environment. Mitigation measures to be applied to eliminate or reduce adverse effects are addressed in **Section 4.1.3**. The environmental justice issues of the equitable sharing of benefits and burdens of the systems alternatives are discussed in **Section 4.1.4**.

4.1.2.1 LAND USE

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not affect current land use because no additional right-of-way would need to be acquired. However, the No Action Alternative would not promote the most efficient use of the existing transportation corridors. The No Action Alternative would not be fully supportive of future land use and transportation identified by the City and County of Denver in *Blueprint Denver* and the *Denver Comprehensive Plan*. These local planning efforts emphasize the need to manage the effectiveness of Denver's roadway network first by investing in operational and reconstruction improvements. This strategy is intended to support the land use vision for Areas of Stability and Change, as described in *Blueprint Denver*.

Consequences Common to System Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative

Each of the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would require the acquisition of some land for transportation facilities and the relocation of several businesses. In addition, residential relocations would be required for System Alternatives 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative. The specific relocations required are presented in detail in **Section 4.2, Right-of-Way and Displacements**. Of the alternatives, System Alternative 1 requires the least relocations, while System Alternative 2 requires the most relocations. The majority of the required relocations for each alternative are located within Areas of Change, and thus the

alternatives are generally consistent with the City and County of Denver's goal of maintaining the Areas of Stability.

In implementing transportation improvements, CDOT seeks only to acquire property needed for the project. As a result of the acquisition process, sometimes a total ownership acquisition is required when only a portion is needed for the project. In those instances, remainder parcels may be available for disposition following project implementation. Future land use for any remainder parcels would be expected to occur in accordance with the current and planned zoning for the area. During preparation of this EIS, CDOT has worked cooperatively with the City and County of Denver to identify possible future land use for potential remainder parcels.

CDOT may sell remainder parcels according to CDOT and FHWA legal requirements and procedures. The general steps in this process would be as follows:

1. At the appropriate time in the project implementation phase, CDOT would identify remainder parcels for possible sale. CDOT would then obtain approval from the Colorado Transportation Commissions to sell the parcels, in accordance with statutory requirements.
2. CDOT would determine the appropriate assemblage of remainder parcels and proposed method of sale. CDOT would then discuss the planned sale with the City and County of Denver, and consider any comments or input. However, CDOT shall be the final decision maker on what will be sold and how it will be sold.
3. If all appropriate approvals are obtained, CDOT would then proceed with an offer of the parcels for sale in accordance with CDOT and FHWA procedures.

It is important to note that CDOT disposes of remainder parcels in accordance with several legal and procedural requirements. Detailed procedures are specified in the CDOT *Right-of-Way Manual*.

Because System Alternative 1 requires the least relocations, this alternative would have the least remainder parcels. Conversely, with the most relocations, System Alternative 2 would have the largest number of remainder parcels. The Preferred Alternative has a similar, but slightly larger number of relocations to System Alternative 1. For each of the alternatives, the total amount of available industrial/commercial property would be somewhat reduced, but the land use would remain consistent with *Blueprint Denver*. Each of the system alternatives would also be consistent with *Blueprint Denver's* goal of managing the transportation system's effectiveness by investing in operational and reconstruction improvements.

The construction of transportation facilities is sometimes considered to contribute to urban sprawl, as improved access to vacant land under some circumstances makes it prime for development. This is often referred to as induced growth, a situation where growth is attracted to an area due to easy access and limited traffic congestion. This concern is especially applicable to the construction of new access to undeveloped areas, assuming that all of the other supporting development stimulants are in place.

In the case of the Valley Highway Project, the transportation improvements are unlikely to contribute to unplanned growth. This is because the proposed project is located in a developed urban environment, and land use planning has already been initiated on the local and regional level. Each of the system alternatives would also improve access to RTD park-n-Ride facilities

at the Broadway and Alameda LRT stations, thus helping to facilitate transit use. In addition, the relatively small size of the project area on a regional scale tends to indicate that the system alternatives would not produce large changes in regional growth patterns.

The system alternatives would accommodate future land use as envisioned for the identified Areas of Change, and would not direct development to identified Areas of Stability. Changing land uses to a different type of use would be unlikely to result from the system alternatives. Changes to existing land uses would be determined by local and regional planning processes and implemented through local planning and zoning ordinances.

System Alternative 1

System Alternative 1 has the most constrained footprint of the system alternatives and, therefore, has the smallest direct impact on land use. As described in detail in **Section 4.2**, this alternative would require the relocation of approximately 25 existing businesses. Most of the businesses requiring relocation are in the vicinity of the I-25/Alameda Avenue interchange or near the crossing of Santa Fe Drive/Kalamath Street the Consolidated Main Line, however; two businesses in the vicinity of I-25 and Broadway would also require relocation. No residential relocations would be required under System Alternative 1.

Figure 4.1-18 presents a conceptual scenario for potential land use that could occur through a consolidation of remainder parcels following implementation of System Alternative 1. As shown on **Figure 4.1-18**, a number of sizable parcels would be available. Many of these parcels would have relatively high visibility and would have access to improved transportation facilities. Overall, the area of commercial/industrial land would be somewhat reduced under this alternative, but the reduction would be relatively minor in relation to the amount of commercial/industrial land within the Neighborhood Study Area and Denver as a whole.

System Alternative 2

System Alternative 2 has the broadest footprint of the system alternatives and, therefore, has the largest impact on land use. As described in detail in **Section 4.2**, this alternative would require the relocation of approximately nine existing residences and approximately 51 existing businesses. All of the residences requiring relocation are located on the 800 block of South Lincoln Street. Most of the businesses requiring relocation are in the vicinity of the I-25/Alameda Avenue interchange or near the crossing of Santa Fe Drive/ Kalamath Street the Consolidated Main Line, however, approximately six businesses in the vicinity of I-25 and Broadway and approximately six businesses in the vicinity of US 6 and Federal Boulevard would also require relocation.

Figure 4.1-19 presents a conceptual scenario for potential land use that could occur through a consolidation of remainder parcels following implementation of System Alternative 2. As shown on **Figure 4.1-19**, the residential parcels that would be acquired on the 800 block of South Lincoln Street would not be suitable for residential or commercial land use, but would be retained as open areas. A number of sizable parcels would be available for industrial or commercial land use. Many of these blocks would have relatively high visibility and would have access to improved transportation facilities.

Commercial/industrial land area would be reduced under this alternative and this reduction would be greater than for the other system alternatives. However, the reduction would be relatively minor in relation to the amount of commercial/industrial land within the Neighborhood Study Area and Denver as a whole.

System Alternative 3

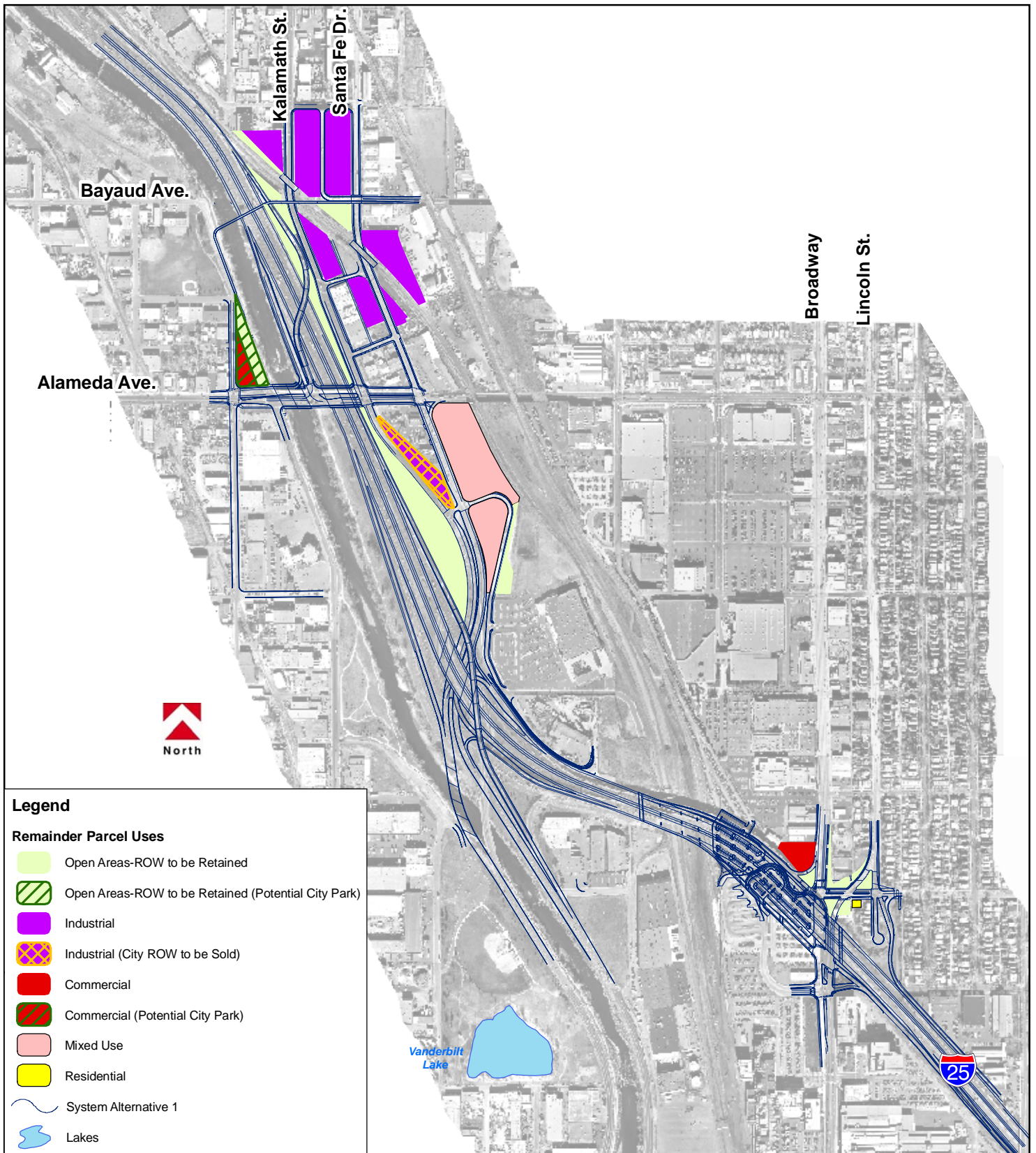
System Alternative 3 is intermediate to System Alternatives 1 and 2 in terms of impact on land use. As described in detail in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**, this alternative would require the relocation of approximately three existing residences and approximately 38 existing businesses. All of the residences requiring relocation are located on the 800 block of South Lincoln Street. Most of the businesses requiring relocation are in the vicinity of the I-25/Alameda Avenue interchange or near the crossing of Santa Fe Drive/Kalamath Street the Consolidated Main Line, however, approximately three businesses in the vicinity of I-25 and Broadway and approximately six businesses in the vicinity of US 6 and Federal Boulevard would also require relocation.

Figure 4.1-20 presents a conceptual scenario for potential future land use that could occur through a consolidation of remainder parcels following implementation of System Alternative 3. As shown on **Figure 4.1-20**, the residential parcels that would be acquired on the 800 block of South Lincoln Street would not be suitable for residential or commercial land use. Some current right of way on the east side of the Lincoln Street (currently beneath and adjacent to the northbound I-25 off-ramp to Lincoln Street) could be used for residential parcels following relocation of the off-ramp under this alternative. A number of sizable parcels would be available for industrial or commercial land use, and many of these would have relatively high visibility and would have access to improved transportation facilities.

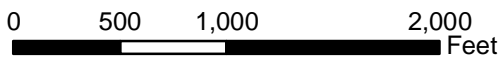
Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative requires more relocations than System Alternative 1, but less than System Alternatives 2 and 3. As described in detail in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**, this alternative would require the relocation of approximately three residences and approximately 30 existing businesses. All of the residences requiring relocation are located on the 800 block of South Lincoln Street. Most of the businesses requiring relocation are in the vicinity of the I-25/Alameda Avenue interchange or near the crossing of Santa Fe Drive/Kalamath Street the Consolidated Main Line. However, three businesses in the vicinity of I-25 and Broadway and approximately six businesses in the vicinity of US 6 and Federal Boulevard would also require relocation.

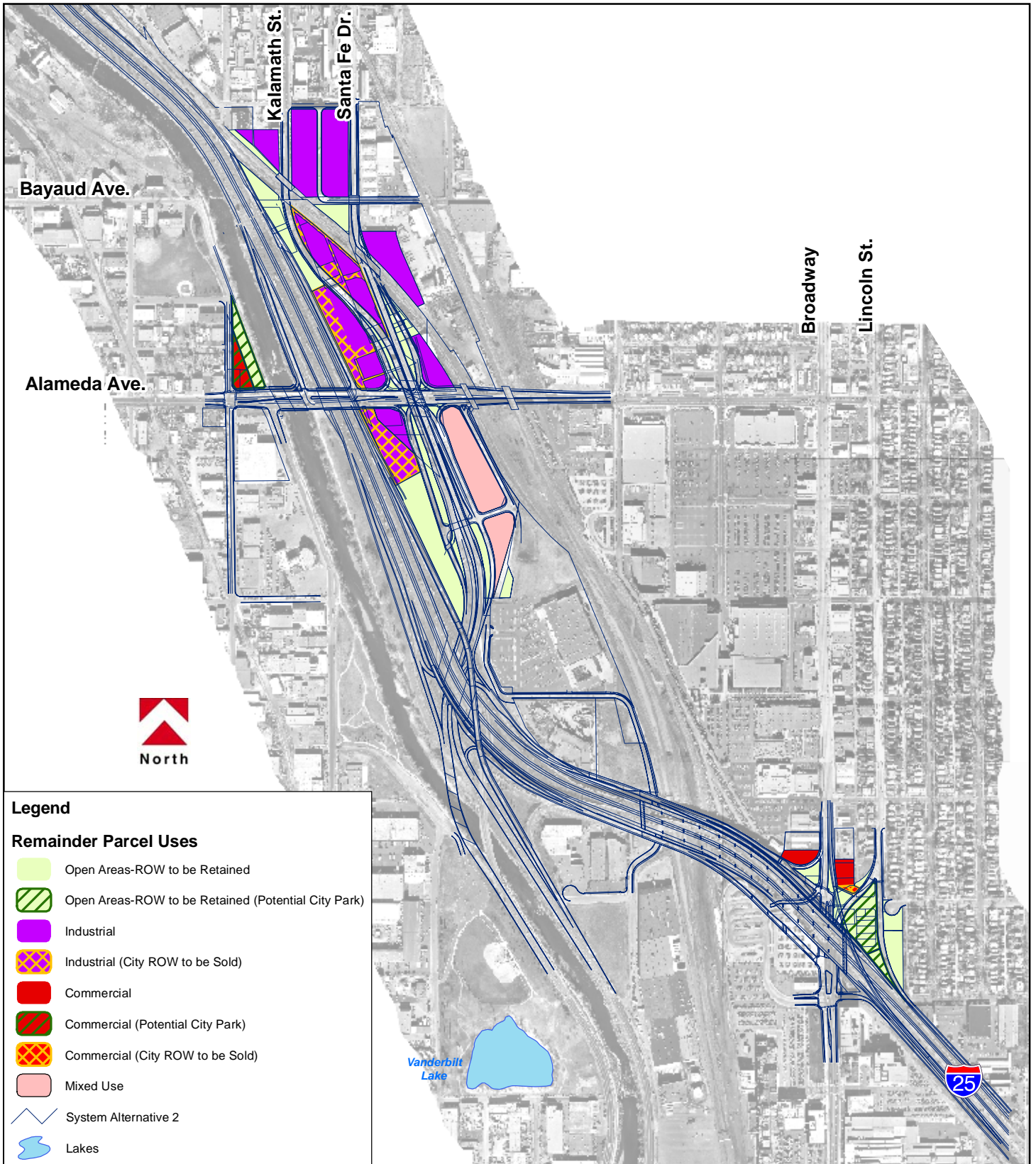
Figure 4.1-21 presents a conceptual scenario of land use that could occur if CDOT disposes of remainder parcels following implementation of the Preferred Alternative. As shown on **Figure 4.1-21**, similar to System Alternative 3 the residential parcels that would be acquired on the 800 block of South Lincoln Street would not be suitable for residential or commercial land use. Some current right of way on the east side of the Lincoln Street (currently beneath and adjacent to the northbound I-25 off-ramp to Lincoln Street) could be used for residential parcels following relocation of the off-ramp under this alternative. A number of sizable parcels would be available for industrial or commercial land use, and many of these would have relatively high visibility and would have access to improved transportation facilities.



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Land Use Concept-System Alternative 1

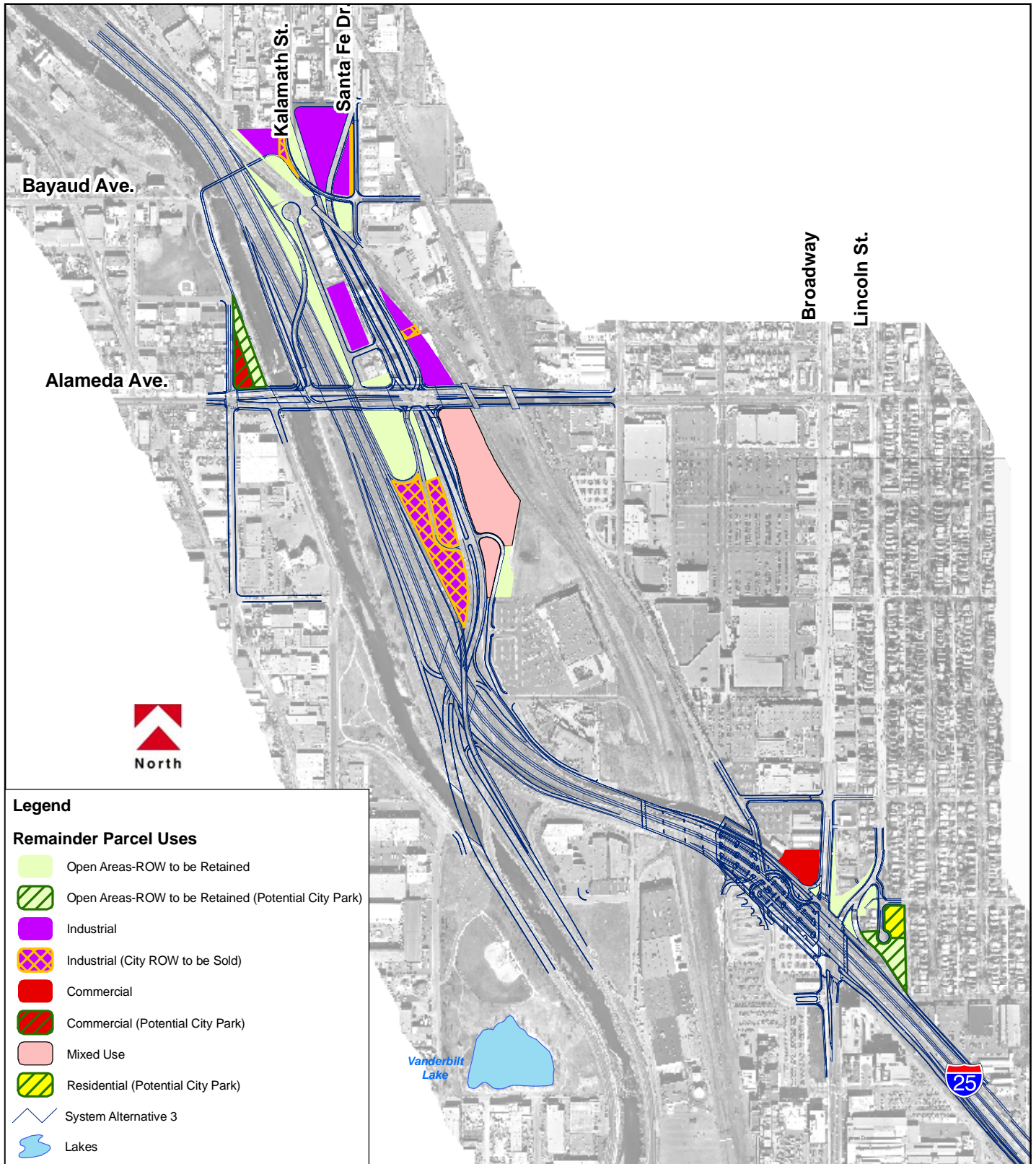


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0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Land Use Concept-System Alternative 2

Figure 4.1-19



Legend

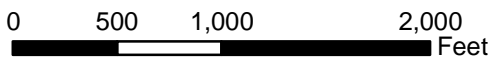
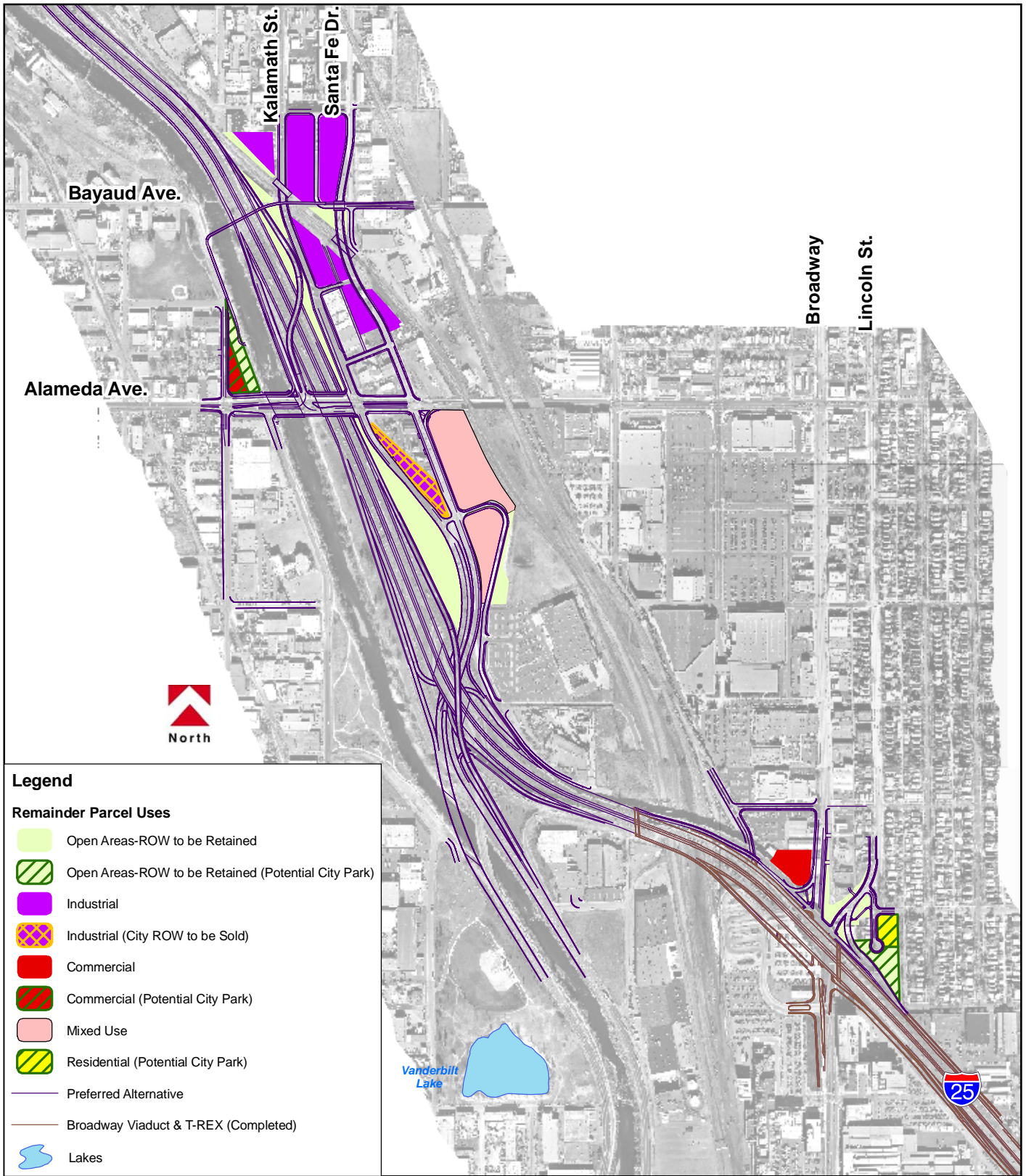
Remainder Parcel Uses

- Open Areas-ROW to be Retained
- Open Areas-ROW to be Retained (Potential City Park)
- Industrial
- Industrial (City ROW to be Sold)
- Commercial
- Commercial (Potential City Park)
- Mixed Use
- Residential (Potential City Park)
- System Alternative 3
- Lakes

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Land Use Concept-System Alternative 3

Figure 4.1-20



Land Use Concept-Preferred Alternative

Figure 4.1-21

4.1.2.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not physically affect current community facilities or neighborhood cohesion. However, specific transportation safety and delay problems, as well as multi-modal access and mobility limitations, would remain. In addition, portions of the existing transportation facilities are in deteriorating physical condition and are not aesthetically pleasing in the context of the adjacent area. These conditions would persist under the No Action Alternative.

Increased congestion and system disruptions due to the lack of lane continuity and balance on I-25 could result in more neighborhood cut-through traffic from frustrated motorists seeking alternative routes to I-25. Additional traffic on neighborhood streets could impact public safety, increase street noise, and degrade air quality.

Access to community facilities in the vicinity of the project is generally adequate at the present time. With increased congestion and system disruptions, this access could worsen in the future with the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, mobility across the corridor would not be improved for bicyclists and pedestrians, nor would access to multi-modal facilities.

Consequences Common to System Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative

While I-25, US 6, and Santa Fe Drive/Kalamath Street provide needed access through and within the local neighborhoods, improvements to these facilities have the potential to affect the quality of life within adjacent neighborhoods. An evaluation of potential effects on neighborhood cohesion, local travel patterns, physical character, safety, and neighborhood services has been an important focus in the development of the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative.

The system alternatives would replace aging and deteriorating transportation facilities with new facilities that would operate more smoothly and with less disruption. The system alternatives would also provide aesthetic improvements, as described in **Section 4.4 Aesthetics and Urban Design**. Mobility across the corridor would be improved for pedestrians and bicyclists, and access to multi-modal facilities would be improved.

As described previously, the majority of the property impacts associated with the system alternatives would be located within identified Areas of Change. The system alternatives would not further divide or isolate neighborhoods, nor would any existing community service boundaries such as school districts, police or fire districts be severed or bisected.

As described previously and also detailed in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**, a number of businesses will be displaced by the system alternatives. These businesses provide goods, services, and employment, but generally do not form a unique focal point for the neighborhood. One community service provider, the City Church Youth Center, would be displaced by all of the system alternatives. As stated previously, attempts to contact this organization have been unsuccessful.

Travel patterns of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists in and between neighborhoods would be altered temporarily during construction. Access to public facilities may also require modification during construction. The effects of construction are discussed in **Section 4.18 Construction Impacts**. Permanent neighborhood access or traffic patterns would not generally be changed, but the elimination of the Bryant Street exit would reroute access to the businesses located in that area.

The system alternatives would not generally affect current community facilities. By improving the transportation system, pedestrian and bicycles facilities, multi-modal access, and mobility across the corridor, the system alternatives would improve access to public facilities.

4.1.2.3 ECONOMICS

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not directly affect population, income, or employment, but it would result in continued safety and system reliability problems for local and regional trips on I-25 and US 6. This would be true for both local residents and employees traveling to and from work. Localized congestion at some interchanges could have operational and cost implications to some existing businesses and could limit the potential uses of some sites, as envisioned by *Blueprint Denver*.

Consequences Common to System Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative

I-25 and US 6 are existing transportation corridors. The system alternatives would not introduce new transportation infrastructure to areas that do not already have access to these facilities. However, improvements to the transportation system would help maintain access and reduce traffic congestion getting to businesses and employment centers in the vicinity of the project and the regional area. The existing, substandard interchange at US 6 and Bryant Street would be closed but access to the businesses in that area would be provided by alternative routes, as described in **Chapter 2 Alternatives**.

Construction of any one of the system alternatives would have positive, short-term impacts on the local economy. The overall cost of improvements is several hundred million dollars, but expenditures would occur over a number of years, depending upon availability of project funding. During construction, the project would employ construction workers and workers in industries that provide supplies and support. Construction workers are currently employed on a number of transportation projects in the Denver Metro area, so continued activity on this scale would probably not represent a major change to existing conditions in the regional employment market.

As described in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**, no residential displacements are expected under System Alternative 1, nine residential displacements under System Alternative 2, three residential displacements under System Alternative 3, and three residential displacements under the Preferred Alternative. These residents would need to relocate, and would receive relocation assistance/benefits as described in **Section 4.2**. At the time of this writing residential property is generally in good supply in the Metro Denver and the local area for both rental and purchase.

As described in **Section 4.2 Right-of Way and Displacements**, relocation assistance would be provided to displaced businesses. Employees of the relocated businesses would be affected by moving work locations. Preliminary estimates indicate that between 250 and 600 employees could be affected depending on the alternative selected. CDOT's past experience indicates that most displaced businesses relocate rather than go out of business, and those that relocate generally stay nearby if suitable space is available. It is possible that some businesses would relocate to distant locations or go out of business entirely. In that case, employees would need to seek other employment. The reestablishment of affected businesses would depend on a number of factors, such as the needs and desires of the business owner, availability of suitable property, and the general economic conditions.

At the time of this writing, commercial property is generally in good supply within Metro Denver, due to the current slowdown in economic conditions. The ultimate availability will depend on the specific facilities and type of location required, and the timing of the relocations in relation to changes in the local real estate market. However, due to the very large size of the commercial real estate market in Metro Denver in comparison with the number of required relocations, it is safe to assume that businesses would be able to find suitable locations for reestablishment.

On a Denver, Metro Denver, and State of Colorado basis, the impact of the system alternatives on employment and tax revenues would be negligible. The system alternatives would affect only a few businesses out of the tens of thousands of privately-owned businesses in Metro Denver, and lost property and sales taxes from the properties acquired would be insignificant relative to all property taxes.

As described previously, a portion of the acquired property (remainder parcels) would be available for future land uses. As these properties are redeveloped, additional employment and taxes would be generated.

The level of employment and taxes generated would depend on the nature of the businesses that are established on the available sites. The timing of future land use would largely be a function of the time that the property can be made available and the economic conditions at that future date. This process would also be influenced by the development planning, review, and approval process.

Project payrolls would increase local household income, business revenues, and may increase income for local businesses. However these increases would be small compared with the size of the local and regional economy. The system alternatives would not have substantial long-term impacts on regional income levels.

The system alternatives provide a number of benefits relative to socio-economic conditions, including increased safety and improving efficient movement of goods and services through the community. The system alternatives are also consistent with long-term planning by the City and County of Denver and DRCOG.

4.1.2.4 REGIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

DRCOG has developed the Metro Vision 2030 Plan in cooperation with local governments, CDOT, RTD and CDPHE. The Metro Vision 2030 Plan is the region's long range plan for growth and development, and includes a number of interrelated elements. The system alternatives,

including the Preferred Alternative, are consistent with the goals and policies established in Metro Vision. The elements of Metro Vision are listed below, and an asterisk (*) denotes elements more relevant to the Valley Highway project:

- Extent of urban development*
- Semi-urban development
- Urban centers*
- Freestanding communities
- Rural town centers
- Senior-friendly development*
- Transportation*
- Parks and open space*
- Water quality*
- Air quality*

Within the Transportation Element, Metro Vision identifies 13 policies to guide the implementation of the transportation system. The system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, directly support several of these policies including:

- Roadways. Expand capacity of existing roadways in the most critically congested corridors and at key traffic bottleneck and encourage access controls to maintain capacity.
- Denver Central Business District. Improve and maintain transportation access to downtown Denver.
- Safety. Develop a transportation system that promotes increased safety and security for all of its users.
- Management and Operations. Make the best use of existing transportation facilities by implementing measures that actively manage and integrate systems, improve traffic operations, and reduce the demand for single-occupant motor vehicle travel.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian. Provide bicycle and pedestrian access through developments, between developments, and links to transit facilities.
- Interconnections. Improve interconnection of the transportation system within modes, between modes, and between the metropolitan area and the rest of the state and nation.
- Land Use Integration. Implement transportation system components that support Metro Vision's urban growth boundary/area, urban centers, and associated concepts.
- Transportation for the Disadvantaged. Provide a transportation system that considers the needs of and impacts on minority, low-income, elderly, and disabled persons.
- Air and Water Quality. Develop a transportation system that contributes to improved air quality and minimizes impacts on water quality.

For additional information on the system alternatives with regard to these issues, see the relevant sections of this EIS.

4.1.2.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

The system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, have been developed to provide transportation benefits to the local community, the City and County of Denver, and the region. Throughout the development of the system alternatives, a strong emphasis has been placed on avoiding adverse impacts to the local community. Where such impacts could not be avoided, the impacts have been minimized. This effort has included an on-going dialog with members of the community and local agencies. The public and agency involvement efforts are summarized in **Chapter 6 Public Involvement**.

The primary community impacts requiring mitigation fall into two categories:

- Right-of-way acquisition / relocation
- Temporary construction impacts

4.1.2.6 MITIGATION FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

When acquisition of right-of-way is necessary, it is done in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. This mitigation measure is discussed in more detail in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**. Compliance with the Act ensures that all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age will be fairly and equitably treated.

4.1.2.7 MITIGATION FOR OTHER COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts on the local community are presented in a number of subsequent sections as follows:

- **Section 4.4 Aesthetics and Urban Design**
- **Section 4.5 Air Quality**
- **Section 4.6 Noise and Vibration**
- **Section 4.18 Construction Impacts**

4.1.3 Environmental Justice Evaluation

4.1.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BASIS AND OBJECTIVES

Environmental justice refers to social equity in sharing the benefits and the burdens of specific projects or programs. Some racial or ethnic minorities and low-income residents historically have experienced a disproportionate share of adverse affects resulting from major federal actions such as the construction of new roadways. *Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*, was issued in 1994 to address this. The Executive Order directs that each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

The definition for minority populations and low-income populations is contained in both Executive Order 12898 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as the final U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.2 on Environmental Justice published in the *Federal Register* on April 15, 1997. The definition provided is any readily identifiable group of minority or low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers) who would be affected by a proposed federal program, policy, or activity. Minorities constitute races and ethnic groups, and include these U.S. Census Bureau-identified groups: Black/African Americans, American Indian/Alaskan Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. In the 2000 census, Hispanics are treated as an ethnic group distinct from racial groups, thus a person could be Hispanic and white or another race.

Low income is defined as persons/families with incomes at or below the Department of Health and Human Services or Census Bureau poverty guidelines. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ, 1997) guidance on environmental justice states that *“The selection of the appropriate unit of geographical analysis may be a governing body’s jurisdiction, a neighborhood, a census tract, or other similar unit that is chosen so as not to artificially dilute or inflate the affected minority population.”* CEQ further adds that *“Minority populations should be identified where either (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographical analysis.”* The CEQ guidelines do not specifically state the percentage considered meaningful in the case of low-income populations.

FHWA Order 6640.23(1998) sets out FHWA’s policy regarding environmental justice, which includes: *“When determining whether a particular program, policy, or activity will have disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations, FHWA managers and staff should take into account mitigation and enhancement measures and potential offsetting benefits to affected minority and low-income populations. Other factors that may be taken into account include design, comparative impacts, and the relative number of similar existing systems in non-minority and non-low-income areas.”*

In addition, FHWA has embraced the following objectives for environmental justice:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations

Community and environmental justice considerations have been fully integrated into the EIS process from the beginning and, thus, have been considered during scoping, alternatives development, public and agency involvement and environmental analysis. Throughout this process, efforts have been made to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to minority and low income populations, and to incorporate features into the project to address the concerns of the communities.

4.1.3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

The demographic and employment characteristics of the Neighborhood Study Area were presented in **Section 4.1.1.4**. Based on these characteristics, the following neighborhoods and populations were identified for targeted outreach and consideration:

- Villa Park, Sun Valley, Lincoln Park, Barnum, Valverde, Baker and Athmar Park neighborhoods (neighborhoods with identified Hispanic and low-income populations)
- Community and business groups serving the Hispanic community (based on area demographics and connections to the larger Hispanic community of west Denver)
- Community and business groups serving the Asian American community (based on an identified Asian American residential population and concentration of Asian businesses nearby on Alameda Avenue and Federal Boulevard)
- Community and business groups serving the Native American community (based on a distribution of Native American residents greater than the City and County of Denver average in many census block throughout the Neighborhood Study Area)

In addition, outreach efforts specifically targeted groups, such as social service providers that serve specific populations within the Neighborhood Study Area.

4.1.3.3 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT RELEVANT TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

An extensive public and agency involvement program has been implemented and is on-going. Elements of this program are discussed in **Chapter 6 Public Involvement**. Elements of the public involvement program particularly targeting minority and low-income populations and the local communities have included:

- Project mailers and newsletters in English and Spanish
- Project meetings held in convenient locations in the project area with Spanish translation provided. Facilitated discussion employed to encourage participation and dialog
- Citizen Working Groups organized on specific topics, as requested during public scoping, with a wide variety of participants meeting at various locations within the project area
- Numerous meetings and focused discussions with neighborhood associations and community groups including:
 - Neighborhood associations - Baker, Valverde, West Washington Park, Athmar Park, Villa Park, Platt Park, Barnum
 - La Alma / Lincoln Park Planning Group
 - Northwest Neighborhood Coalition
 - Poder Advocacy Council
 - NEWSED Development Corporation
 - Mi Casa Woman's Resource Center
 - Bridge Project/Columbine Homes
 - Denver Indian Center
 - Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
 - Sumner Business Group

- Broadway Merchants Group
- Bryant Street Businesses
- Alameda Avenue businesses (with Spanish translation)
- Alameda Avenue Square Businesses (with Vietnamese translation)
- Door-to-door visits to businesses, churches, and public facilities (recreation centers) in the area
- Informational booth at El Grito festival in September 2003 and September 2006 (with Spanish translation)
- Individual meetings with City Councilwomen representing the area, both before and after recent City elections
- Specific meetings with CDOT right-of-way staff, preceded by invitation letters, for property owners (residential and business) potentially affected by acquisitions
- Feature story on Univision
- Individual meetings with business owners and residents on request
- Meetings with organizations in the area that serve specific populations including:
 - Atlantis Community (physically disabled individuals)
 - Bayaud Industries (individuals with history of mental illness)
 - Platte River Industries (developmentally disabled individuals)
 - Shalom (developmentally disabled individuals)
- Monthly meetings with Technical Working Group including lead agency, cooperating agencies and key resource agencies
- Quarterly meeting with Policy Advisory Committee including elected officials and management personnel from CDOT, FHWA, cooperating agencies and key resource agencies

4.1.3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONSIDERATIONS DURING ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT AND SCREENING

Throughout the process of alternatives development, screening and identification of the Preferred Alternative, efforts have been made to avoid/minimize community impacts and address community concerns. Key efforts have included:

- Alternatives were developed with strong preference toward avoidance of residential and business property acquisitions. To this end, the system alternatives under consideration, including the Preferred Alternative, all hold relatively closely to the existing roadway alignments.
- Alternatives were developed to avoid impacts to community facilities and parks.

- The system alternatives include many features that will benefit the local community and address community concerns, including:
 - Closure of the Bryant Street/ US 6 interchange to address safety concerns shared by residents and businesses
 - Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle mobility across the I-25 corridor at Broadway and along Alameda Avenue
 - A dedicated pedestrian and bicycle bridge crossing I-25, the South Platte River and the rail corridor at Bayaud Avenue. This bridge alignment was identified in the *Denver Bicycle Master Plan* and will link the Baker neighborhood with the South Platte Trail and with the Valverde neighborhood.
 - Aesthetic improvements identified in coordination with a Citizen Working Group
 - Measures to address noise concerns identified in coordination with a Citizen Working Group
 - Measures to minimize construction impacts identified in coordination with a Citizen Working Group
- A detailed assessment of required property acquisitions has been performed by CDOT, including evaluation of access to remaining businesses.
- A detailed evaluation of land use potential for possible remainder parcels has been done in coordination with the City and County of Denver, considering parcel size, access, zoning and other factors.

4.1.3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FINDINGS

Implementation of the project would include a number of direct benefits to the local community as well as the City and Region, including:

- A safer, more reliable, and more efficient transportation system
- Improved mobility across the corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists
- Improved access to the LRT stations and the South Platte River Trail
- Aesthetic improvements relative to the aging transportation facilities now in place
- Improvement in the quality of stormwater discharge to the South Platte River

These benefits are expected to be equitably shared across demographic groups and communities.

Possible adverse community impacts of the systems alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative are primarily related to displacements of businesses and residents. In general terms, the findings are as follows:

- Residential displacements vary from 0 to 9 residences, depending on the alternative, all within the West Washington Park neighborhood. The West Washington Park neighborhood in general, and the census block/block group specifically affected, have not been identified as having minority and/or low income populations greater than the City and County of Denver as a whole.

- CDOT has provided, and will continue to provide, specific information regarding the alternatives and right-of-way acquisition procedures to the affected individuals.
- Displaced businesses do not seem to provide unique goods and services not available from other sources.
- The primary impact of business displacements would be disruption for employees and owners. Depending on the decision of individual business owners, some businesses may relocate to other areas or remain close to their existing location. Relocation to another area could result in a loss of jobs in the area, but this may be offset to some degree by construction employment and future land use of remainder parcels. Also, employment in the area is forecast to grow through redevelopment of properties such as the former Gates Rubber Company site.
- Business displacements would affect a cross section of owners and employees. Minority and low-income individuals would be affected along with others. A review of the types of businesses that would be displaced (see **Section 4.1 Right-of Way and Displacements**) and information gained through public involvement and agency coordination (see **Chapter 6 Public Involvement**) indicates that the business displacements would not be concentrated in any one industry or employment sector, and the impacts of the displacements would not fall disproportionately on any particular segment of the population.
- Under current market conditions, displaced residents and business owners would likely be able to find replacement properties in the area if they desire. However, actual availability will be largely a function of the real estate market at the time of implementation.
- The future land use potential of remainder parcels has been identified. Many of the remainder parcels should be attractive for potential land uses. However, the timing and character of actual future land use will depend on a number of factors such as market conditions, property divestment procedures, infrastructure availability, existing contamination, and other planning considerations.

The system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, vary in the degree to which they displace existing residents and businesses. Alternative 1 has the least displacements (no residential displacements and 25 business displacements), while Alternative 2 has the greatest number of displacements (nine residential displacements and 51 business displacements). System Alternative 3 has three residential displacements and 38 business displacements, while the Preferred Alternative has three residential and 30 business displacements.

Consideration of the mitigation strategies identified above in **Section 4.1.3 Mitigation Measures** and future public involvement will assist CDOT and FHWA in completing the community impacts and environmental justice efforts, as part of final design and project implementation.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not improve the existing transportation facilities; therefore, no property belonging to minority or low-income residents would be acquired for right-of-way, and no relocations would be required. The No Action Alternative does not address existing safety and operational concerns on I-25 and US 6. Congestion caused by geometric deficiencies and system upsets may cause increased cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets. Increased

neighborhood traffic could be expected throughout the I-25 and US 6 corridor where convenient cut-through opportunities exist and would not be concentrated in minority or low-income neighborhoods.

Potential environmental impacts associated with cut-through traffic—to safety, noise, and air quality—would be borne equally by all residents adjacent to I-25 and US 6 and not be experienced disproportionately by minority or low-income residents. The same would be true for operations and safety issues on I-25 US 6, which would affect all residents adjacent to the highway.

To the extent that low income and minority populations may be more dependent on transit, bicycle, and/or pedestrian modes of travel, the No Action Alternative may have some disproportionate adverse impacts on these populations because existing deficiencies relative to access to these modes would not be addressed.

System Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and the Preferred Alternative

As described previously, construction of any of the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would require the relocation of a number of businesses. In general, the businesses requiring relocation do not seem to have a unique function or serve a particular population within the community. The businesses requiring relocation are diverse in nature, but their location in the area generally appears to be related to the established industrial areas as well as to proximity to I-25, US 6, and other transportation facilities, rather than proximity to the local communities. The surrounding neighborhoods do not appear to be dependent on these businesses for goods and services. Therefore, the relocation of these specific businesses would not be expected to have an adverse effect on the communities near the project, nor would this be expected to have a disproportionate adverse impact on minority or low-income populations.

Some of the businesses requiring relocation may be minority-owned and/or may employ minority and/or low-income individuals. The relocation of these businesses would affect these owners and employees in a similar manner as non-minority and non low-income owners and employees. A disproportionate adverse impact would exist only if the burden of this falls more heavily on low-income or minority individuals than on the population as a whole. There is currently no indication that this would be the case.

System Alternatives 2 and 3 require the relocation of 9 and 3 households, respectively. The Preferred Alternative requires the relocation of 3 households. These households are not in the areas identified as containing low-income or minority populations. As described in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**, residents would receive relocation benefits in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act. These relocations would not be expected to cause disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income populations.

Construction of any of the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would require temporary detours, and could require relocating transit routes, or moving transit stops during construction of the project. These would need to be carefully planned, as described in **Section 4.18**, and with such planning would not have a disproportionate adverse impact on minority and/or low-income populations.

The system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would not divide or segment neighborhoods, nor introduce new streets in residential neighborhoods. Potential impacts to minority and low-income communities, such as noise and visual impacts would be experienced proportionately by residents throughout the project corridor. The system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would provide improvements to sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, pedestrian islands, and crossing signals at several locations. These improvements would provide better and safer access and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists, and the improvements would be shared equitably among residents.

4.1.3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE ACTIONS

At the current planning stage (Final EIS), FHWA and CDOT have concluded that the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, are not likely to have disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority and/or low income populations, provided that the mitigation measures identified in **Section 4.1.3 Mitigation Measures** are implemented and future detailed project planning/design/implementation phases continue to consider and honor the principles of environmental justice.

Because the project is in the early planning stages, further coordination, consideration of impacts, and detailed development of mitigation will be required to ensure that the environmental justice commitment and considerations are fully addressed. This will include working with the communities, community service providers and local agencies on issues such as aesthetic/urban design elements to be included in the final design (see **Section 4.4 Aesthetics and Urban Design**) and measures to minimize disruption during construction (see **Section 4.18 Construction Impacts**). Coordination will be required at the following future stages of project development:

- Final EIS public hearing and comment period
- Commitment to project elements and mitigation measures (Record of Decision)
- Detailed engineering design
- Relocation planning and relocation assistance
- Construction planning
- Construction implementation

The project team has worked closely with the communities in the study area, resulting in the following components that have contributed greatly to the project as a whole:

- **Full and Fair Participation** – The development and consideration of alternatives to date has benefited greatly from an open and extensive public outreach and involvement effort. This included the specific public involvement elements targeting minority and low income populations, as described in **Section 4.1.4.3** and in **Chapter 6**. Public meetings, small group meetings, and Citizen Working Group meetings have proved to be invaluable forums to provide information and gather input and suggestions. This input has been used to develop alternatives that not only meet the operational needs of the transportation system, but also are compatible with and encouraged by the local community. The extensive discussions have resulted in an increased level of public awareness of the project and generally high level of support for both the improvement of the transportation system and the process used to develop and screen alternatives.

- **Equitable Sharing of Benefits** – As described above in **Section 4.1.4.4**, the system alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, provide a number of benefits. Many of these benefits, such as operational and safety improvements of the transportation system (see **Chapter 3 Transportation Analysis**), will benefit both the local community and others traveling on the transportation system. Other benefits, such as aesthetic improvements by replacement of aging and deteriorating structures and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle mobility, will provide more tangible direct benefits to the local community, including minority and low income populations. When considered as a whole, there is every indication that the benefits of any of the system alternatives would be shared equitably among all segments of the population.
- **Avoidance of Disproportionately High and Adverse Impacts** – A key principle of environmental justice is the avoidance of disproportionately high and adverse impacts of a project on minority and/or low income populations. Throughout the development of the system alternatives including the Preferred Alternative (see **Chapter 2 Alternatives**), a strong and concerted effort has been made to first avoid (where possible), then minimize, and finally mitigate adverse impacts to the community. This effort has included such actions as minimizing the footprint of the project so that only a limited number of businesses and residences are displaced, considering the constrained urban nature of the corridor. Where adverse impacts could not be avoided, appropriate mitigation measures have been identified. These are identified by resource throughout the remainder of this chapter. Key mitigation commitments protecting low income and minority populations, as well as others, in the local community are found in **Section 4.2 Right-of-Way and Displacements**, **Section 4.3 Parks and Recreation**, **Section 4.4 Aesthetics and Urban Design**, **Section 4.5 Air Quality**, **Section 4.6 Noise and Vibration**, **Section 4.13 Hazardous Waste**, and **Section 4.18 Construction Impacts**. Through the full and fair participation process described above, the local communities including low income and minority populations have had an opportunity to participate in the identification of impacts and mitigation measures. Through the application of the mitigation measures identified in these sections, and others, FHWA and CDOT intend to fulfill their commitment to the principles of environmental justice and to a positive outcome for the community.

In summary, with the comprehensive approach outlined above, CDOT and FHWA are on target to fully address the environmental justice fundamental principles of:

- Full and fair participation
- Avoidance of disproportionately high and adverse impacts
- Equitable sharing of benefits