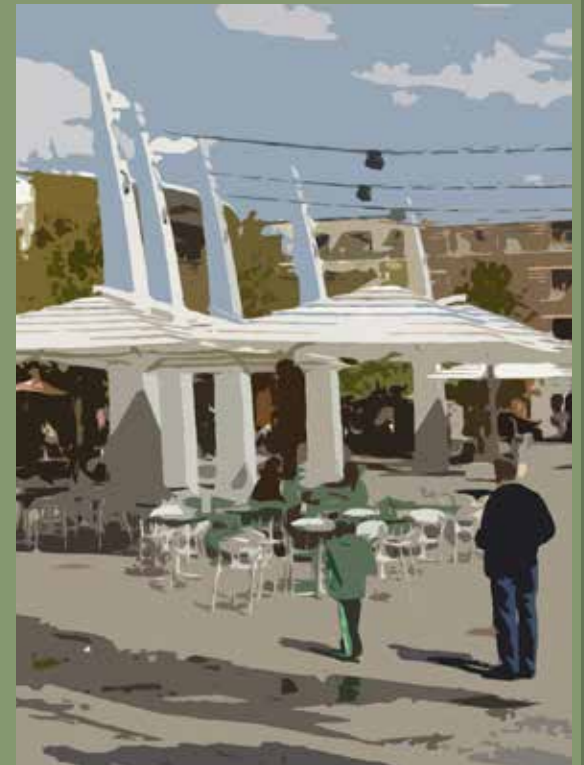




# NORTHWEST SUBAREA PLAN

Update Adopted October 2013 | Originally Adopted June 2006





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## 2013 UPDATE

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*The City of Wheat Ridge would like to thank the numerous residents, property owners, and business owners who participated in planning meetings for the update of the Northwest Subarea Plan.*

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# CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Northwest Subarea Plan is to establish a vision that will guide future development around the Ward Road commuter rail station in Wheat Ridge. As part of the FasTracks Program, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) will build the Gold Line, an 11.2-mile electric commuter rail transit line connecting Wheat Ridge to Union Station in downtown Denver. The end-of-line station will be Ward Road Station, located near Ward Road and W. 50th Place in the northwest corner of the city. Riders will be able to travel between Ward Road Station and Union Station in 25 minutes, creating the opportunity to attract not only commuters, but also reverse commuters coming from downtown Denver to Wheat Ridge. RTD started construction on the Gold Line in 2012 and it is expected to open in 2016. The area that is covered by the Northwest Subarea Plan is generally bounded by W. 52nd Avenue to the north, Tabor Street to the east, Interstate-70 to the south, and Ward Road to the west. Figure 1 shows the location and boundaries of the subarea.

## 2006 PLAN

In 2006, the City of Wheat Ridge adopted the Northwest Subarea Plan. The plan called for mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development - often called transit-oriented development (TOD) - to be developed over time around Ward Road Station. It set goals and policies related to land use, urban design, and infrastructure to achieve that vision.

One purpose of the 2006 plan was to inform the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that RTD would be required to complete prior to the Gold Line's construction. The EIS process occurred from 2007 to 2009. The process, which involved stakeholder input along the entire Gold Line, analyzed a variety of alternatives and eventually determined a final alignment for the Gold Line corridor, including all eight station locations in Denver, Adams County, Arvada, and Wheat Ridge.

## 2013 UPDATE

Many milestones have been reached since the original adoption of the Northwest Subarea Plan, so in 2013 the City initiated an update to incorporate important changes and to bring the plan document up-to-date. The purpose of this update is *not* to revisit the overall vision and major policy goals established in the 2006 plan. Instead, the updated plan furthers the original vision for transit-oriented development by refining and clarifying the goals and strategies to realize that vision. The following is a summary of major milestones, plans, and policies that have been incorporated into the 2013 plan.

## RTD Station Design

As mentioned above, the final Gold Line alignment was established through RTD's completion of the EIS process in 2009. Shortly thereafter, RTD worked to refine the design for each station along the Gold Line. In 2011, the City of Wheat Ridge and RTD executed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that included parameters for the Ward Road Station design. As part of the IGA, RTD committed to construct a variety of improvements with the transit station, including:

- A newly-constructed intersection at Tabor Street and Ridge Road connecting with W. 50th Place and creating a through east-west route to station.
- The extension of W. 50th Place east to connect to the station and to the newly-constructed intersection of Ridge Road and Tabor Street. The new portion of 50th Place will include detached sidewalks, on-street parking, and bike lanes.
- The extension of Taft Court, south of W. 52nd Avenue, to intersect with W. 50th Place. The new Taft Court will include detached sidewalks and on-street parking.
- A surface parking lot with just under 290 parking spaces which may be expanded after opening day based on levels of parking utilization.

## Envision Wheat Ridge

The City of Wheat Ridge adopted a new comprehensive plan, Envision Wheat Ridge, in 2009. Envision Wheat Ridge establishes the Northwest Subarea as one of five priority redevelopment areas in the City. It reinforces the vision established in the 2006 subarea plan for higher density, mixed use development around the transit station. It refined that vision, however, by calling for a focus on employment-supporting land uses in the area. Envision Wheat Ridge also calls for the development of mixed use zoning that supports transit-oriented development (TOD), including design standards, to promote quality development in the Northwest Subarea.

The Northwest Subarea Plan is adopted as an amendment to Envision Wheat Ridge.

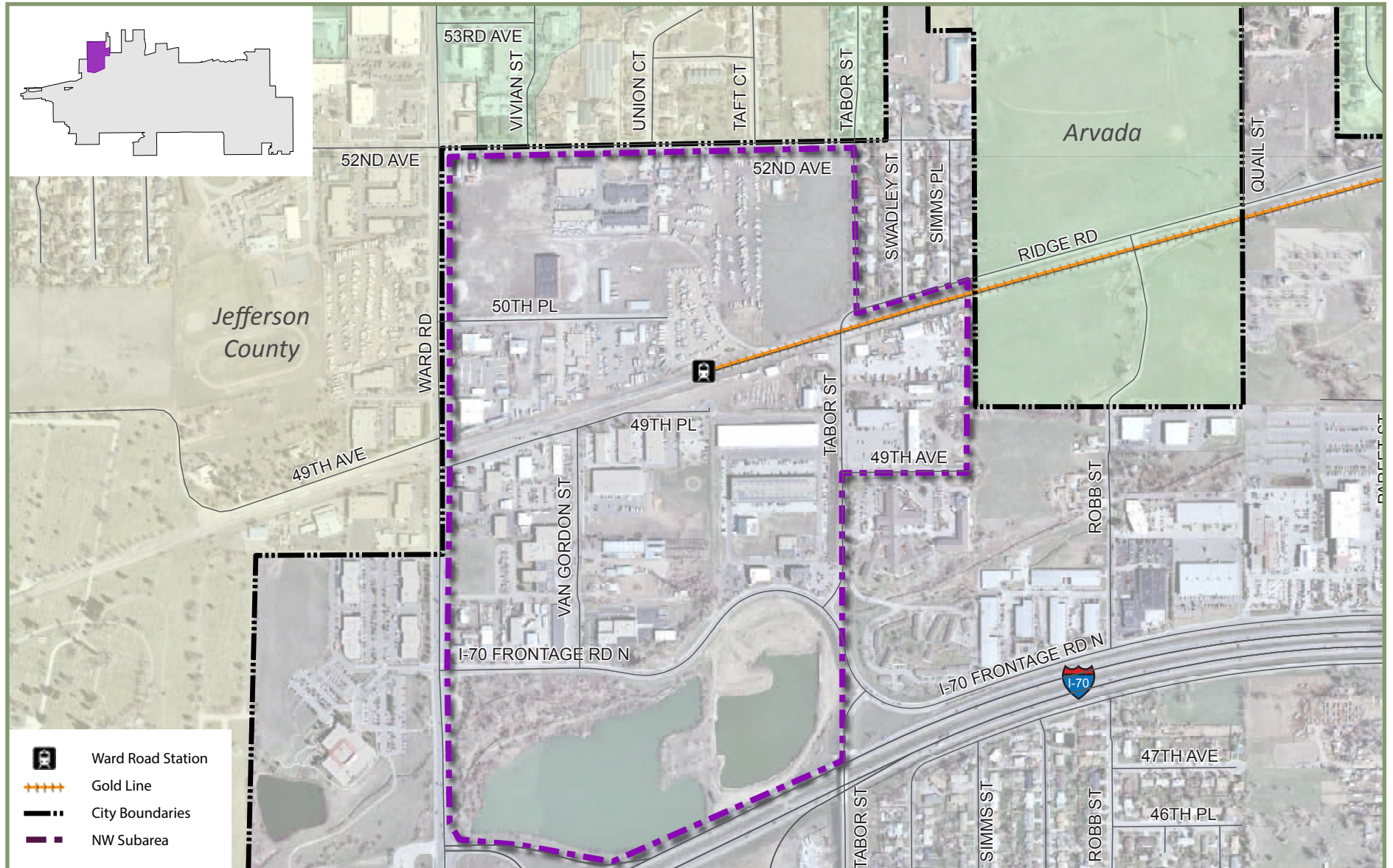
## Urban Renewal Designation and City Charter Exemption

In 2009, the entire Northwest Subarea became part of the I-70/Kipling Corridors Urban Renewal Area. Renewal Wheat Ridge, the City's urban renewal authority, adopted the I-70/Kipling Corridors Plan in May 2009. The formation of the urban renewal area is significant because it enables the use of certain financing tools, such as tax increment





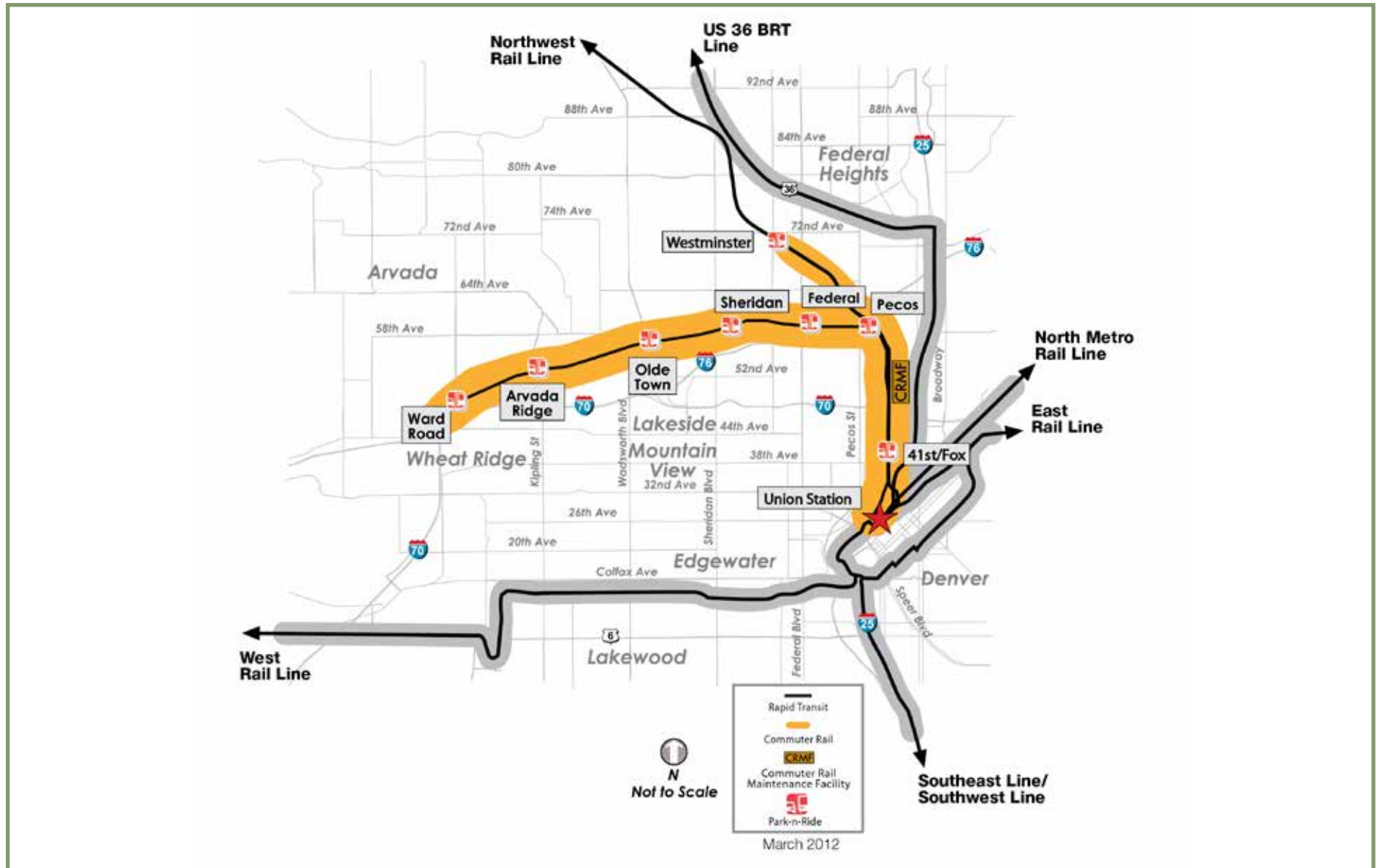
# FIGURE 1 | NORTHWEST SUBAREA BOUNDARIES



The Northwest Subarea is generally bounded by W. 52nd Avenue, Tabor Street, Interstate-70, and Ward Road. The boundary has been modified slightly since the 2006 plan was adopted: the established residential neighborhood to the northeast is removed and the area west of Tabor Street, south of Ridge Road is added.



FIGURE 2 | GOLD LINE MAP



This map, provided by RTD, illustrates the Gold Line in relation to other FasTracks transit lines. Ward Road Station is the end-of-line station for the Gold Line.

financing (TIF), that could help to fund future development and/or infrastructure improvements in the subarea.

Shortly after the formation of the urban renewal area, Wheat Ridge voters exempted the I-70/Kipling urban renewal area from the height and density restrictions in the City Charter. When the original Northwest Subarea Plan was adopted in 2006, the subarea was subject to restrictions in the charter that limit development to 50 feet in height for commercial buildings, 35 feet for buildings with residential use, and a maximum residential density of 21 units per acre. These restrictions no longer apply to the subarea, which creates new opportunity for the mixed-use, higher-density development that is common to TOD.

### ***Mixed Use Zoning***

The 2006 Northwest Subarea Plan, along with Envision Wheat Ridge, recognized the need for zoning that would encourage the type of urban, mixed-use development envisioned for the station area. In 2010, the City adopted four new mixed use zoning districts. One of these districts, Mixed Use-Commercial TOD, was specifically designed for the Northwest Subarea. It contains a variety of features such as allowance for multi-story buildings, flexible development standards, incentives for mixed use development, reduced parking minimums, and architectural design guidelines that will encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development. In the summer of 2012, City Council approved a rezoning to MU-C TOD of a large 14-acre property in the subarea - the former Jolly Rancher site.

### ***Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan***

In 2010, Wheat Ridge adopted a city-wide master plan for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. The plan establishes key routes for bicycle connections to Ward Road Station, the most important being a north-south connection on Tabor Street and an east-west route along Ridge Road and W. 50th Place. The master plan also designates key pedestrian improvements planned in the Northwest Subarea, including detached sidewalks along Ward Road.

### ***Streetscape Design Manual***

The City adopted a Streetscape Design Manual in 2010. The manual identifies priority corridors in Wheat Ridge, requiring enhanced streetscapes with sidewalks, amenity zones, and street trees to be installed with major redevelopment or new development. The Streetscape Design Manual includes the Northwest Subarea as a priority area.

It requires that all new streets serving commercial or mixed-use development have a minimum 8-foot wide detached sidewalk with minimum 6-foot wide amenity zone. All new streets serving residential development must include a minimum 6-foot wide detached sidewalk and 6-foot amenity zone. The manual also includes guidelines for benches, pedestrian lights, and plant material within the amenity zone.

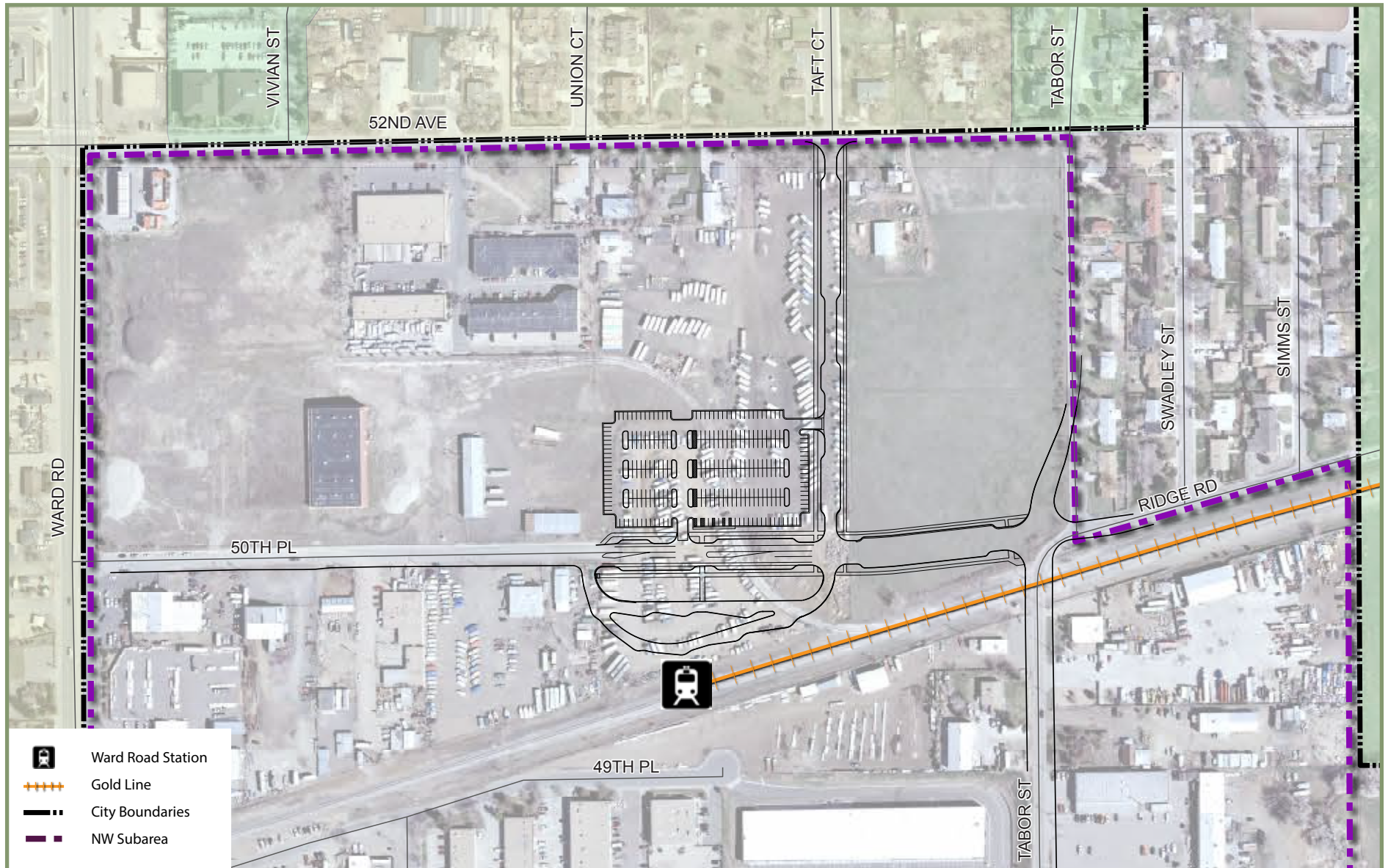
### ***EPA Smart Growth Implementation Grant***

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Sustainable Communities offers communities assistance in implementing smart growth through its Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program. The City of Wheat Ridge was selected for this implementation assistance program in 2010-2011. The SGIA team developed recommendations for financing infrastructure improvements needed in the Northwest Subarea, including new streets, stormwater facilities, and structured parking.

The final report produced by EPA recommends that Wheat Ridge prioritize stormwater and street improvements. It suggests utilizing value capture tools, such as tax-increment financing (TIF) and assessment districts, for most of the needed infrastructure. It also recommends the use of user/utility fees to help pay for new streets and new sewer and water utilities in the area. The final report, which includes a comprehensive overview of financing strategies for TOD in the United States, is available for download from the EPA Smart Growth website; it is entitled "Infrastructure Financing Options for Transit-Oriented Development."



## FIGURE 3 | RTD STATION DESIGN



This image depicts RTD's design for the station and related improvements. The design is current as of late 2012; the underlying aerial image is also from 2012.





## CHAPTER 2 | PLANNING PROCESS

This chapter provides a brief description of the planning process that shaped the Northwest Subarea Plan including the original 2006 planning process and the more recent 2013 update effort.

### 2006 PLAN

Four public meetings were held in 2005 and 2006 for the development of the original Northwest Subarea Plan. These meetings were attended by a variety of stakeholders, including land owners in the subarea, planners from Wheat Ridge, Jefferson County, and Arvada, RTD staff, various citizens, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The first two meetings focused on potential changes in the area and included a public design session for attendees to give input on the future vision for the subarea. The feedback received in these two meetings informed the future land use map and the goals and policies of the plan, which were discussed at the third and fourth public meetings. Objectives discussed at the Northwest Subarea meetings in 2005-2006 can be summarized into five main categories:

- Introducing land uses that will allow property owners to take advantage of the new transit station.
- Improving circulation in the subarea (including auto, bus and pedestrian).
- Resolving drainage problems.
- Identifying the intended character of the subarea, to guide future building placement and design.
- Creating a means for existing uses to continue and make a smooth transition to the new plan.

### 2013 PLAN UPDATE

The process for updating the plan in 2013 included two public meetings attended by the same range of stakeholders as from 2006. At the first meeting, staff provided an overview of why an update to the plan was proposed. Meeting attendees then broke into small working groups and were asked to give feedback on three topics to shape the updated plan, namely:

- **Future Land Use Map** - City staff proposed a few changes to the future land use map for public input. These changes included: (1) the expansion of the mixed use TOD area to include all land north of the rail tracks bounded by Ward Road, 52nd Avenue, and Tabor Street, as well as a few parcels immediately southeast

of the station; (2) renaming the area south of the tracks, labeled as “office/industrial” in the 2006 plan, to “mixed use/employment TOD.” This change would retain the focus on office-flex space in the area, but also provide the opportunity for future land uses that might include residential, hotel, or entertainment. The intent of this change is to better connect the land to the south with the transit station, which may be possible through a future pedestrian bridge that would directly connect the station platform and the land south of the tracks.

- **Bicycle-Pedestrian Circulation Map** - Drawing on the City’s Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan, as well as Jefferson County’s Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan, staff presented a map showing all planned bike and pedestrian improvements in the subarea for input.
- **Urban Design Character** - Meeting attendees gave input on the desired character for future subarea development. Utilizing photographs of urban design examples, stakeholders brainstormed ideas about the character of open space, streetscapes, and building form and massing.

The input received from stakeholders at the first meeting was diverse, but the most common themes and ideas are summarized below.

### Future Land Use Map

- It makes sense to expand the primary mixed use TOD area (shown in pink in the Future Land Use Map in Figure 7) to include the entire area north of the tracks as well as parcels directly southeast of the station, which will have easy access to the station via Tabor Street.
- For the land south of the tracks, it makes sense to expand the range of future land uses beyond office/industrial to include mixed use.
- It is generally reasonable to have higher densities closer to the station with transitions toward Ward Road and the residential neighborhood to the east, as shown on the future land use map.
- Open space should be a key component of future development around the station. Ideas included:
  - A central open space that might incorporate uses such as farmers markets, festivals, and artisan markets.
  - Open space with green and natural landscapes.
  - A trail connections to the large ponds at the south of the subarea.





*The first public meeting, held in February 2013, regarding the plan update.*

- Open space west of Tabor Street to help transition into the existing residential neighborhood east of Tabor Street; this could include a park and/or community gardens.
- There was a recommendation to pursue civic land uses, such as a library, to help add activity and interest to the subarea.

### ***Bicycle-Pedestrian Circulation Map***

- The proposed connections make sense, but there needs to be careful thought about how to design the streets that will carry bicyclists - especially Tabor Street and Ridge Road - since they are narrow and do not seem safe for bicyclists in their current configuration. There was also concern that most of the existing streets are too narrow for the new traffic that will come to the area, which should be considered when design for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- There were suggestions to plan for sidewalks on Tabor Street, which currently does not have any.
- Many people liked the idea of a future pedestrian bridge to connect the station over the tracks to the south. There were suggestions that maybe another pedestrian bridge could be added to span the tracks at Tabor Street.
- Some residents emphasized the need for sidewalks to be added to 52nd

Avenue, which lies on the border of Wheat Ridge, Arvada, and unincorporated Jefferson County.

### ***Urban Design Character***

- Streetscape character - most attendees liked the images of streetscapes with high quality materials and pedestrian amenities, such as those seen in Olde Town Arvada.
- Building form and massing - there was general consensus that 5-7 story buildings, including residential, office, and mixed-use, were appropriate for the area, especially where close to the station. Some attendees expressed concern about taller buildings blocking views to the west and suggested that it might make sense to encourage taller buildings in the area south of the tracks since it has a lower elevation than the rest of the subarea. Some attendees also emphasized that parking should be structured where possible and designed to not be visible from the public realm/sidewalk.
- Open space character - as mentioned in the land use section, many stakeholders emphasized the importance of open space to the future character of the area. Many discussion groups mentioned the idea of plazas or other spaces that would allow for festivals and artisan and/or farmers markets. There was also interest in green spaces and community gardens.

Although it was not a designated topic for discussion, many attendees mentioned concern about increased vehicular traffic in the area. There was also concern that the parking being provided by RTD for the station (290 spaces for opening day) will not be adequate, with suggestions to add a parking garage in the future.

Staff utilized the feedback from the first public meeting to draft the updated plan. The update was presented in a second public meeting in the spring. This meeting was an open house and was coincident with an RTD FasTracks open house regarding the Gold Line construction activities. Staff summarized feedback from the first meeting and shared the proposed Future Land Use map and other plan updates.

## CHAPTER 3 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter summarizes the existing conditions in the Northwest Subarea as related to land use, zoning, transportation, and community services. The images on the following page show existing development.

### LAND USE

A mix of land uses exists in the subarea, which is bisected by the BNSF railroad tracks. South of the tracks, light industrial and office/warehouse uses predominate, with some retail uses along Ward Road. The Mountain Vista Nursing Home is located on the east side of Tabor Street. Two lakes are located at the very south end of the subarea; one is privately owned and the other is owned by the City of Arvada.

North of the BNSF tracks along Ward Road are a gas station, automobile repair establishments, and a lumber yard. The former Jolly Rancher candy factory, on property north of 50th Place and east of Ward Road, has been demolished. Boat and RV storage and office/warehouse uses occupy much of the remainder of the subarea, with the exception of the area near Tabor Street. West of Tabor Street is a large property including a single-family home and alpaca farm. A residential neighborhood consisting of single and two-family homes is located east of Tabor Street. Figure 4 shows existing land uses.

### ZONING

The subarea currently includes a variety of zoning designations. Most of the subarea is zoned for industrial uses, either through Industrial-Employment (I-E) zoning or Planned Industrial Development (PID) zoning. A few parcels along Ward Road are zoned commercially, with C-1, C-2 and Planned Commercial Development (PCD) zoning. Two parcels on W. 52nd Avenue are zoned Agriculture-Two (A-2): the BNSF railroad right-of-way and the pond owned by Arvada. The residential area north of the tracks is zoned Residential-Two (R-2). The alpaca farm occupies land that is zoned Residential-One (R-1) and is platted as a single family subdivision. The former Jolly Rancher site is about 14 acres in size and was rezoned to Mixed Use-Commercial TOD in 2012. Figure 5 shows existing zoning.

### TRANSPORTATION

The following is a brief summary of the existing transportation network in the Northwest

Subarea. Figure 6 shows the existing transportation network and traffic counts; Figure 8 in the following chapter shows existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

### *Vehicular Circulation*

Ward Road borders the subarea on the west and is a regional north-south arterial. North of I-70, Ward Road is Colorado State Highway 72 and is under CDOT's jurisdiction. Other streets which serve the subarea include Tabor Street, Ridge Road, W. 52nd Avenue, and West I-70 Frontage Road North. In comparison to Ward, these roadways are narrower collector and local streets and carry far fewer cars. At the northeastern edge of the subarea, Tabor Street is a narrow residential street that serves the low-density neighborhood east of the subarea. South of the tracks Tabor remains a two-lane road, but it carries more traffic as it connects to W. 44th Avenue south of I-70. Ridge Road provides a connection between the subarea and Kipling Street to the east.

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation*

There are currently limited facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians within the subarea. Nearly all of the existing streets in the subarea, including Ward Road, lack sidewalks making pedestrian travel challenging and in some cases unsafe. There are no existing bike facilities in the subarea, indicating a large gap in the existing transportation network. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the City's Streetscape Design Manual will require detached sidewalks for all new streets in the subarea, including those being built by RTD as part of the commuter rail station. The City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan calls for future on-street bike lanes on Tabor Street, 50th Place, and Ridge Road.

### *Transit*

Currently, RTD operates several major bus routes in the area including express service into downtown (see Figure 6). The existing Ward Road Park-N-Ride is located just southwest of the subarea at Ward Road and I-70. When the new commuter rail station opens in 2016, RTD will close the Park-N-Ride and reroute all buses through Ward Road Station. Some existing bus routes will be replaced by the Gold Line. RTD will revise its bus service plan closer to the 2016 opening date, thus final bus circulation is not currently known. The new station will have 8 bus pull-outs. Most buses will enter and exit the station using Ward Road, 50th Place, 52nd Avenue, and the newly constructed Taft Court. A few buses will approach the station from the east using Ridge Road.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS



W. 50th Place, former Jolly Rancher property at left



W. 52nd Avenue



Existing business on Ward Road



Existing business on W. 50th Place



Railroad spur and RV storage business



Existing business on W. 50th Place



Office/flex space near W. 52nd Avenue



Office/flex development near W. 52nd Avenue



Existing railroad crossing at Ward Road



### ***Parking***

Parking for existing land uses is primarily provided on private property in paved and unpaved surface lots. Currently, on-street parking is only available on W. 50th Place. RTD analyzed projected ridership and traffic generation based on the peak 15-minute headway for Gold Line trains to determine that approximately 290 parking spaces are needed for the new Ward Road Station. RTD will provide those parking spaces in a large off-street parking lot north of the station (Figure 3), as well as through on-street parking on 50th Place and the new Taft Court. Per the City's Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with RTD, once the 290-space parking lot reaches 90% utilization, RTD will be required to expand the parking lot to the north, to accommodate 440 total spaces.

### ***Parks and Open Space***

There currently are no City parks or recreation facilities located in the subarea. The nearest Wheat Ridge parks are located south of I-70. The Van Bibber Creek Park and Open Space is located in the City of Arvada approximately ½-mile north on Ward Road.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Within the subarea, the City provides police protection, road maintenance, storm sewer maintenance, parks and recreation, and general governmental services. Water, sanitary sewer, and fire protection are provided by separate districts.

### ***Water***

Valley Water District provides water service to the area. The district provides the infrastructure and water is delivered to the District by the Denver Water Department. The District must comply with the Denver Water Department's rules and regulations concerning water taps. Developers are required to fund any water system improvements needed to serve proposed development.

### ***Sanitary Sewer***

Fruitdale Sanitation District provides sanitary sewer service to the subarea. The District relies on the Metropolitan Denver Sewage Disposal District Number 1 for treatment, but maintains its own system of pipes within the district boundaries. Some lines in the District's system may be near capacity and likely need expansion for large scale development to take place.

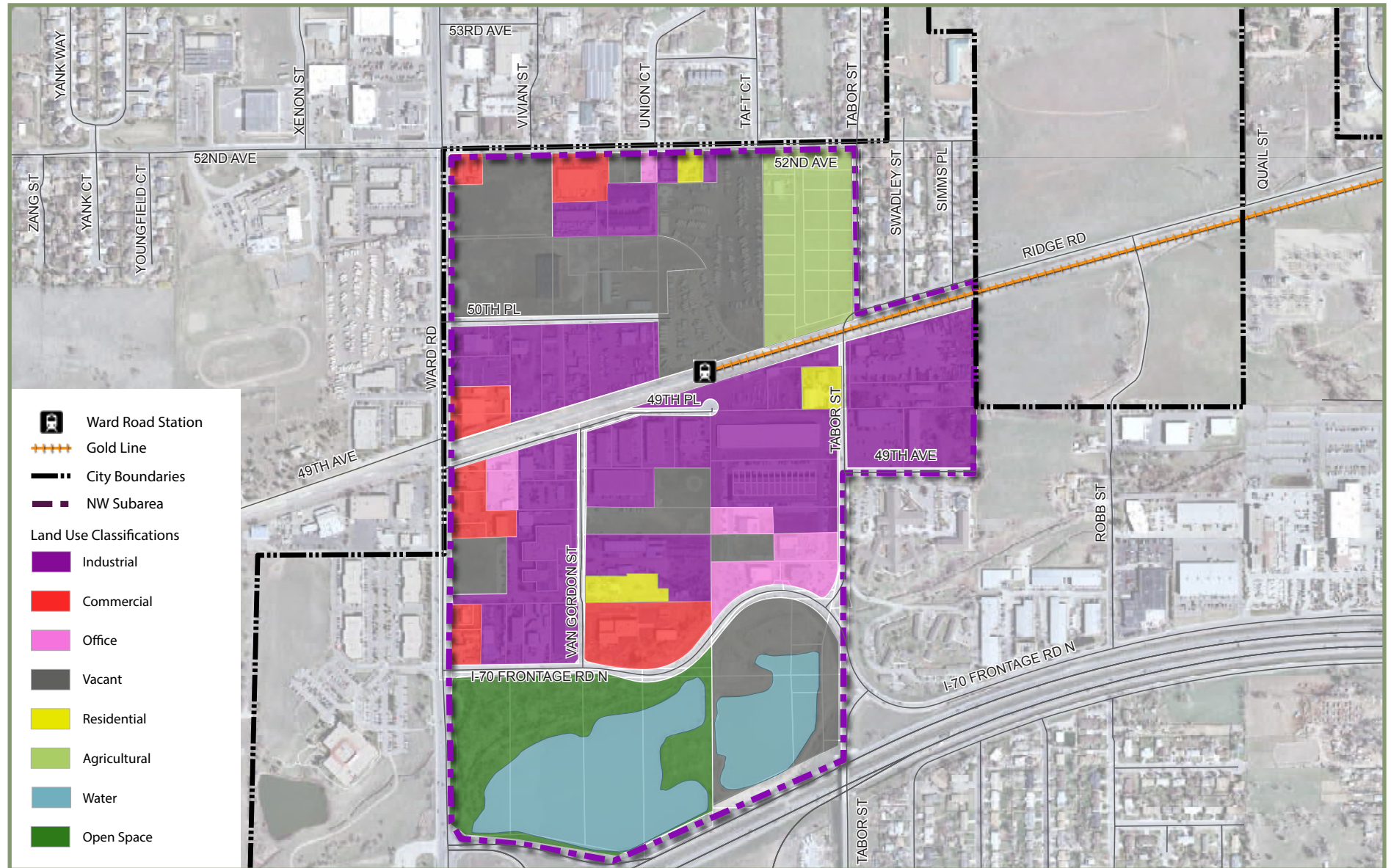
### ***Fire Protection***

The Arvada Fire Protection District serves the subarea. A substation is located east of the subarea at Ridge Road and Oak Street. Redevelopment projects that occur in the subarea will need to conform to the District's current fire safety codes.





## FIGURE 4 | EXISTING LAND USE

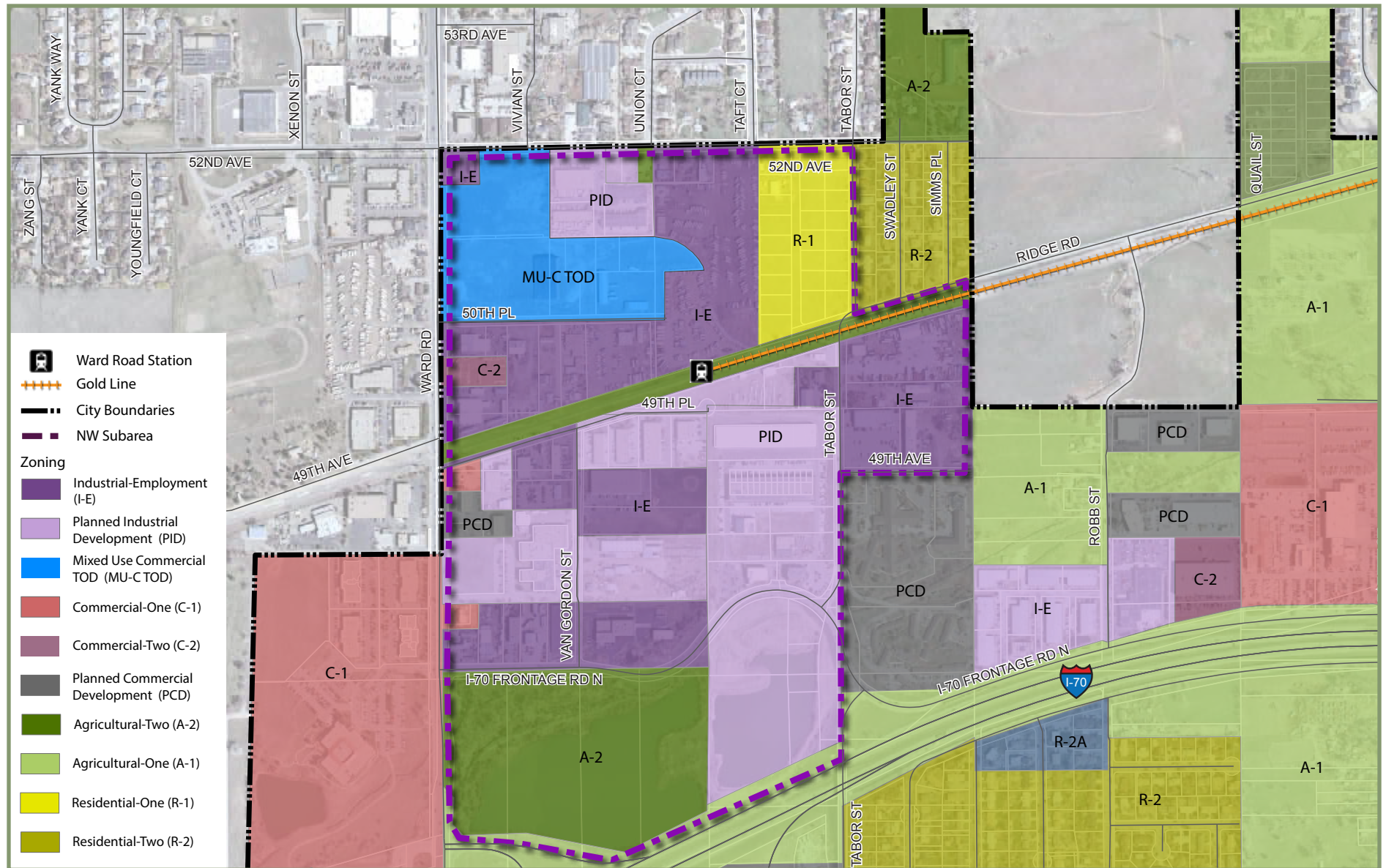


Current land use in the Northwest Subarea has been classified based on the predominant land use and/or building form.



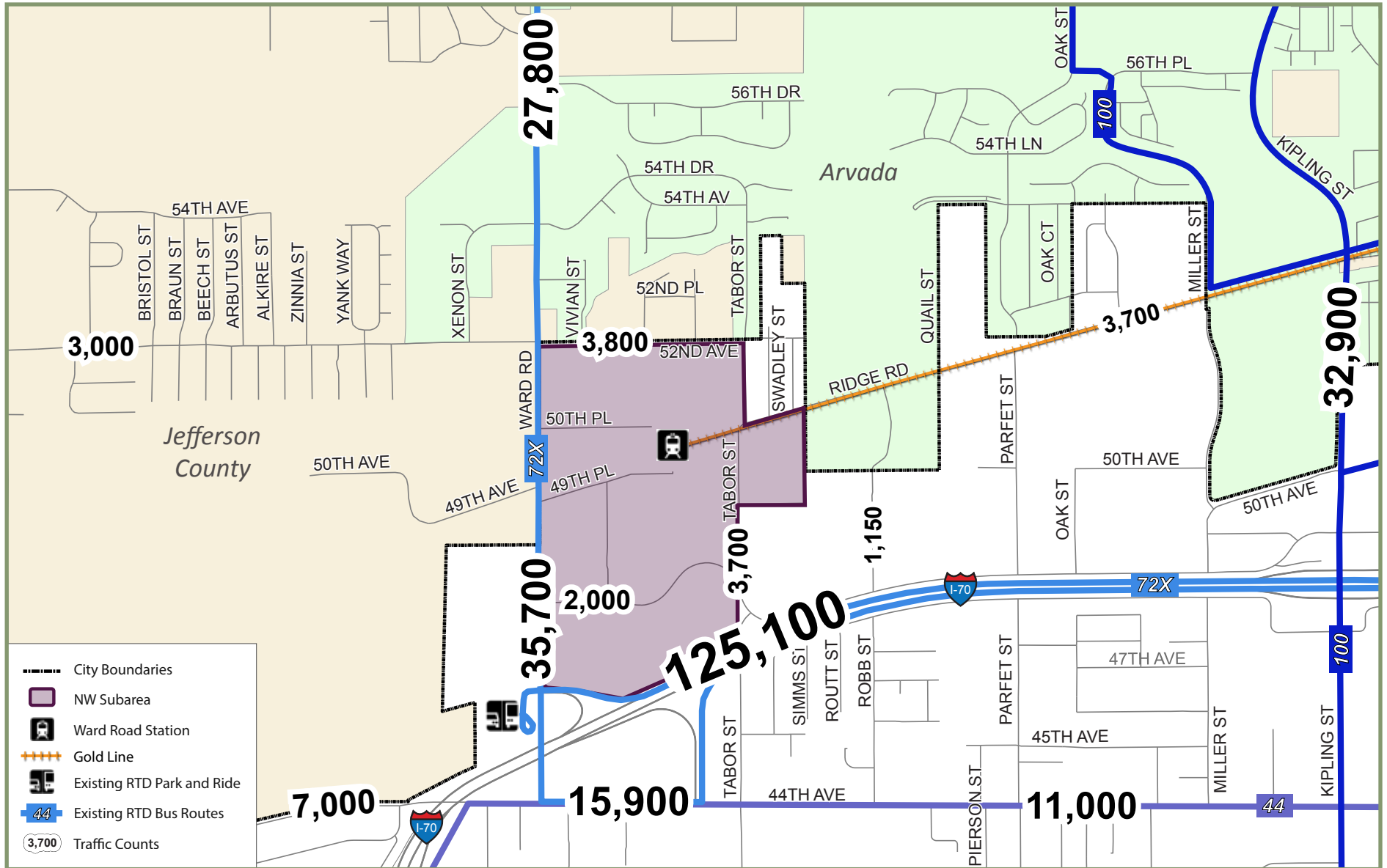


# FIGURE 5 | EXISTING ZONING



The subarea currently includes a variety of zoning designations. Most of the subarea is zoned for industrial uses, either through Industrial-Employment (I-E) zoning or Planned Industrial Development (PID) zoning. The former Jolly Rancher site was rezoned to Mixed Use-Commercial TOD in 2012.

## FIGURE 6 | EXISTING TRANSPORTATION



*This map depicts the existing transportation system, including existing roadways, bus facilities, and current traffic counts. The Park-N-Ride facility and RTD bus routes are expected to be relocated through Ward Road Station once it is completed. See Figure 8 for existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.*

## CHAPTER 4 | FUTURE SUBAREA CHARACTER

The aesthetic character of the subarea is a key component of the vision for the future; this includes building design, natural vegetation, views and vistas, and the design of the public realm - namely streets and open space. In both 2006 and 2013, much of the discussion at public meetings was about the desired future character of the Northwest Subarea.

### FUTURE VISION

The Northwest Subarea has the potential to become a mixed-use “village” with an urban character near the transit station, gradually transitioning to a more suburban character as it extends outward to blend with the adjacent neighborhoods. In the core area near the transit station - approximately 1/4 mile around the station platform - the following character is envisioned:

- Buildings oriented close to the sidewalk, with parking located to the rear and side of buildings.
- Quality streetscapes with wide sidewalks and street trees that provide shade.
- Buildings located to provide continuous facades along the street, with little to no setbacks.
- On-street parallel parking to provide convenience for drop-in customers and future residents of the area.
- Ground floor facades that are largely transparent, with many windows, to encourage office and retail uses and to provide an interesting sidewalk environment for pedestrians.
- Building materials that provide visual interest and a pedestrian scale; industrial architecture (such as tilt-up concrete) should be avoided.
- Varied building heights and upper-level setbacks to avoid buildings of uniform height and long, uninterrupted wall planes.
- Occasional towers and other architectural features that will give identity to the area.
- A mix of land uses, including retail, office, and residential, that create activity and interest for commuter-rail riders, residents, and employees in the area.
- Small, shaded plazas and seating areas for pedestrian comfort.

The following chapters outline the vision for the subarea in more detail, focusing on future land use, transportation, urban design, and infrastructure recommendations.

The images on the following page illustrate samples of the desired character for the subarea. These images were selected for inclusion in the plan based on feedback that was received at the first public meeting in February 2013.





# DESIRED CHARACTER



**Streetscapes:** high quality, wide sidewalks, pedestrian-friendly facades



**Mixed Use:** buildings orient to the street, quality architectural features



**Streetscapes:** outdoor seating, trees and shade



**Residential:** mid-rise buildings with quality architecture



**Mixed Use:** mid-rise buildings with quality architecture



**Open Space:** quality, interactive spaces



**Open Space:** green spaces, community gardens



**Mixed Use:** quality materials with active ground floor uses



**Open Space:** public art



**Open Space:** quality plazas for artisan or farmers markets



**Office/flex:** pedestrian-friendly design with warehouse space in back

## CHAPTER 5 | FUTURE LAND USE

The vision for the subarea is pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development that will be anchored by the new commuter rail station. Success stories from other transit-oriented development around Denver and other cities in the U.S. show that transit stations tend to attract higher density, mixed-use development that consists of retail, office, and/or residential uses that take advantage of convenient access to transit and the large numbers of people that pass through the area. Transit stops also have the potential to become a “gateway” for a city or a community since they are often the first impression that transit riders have of a particular area. For these reasons, Ward Road Station provides a unique opportunity for landowners to take advantage of higher-intensity uses than currently exist in the area, as well as an opportunity for the City to create a quality image of Wheat Ridge for Gold Line riders.

It is important to note that the recommendations below, as well as the future land use map in Figure 7, lay the vision for the *future*. Existing businesses in the area should be able to continue operation and in some cases to expand. During the planning process in 2006, the City made it clear that the purpose of the Northwest Subarea Plan is not to force out existing businesses. That goal remains the same in the current plan. However, because of potential future benefits to all of the landowners in the area, it is important that any *new* development in the area contributes to the future vision for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development.

The area immediately north of the future station has the most vacant land. It also benefits from direct access to the new station. For these reasons, this area likely has the most potential for new development. There is also great potential for parcels located southeast of the station which will have easy access to the station via Tabor Street. Eventually, properties immediately south of the station could benefit from a pedestrian bridge that would span the tracks, provide a connection to the south, and increase the potential for new development.

The future land use map and recommendations are intended to be somewhat flexible since development in the subarea will be driven by the private market. The map and land use concepts are intended to provide a general framework. The framework is not meant to be overly prescriptive, but it should be clear enough to guide future zoning and development decisions.

### FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 7) focuses on a core transit-oriented development (TOD) area, shown in pink, labeled Mixed Use TOD. This area is envisioned to develop with a mix of commercial, retail and residential uses. New residential development will provide additional patrons for commercial development. High density development is envisioned close to the station. Along the northeast, density should be reduced in order to transition to the single- and two-family neighborhood east of Tabor Street. Along Ward Road, lower-density commercial and retail development would benefit from immediate proximity to a well-traveled, regional arterial.

Most of the area south of the tracks is shown as Mixed Use/Employment TOD. Many of the existing land uses in this area are office-flex, a use that fits well with the City's comprehensive plan recommendation that the TOD area to focus on employment uses. This area is envisioned to contain a continued focus on office-flex uses. However, as the area redevelops over time, the office-flex could be complemented by other uses such as residential, hotel, or entertainment.

### LAND USE CONCEPTS

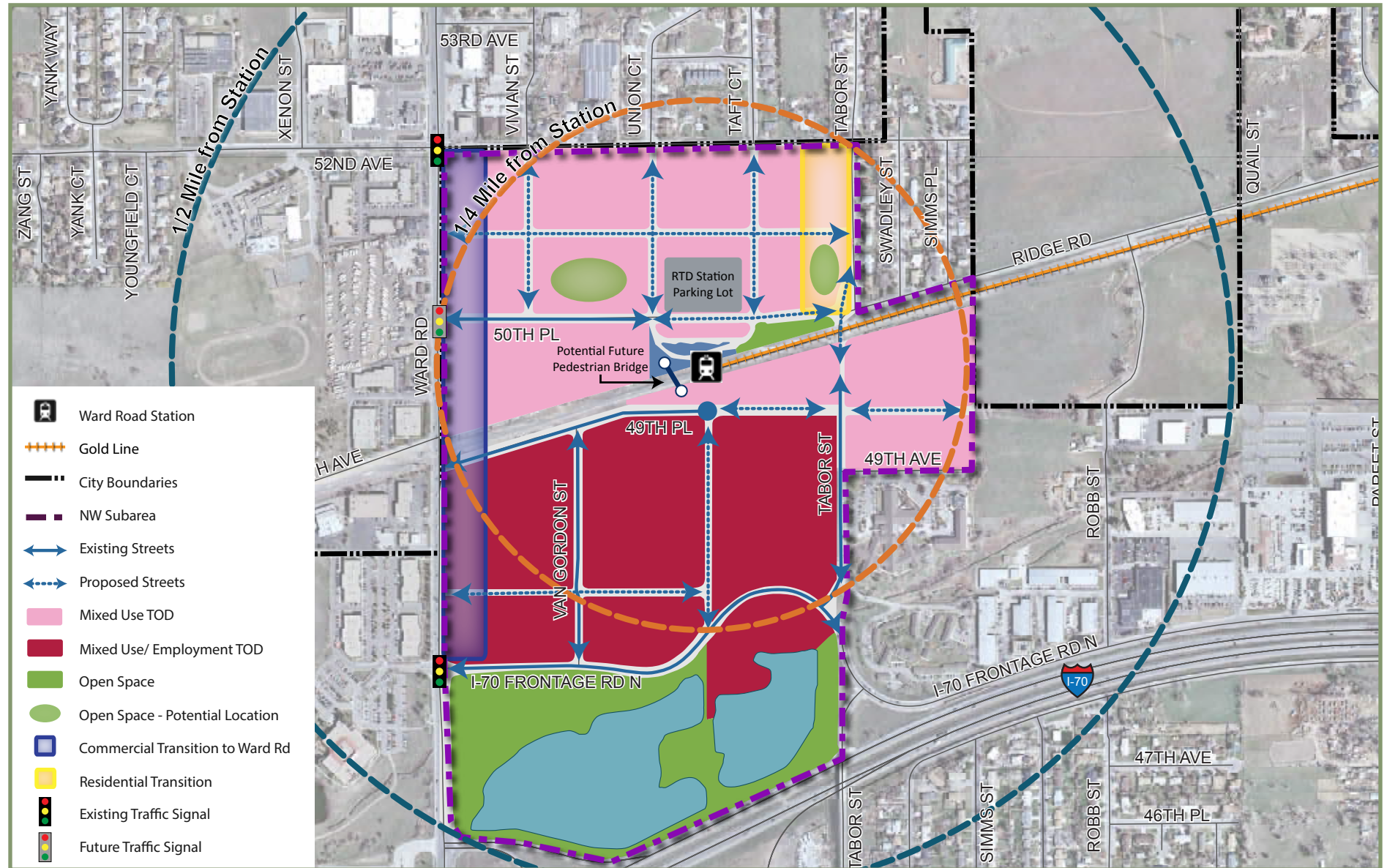
All of the future land uses in the subarea are intended to support and take advantage of transit. To do this all new land uses should be consistent with the following concepts:

- **Density** - All land uses should be higher in density, especially close to the station.
- **Pedestrian Environment** - Future land use must encourage active, safe, and walkable streets, such as retail frontages with quality design.
- **Reduce Automobile Dependency** - A mix of land uses including residential, retail, and employment helps to reduce dependency on the automobile and encourage transit ridership.
- **Parking** - To reduce overall parking, future land use should take advantage of shared parking concepts.
- **Open Space** - Quality open space, whether publicly or privately owned, should be incorporated into new development to encourage pedestrian activity and complement uses such as residential and employment.





# FIGURE 7 | FUTURE LAND USE



The future land use map creates a framework for land use concepts within the subarea and is intended to help guide future zoning and development decisions.

## LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed land uses shown on the Future Land Use map in Figure 7.

### 1 - Mixed Use TOD

**Location:** North of the tracks (bounded by Ward Road, W. 52nd Avenue, and Tabor Street) and immediately southeast of the station.

**Use and Density:** Mixed use includes higher density, mid-rise buildings such as apartments, condos, and multi-story office development, preferably with retail uses at the ground floor. The mixed use area should also allow live-work arrangements, civic uses, hotels, and entertainment uses.

**Buildings:** Buildings should be designed as timeless and transitional. The goal is to create buildings that enhance the pedestrian environment and create a quality character for the subarea. Particularly when the ground floor is a retail use, facade transparency should be increased and meet applicable design standards. Buildings should be placed close to the sidewalk with minimal, if any, setback.

**Parking:** Surface parking should be located at the rear of buildings or, where necessary, to the side. Parking should not be placed between the building and the sidewalk. Parking should be accessed via alleys where possible. Surface parking should be reduced by providing structured or underground parking wherever feasible.

### 2 - Mixed Use/Employment TOD

**Location:** South of the tracks between W. 49th Place, Tabor Street, Ward Road, and I-70.

**Use and Density:** The focus is employment land uses, which may include office or office-flex. Other land uses may include residential, retail, hotel, or entertainment. Higher densities are important close to the station and should be permitted through the entire Mixed Use/Employment TOD area.

**Buildings:** New office and office-flex space should be designed to relate to the street and promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. This means placing buildings closer to the street with warehouse uses in back. Buildings should be designed with quality materials and contribute to the pedestrian environment, with transparent ground floors where possible.

**Parking:** Parking should be located at the rear or side of buildings and accessed through alleys. Where possible, structured parking is encouraged and surface parking should be minimized.

### 3 - Commercial Transition to Ward Road

**Location:** Along Ward Road from W. I-70 Frontage Road North to W. 52nd Avenue.

**Use and Density:** While a range of uses, including residential, office, and mixed-use buildings, should be allowed along Ward Road, auto-oriented retail and commercial uses also make sense in this location. Retail and restaurant uses would benefit from the proximity to this major arterial.

**Buildings:** Lower-density, auto-oriented retail and restaurant buildings should be designed to place the building close to the street, with quality facades along the sidewalk where feasible. Quality materials and design are important since the buildings along Ward Road form a gateway into the subarea from the west.

**Parking:** Parking should be located at the rear of buildings and accessed through alleys where possible. Surface parking area should be reduced as much as possible.

### 4 - Residential Transition

**Location:** Immediately west of Tabor Street and north of the tracks.

**Use and Density:** The most appropriate land use in this area is medium density residential, such as townhomes or condos, that will provide a buffer between the core mixed-use area and the low-density neighborhood to the east. Some mixed use, such as live-work units, may also be appropriate. Open space, such as a park or community garden, would be a desirable use in this area.

**Buildings:** Buildings should be designed with high quality materials. Building height and form should transition to respect the low-density neighborhood to the east.

**Parking:** Parking should be located to the rear or side of buildings and accessed through alleys. Where possible, garages should be incorporated into the rear of main buildings.

### 5 - Open Space

Quality open space should be a key component of future development, especially in the mixed use TOD area north of the tracks. The appropriate size and location for open space will depend in part on the extent of new development in the area, especially residential development. Because transit-oriented development is compact and urban in nature, the need for parks and recreation facilities may be partially met by private facilities such as health clubs and amenities provided within new residential apartment buildings.



The Future Land Use Map shows the existing open space/ponds at the south of the subarea, as well as a small area of RTD-owned land that will be landscaped immediately east of the station. More open space - whether designed as plazas, green spaces, or both - should be incorporated into the subarea as it develops. Two potential open space locations are shown on the map. These locations are not definitive since the land use map is intended to be flexible and allow for a variety of development options. Two conceptual locations for open space were identified based on public input:

- A central open space, located within a couple blocks of the station to the north of the tracks. This space could anchor the mixed use TOD development and provide the opportunity for uses such as farmers markets, artisan markets, or outdoor concerts.
- A small park and/or community garden in the residential transition near Tabor Street. This would provide an amenity for new residents, and for existing residents in the neighborhood east of Tabor Street.

Open space in the subarea should be developed in close coordination with the City's Parks and Recreation Department. It may be appropriate for new open space to be privately constructed and maintained through a special district. Further discussion about implementation and potential funding for open space may be found in the Infrastructure and Amenities chapter below.



## CHAPTER 6 | FUTURE TRANSPORTATION

Transportation and traffic issues were among the primary concerns expressed during the public meetings held in development of this plan. The subarea is somewhat unique since the challenges of traffic congestion and providing access to and from the new transit station are compounded by the presence of the BNSF freight railroad tracks which bisect the area. Other issues identified during the planning process include:

- Blockage of Ward Road by freight trains,
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety,
- Accommodating bus traffic circulating to Ward Road Station,
- The need for streets with quality character and design, and
- Future roadway improvements adjacent to and within the subarea, primarily Ward Road, 52nd Avenue and 50th Place.

### VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

One of the goals of the Northwest Subarea Plan is to design automobile circulation to be as convenient and direct as possible. As seen in the Future Land Use Map (Figure 7), several new streets are envisioned to improve circulation in the subarea.

#### *External Access*

Ward Road will continue to provide an important regional connection to the subarea and future development. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Regional Transportation Plan recommends the widening of Ward Road to six lanes. Future development along Ward Road may need to provide a reservation area to allow for a future widening of the Ward Road right-of-way.

Although Ward Road Station will be the end-of-line station for the Gold Line project, RTD has plans to one day extend the Gold Line west into Golden. At that time, a grade-separated crossing over Ward Road is recommended. To plan for this future improvement, the City should work with the railroad, CDOT, RTD, and Jefferson County (which lies on the western side of Ward Road).

There are currently only two signalized intersections on Ward Road within the subarea: at W. 49th and W. 52nd Avenues. Because West 50th Place will be a primary access between the station and Ward Road, an additional traffic light may be installed in the future with CDOT approval when traffic warrants are met.

As part of their construction project to build the new station, RTD will extend 50th Place to the east so that it connects to the station and to Ridge Road. With this connection, Ridge Road will then provide primary access to the station from the east. RTD will also build Taft Court south of 52nd Avenue, as seen in the Future Land Use Map, creating a connection to the station from the north.

In addition to Ward and Ridge Roads, Tabor Street will also be an important access route connecting the station and subarea to the south. With a direct connection to W. 44th Avenue and to I-70, Tabor Street will serve as an alternative route to Ward Road.

#### *Internal Access*

The objective for internal circulation within the subarea is to increase the number of streets to provide multiple routes for businesses, residents, and transit users to reach their destinations and avoid the funneling of traffic onto just a few roads. The goal is to create a grid of streets that increase the choice of routes and also provide rectangular blocks that are ideal for future redevelopment. The Future Land Use Map (Figure 7) shows the proposed new network of streets within the subarea.

All of these streets will need to be built in conformance with Wheat Ridge road classification standards, as well as the streetscape standards in the City's Streetscape Design Manual.

### PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION

The goal is to create an environment within the subarea that is safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists and encourages residents and employees to walk to the transit station and other community facilities. To accomplish this, a number of sidewalks and bike facilities are planned. The proposed pedestrian and bicycle circulation network is illustrated in Figure 8.

#### *Pedestrian Network*

All new streets constructed in the subarea, including RTD's extension of W. 50th Place and Taft Court, will be required to include a detached sidewalk (a sidewalk with an amenity zone or buffer separating it from the street). Over time, this will provide a grid of pedestrian streets throughout the subarea.





Improvements to existing streets are also planned. When Ward Road is widened in the future, detached sidewalks are planned for both sides. West 52nd Avenue, at the northern border of the subarea, is also envisioned to have sidewalks added in the future. This is an important connection for the residential neighborhood north of the subarea, especially since school children from the neighborhood use 52nd Avenue to cross Ward Road and access the Jefferson County school just west of Ward Road. The north side of 52nd Avenue is outside of the Wheat Ridge municipal boundary and is located in the City of Arvada and in unincorporated Jefferson County. Sidewalk improvements along W. 52nd Avenue will likely require multi-jurisdictional coordination. Ideally, Ridge Road and Tabor Street would also be rebuilt in the future to accommodate sidewalks for pedestrians.

### ***Bicycle Network***

The planned bicycle network relies on a north-south connection to the station using Tabor Street and an east-west connection to the station using Ridge Road/50th Place. Planned bike lanes would connect the subarea to existing trail systems. The planned bike lane on Tabor Street would connect the transit station to the Clear Creek Trail to the south of 44th Avenue. Future on-street bike lanes on Ward Road would connect the subarea to the Van Bibber Creek Trail to the north in Arvada and unincorporated Jefferson County.

The bike lane on Ridge Road is planned to be implemented in coordination with the City of Arvada, whose city boundary overlaps with Ridge Road between Ward Road Station and Arvada Ridge Station - the Gold Line station immediately to the east at Miller Street.

### **TRANSIT**

The completion of the Gold Line will add a high-quality transit connection between the subarea and downtown Denver. As mentioned in the Existing Conditions chapter, RTD will close the current Ward Road Park-N-Ride and consolidate it with the new Ward Road Station. The exact bus routes and circulation patterns that will connect buses to the future station have yet to be proposed by RTD. As opening day for the station approaches in 2016, the City should work closely with RTD and other stakeholders in and near the subarea to ensure that adequate bus connections to the station are provided.

One of the major land uses to the southwest of the subarea is the Kaiser Permanente Wheat Ridge clinic. Many of the patients using the Kaiser clinic depend on bus lines at the Ward Road Park-N-Ride to access healthcare. A bus route or circulator that connects the future commuter rail station and the Kaiser facility should be considered in order to provide safe, reliable transportation.

### **PARKING**

RTD will provide a surface parking lot with approximately 290 spaces directly north of the new station. During public meetings, stakeholders expressed concern that this will not provide enough parking for the end-of-line riders and several suggested a structured parking garage would make more sense. Per the IGA with the City, RTD will be required to expand the surface parking lot to the north to provide 440 total parking spaces, once the planned surface parking lot reaches 90% utilization.

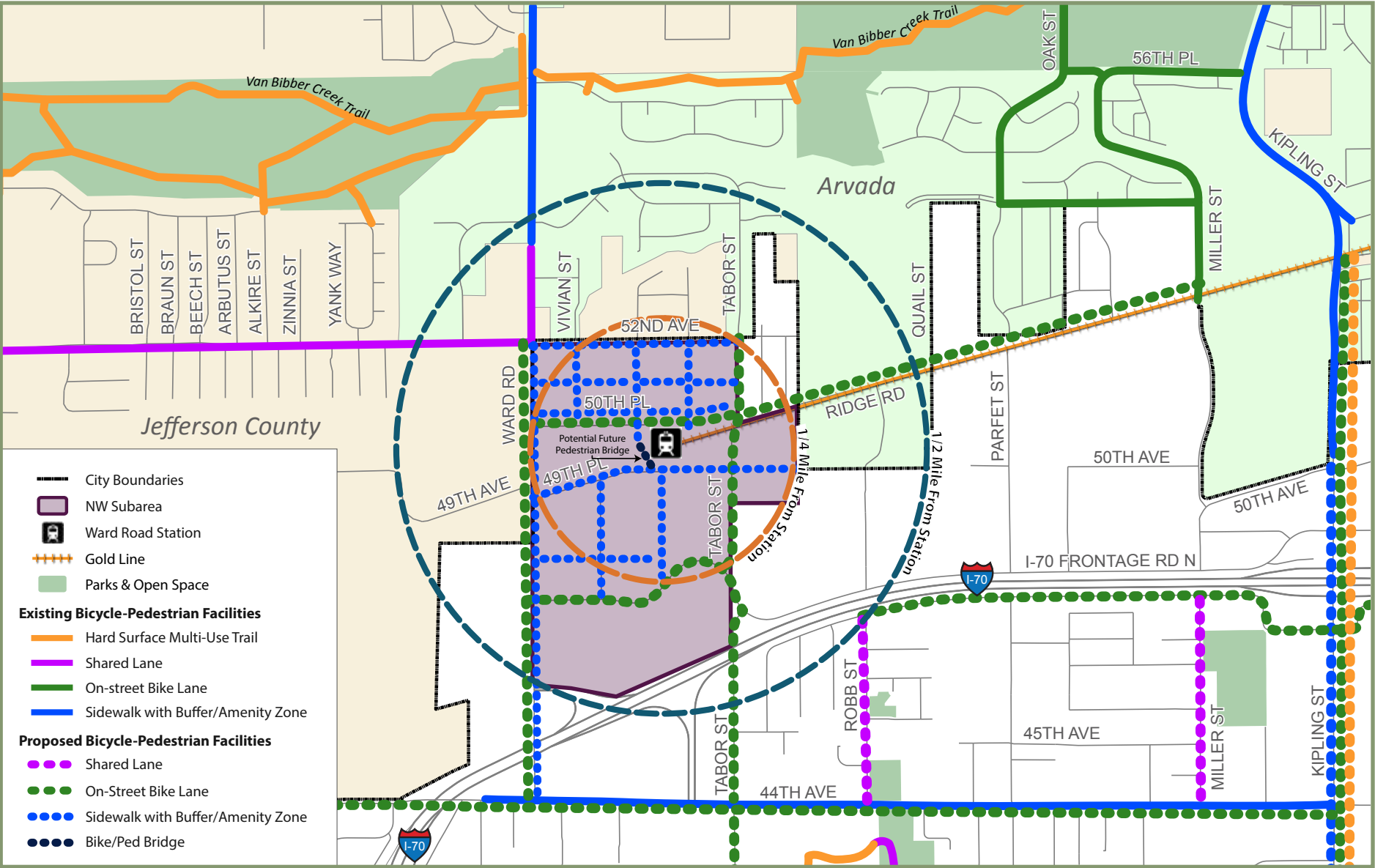
Eventually, the goal is for the RTD surface parking lot to be replaced by a parking structure. This structure could incorporate parking for transit riders, as well as for nearby development. A shared parking garage would enable the City to leverage funding from a private developer since it would provide parking for private development as well. A future parking garage could be built near RTD's planned surface parking lot, enabling the parking lot site to be redeveloped and activated in the future.

To provide a more coordinated approach to parking, landowners in the area could form a parking district or business improvement district in the area. Each land owner could contribute to the parking district instead of building their own individual parking lots. The district would then construct consolidated lots, or structures, in the most convenient locations. A Ward Road TOD Metropolitan District has been formed for a portion of the property adjacent to the station and could be used as the mechanism for financing the parking structure.

On-street parking will be an important feature for the subarea as new streets are built. Wherever possible, new streets should incorporate on-street parallel parking. In some areas, it may be desirable to charge for peak time parking. The charge can be adjusted to make sure it is fully utilized. This will give consumers the ability to park at or near the desired retail/commercial establishment. A parking district could manage the parking and use fee revenues to maintain the streetscape, assist in the purchase of amenities, pay for signage, and eventually help transition into a parking structure.



FIGURE 8 | PROPOSED BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION



Proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities are based primarily on the recommendations of the City's 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

## CHAPTER 7 | INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

Improved infrastructure and amenities will be essential as the subarea develops over time. This Chapter summarizes the major improvements that are needed and discusses how each type of improvement could be funded in the future. Many of the recommendations for financing strategies come from the EPA Smart Growth Implementation Report, referenced in the Introduction chapter. The report contains recommendations specific to financing infrastructure improvements in Wheat Ridge's Northwest Subarea.

### SUMMARY OF FINANCING TOOLS

The second part of this chapter discusses infrastructure improvements that are needed within the subarea and suggests several common financing mechanisms. These financing tools are briefly described below.

#### *Special Districts*

A special district is a quasi-municipal corporation that is formed through an election by the private property owners in the special district's geographic area. In Colorado, special districts are often called metropolitan districts. Once formed, a special district can establish a special assessment tax. These additional tax revenues can then be used to pay for public improvements or to secure debt financing, such as bonds, to pay for public improvements within the district. A small metropolitan district has already been formed in the subarea. It currently includes the former Jolly Rancher site but it could be expanded to cover a larger area in the future.

#### *Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*

TIF works by freezing current tax levels and using projected future gains in taxes to subsidize public improvements. Future increases in taxes, or tax increments, are typically used to finance debt that is issued to pay for public improvements, such as streets and utilities, in the TIF district. This tool is a financing option in the subarea since it is part of a designated Urban Renewal Area (I-70/Kipling Corridors Urban Renewal Plan, 2009).

#### *Development Impact Fees*

Development impact fees are charges assessed on new development to defray the cost to the municipality of building public services to serve new development. The fees

are usually collected at one time and are used to offset the cost of public improvements, such as streets and utilities, as they are built. Impact fees are not typically used in Wheat Ridge, but they could be a viable way to collect money for public improvements that the City would like to coordinate, such as regional stormwater management.

### STREETS

A complete grid of high-quality, pedestrian-friendly streets, as shown in the Future Land Use Map, will be necessary in order to realize the vision for TOD in the subarea. This includes construction of the roadway, curb, gutter, sidewalk, and amenity zone as called for in the City's Streetscape Design Manual.

#### *Implementation and Financing Strategies*

The City has a limited capital budget through its Capital Investment Program (CIP) and available funds are typically allocated for street repairs. For new streets, developers are responsible for constructing all improvements per the development code and Streetscape Design Manual. Likewise, new streets in the subarea will be built by private development as it occurs.

Financing tools that could help the private sector pay for major street improvements include a special district (metropolitan district) or TIF. A Ward Road TOD Metropolitan District has been formed for a portion of the subarea and could be expanded to pay for roadway construction. There is also potential to secure grants at the regional or federal level that are targeted at smart growth areas and multi-modal streets.

### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater drainage has been an issue in the subarea for decades because there is very little existing infrastructure to handle stormwater flows. Currently, there is a storm sewer line under W. 50th Place which turns at the east end of the street and discharges to the south at the BNSF railroad tracks. All other stormwater in the area surface drains to the southeast, flowing over Tabor Street and Ridge Road and heading to the east.

At the south end of the subarea, there is a storm sewer line under I-70 Frontage Road North; this line carries stormwater south and discharges into the existing ponds.



## Current Improvements

As part of the design for the Gold Line, the City of Wheat Ridge worked closely with RTD, Urban Drainage, and the City of Arvada to develop a regional stormwater management solution that will greatly improve the drainage issues in the subarea. The Cities of Wheat Ridge and Arvada will construct a major storm sewer line that parallels the commuter rail tracks on the south side of the tracks. RTD will build connections to this new line as well as a regional detention pond located southwest of Ridge Road and Quail Street, to the east of the subarea. The new storm sewer line will convey all of the stormwater runoff from the north half of the subarea to the new regional pond. These improvements are funded and will be complete with the Gold Line project in 2016.

## Future Improvements

As new development occurs in the subarea, private developers will be required to construct new storm sewer lines to convey the stormwater runoff from their property. On-site detention and water quality will also be required. Urban Drainage is in the process of updating a regional drainage plan which affects the Northwest Subarea. The private property requirements for on-site detention and water quality features could be reduced depending on the conclusions of the updated drainage plan.

A regional approach to stormwater management is preferred with one or two detention facilities to serve development in the mixed use TOD area north of the tracks. Regional facilities would be a much more efficient use of land, rather than require each development site to provide their own detention facility.

## Implementation and Financing Strategies

There are a few potential financing tools that make sense for stormwater improvements for future development. As with streets, these include a special district or TIF. A third option could be impact fees in which the City would collect fees and use them to build a regional detention facility for new development. Another option for financing stormwater improvements are utility fees. Utility fees are typically set to cover a system's operating and capital expenses each year, which could include payment of debt service for improvements to the system.

## SEWER AND WATER

As development occurs, upgrades to the existing sanitary sewer and water service will be necessary. As mentioned in the Introduction, the City does not control these utilities.

Valley Water District provides water service to the subarea and Fruitdale Sanitation District provides the sanitary sewer service. Both districts would require private developers to pay for upgrades to the systems as development occurs.

## Implementation and Financing Strategies

Even though the City does not control water and sewer utilities, it could work with the utility districts to sequence infrastructure projects and to determine which costs are reasonable for developers to pay. Phasing is an important consideration since the utilities will be under streets; the most sensible approach would be to install water and sewer lines with sufficient capacity for future needs prior to roadway construction.

Potential financing mechanisms to help cover the costs of utility upgrades include a special district, TIF, development impact fees, and/or utility user fees.

## STRUCTURED PARKING

As discussed in the Future Land Use chapter, there is a strong desire for structured parking in the subarea. Parking garages and underground parking have many benefits, including the ability to achieve higher density development, the preservation of land for amenities like open space, and the ability to hide parking from the public realm.

## Implementation and Financing Strategies

Parking garages are expensive to build. Strategies to help finance a parking structure (or structures) in the subarea include a special district or TIF. Another option would be to charge a fee for parking for Ward Road station users, especially if a parking garage is shared between RTD riders and private development. While state law currently limits RTD's ability to charge for parking, this may change in the future and it could be a viable way to help defray the costs of a parking structure.

It may make sense to wait until the Gold Line has been operational for some time prior to building a parking structure. This will allow stakeholders to better understand the actual parking demand of transit riders.

## OPEN SPACE

As discussed in the Future Land Use chapter, quality open space should be a key component of future development in the subarea. The City currently has a parkland dedication formula required for residential subdivisions which is not appropriate for



higher-density residential development and should be re-evaluated for the subarea. City code also allows developers to pay a fee-in-lieu of parkland dedication which may be an appropriate option in the subarea, since open space needs are generally reduced in an urban, compact development.

### Implementation and Financing Strategies

Open space could be created in the subarea by a combination of strategies including the City's parkland dedication requirement (recalibrated for the subarea) and financing mechanisms such as a special district and/or TIF. There is also the possibility of obtaining grant funds to offset the costs of open space development. If the existing metropolitan district is expanded to cover a larger portion of the TOD area, it could be a viable mechanism for funding the construction and maintenance of open spaces. It is possible that some open space, especially small plazas or pocket parks associated with a development site, will be privately constructed, owned, and maintained.

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The improvements shown in the Future Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Map (Figure 8) are essential to providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access to the station and to the subarea. One essential improvement that will be a costly but high-priority investment is the pedestrian bridge connecting the station directly to the south. The City currently does not have capital dollars reserved for bicycle or pedestrian improvements and is

not expected to have funding for such improvements unless a funding mechanism, such as a street utility fee, is approved by Wheat Ridge voters.

As with other needed improvements, a special district and/or TIF could be used to finance bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Federal or regional grants targeted for bike/ped improvements at transit stations are another viable option, including for the pedestrian bridge. A Safe Routes to School grant could be a potential funding source for new sidewalks on 52nd Avenue since it is a route used by children to reach Drake Middle School west of Ward Road.

For many of the needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements, such as along Ridge Road and W. 52nd Avenue, the City of Wheat Ridge will need to coordinate with Arvada and Jefferson County, since the roadways cross through multiple jurisdictions.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: PRIORITIES AND FINANCING

The following table summarizes the major infrastructure items and potential financing mechanisms. Those checked in the "High Priority" column should be among the City's highest priority to assist in implementation in the coming years. The content in this table is based on the 2012 EPA report "Infrastructure Financing Options for Transit-Oriented Development."

TOD Infrastructure	Potential Financing Mechanisms						High Priority
	Special District	TIF	Development Impact Fees	User/Utility Fees	Debt Tools	Grants	
Streets	X	X		X		X	X
Sewer and Water	X	X	X	X	X		
Stormwater	X	X	X		X	X	X
Structured Parking	X	X	X		X		
Open Space	X	X				X	
Bike/Ped Facilities (including Ped Bridge)	X	X				X	X (especially ped bridge)



## CHAPTER 8 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although redevelopment of the subarea will depend on the private market, the City should be proactive in attracting new development. The City can be proactive by offering incentives and financing tools to help cover the costs of development, especially for the public infrastructure that is summarized in the previous chapter - Infrastructure and Amenities.

This chapter outlines incentives and financing tools for the subarea that are already in place, or have City approval to be put in place, that could be considered to attract private reinvestment to the area.

### CITY INCENTIVES

#### ***Enhanced Sales Tax Incentive Program (ESTIP)***

Section 22-73 of the City's Municipal Code establishes an Enhanced Sales Tax Incentive Program (ESTIP). The purpose of the program is stimulate the economy by encouraging the establishment or expansion of businesses which generate retail sales tax within the city. For new or expanded businesses which are accepted into the program, any enhanced sales tax may be shared annually by the city and the applicant.

The base figure for sales tax is divided into twelve (12) monthly increments. If in any month the agreed upon figure is not met by the applicant, no funds are shared with applicant for that month, and no increment is shared until that deficit and any other cumulative deficit has been met.

#### ***Business Development Zone (BDZ) Program***

Section 22-85 of the City Code establishes the Business Development Zone Program. The purpose of the BDZ is to create opportunities for new development, redevelopment or expansion and to increase the likelihood that new and improved businesses will generate more municipal sales and use tax revenues for the city in the future.

The BDZ program provides for the abatement of certain types of fees, taxes and other business development-related charges for new development or redevelopment within the City of Wheat Ridge. Participation in the Business Development Zone program is enacted through staff and authorized through an agreement approved by the City Council.

Any owner or proprietor of an established, proposed, or newly purchased business, or the owner of an existing business who wishes to expand, may apply to the City for inclusion within the program. Abatement or sharing of eligible city fees, charges, and taxes are normally granted up to the amount of expected incremental future sales and use tax revenue to be generated by the project during the agreed to time period.

#### ***Bonding***

The Urban Renewal Authority, through the approval of the City Council, has the ability to bond for public improvements within the TOD project area.

### COUNTY INCENTIVES

#### ***Corporate Personal Property Tax Rebate***

The Colorado Corporate Personal Property Tax Rebate program allows local counties, municipalities, and school districts to negotiate with new and expanding Colorado companies for corporate personal property tax rebates of up to 50 percent for up to four years. Jefferson Economic Council (JEC) facilitates rebate requests for applicants in Jefferson County.

To qualify for the rebate, a project must fall in to one of three categories:

- New Business Facility - A newly acquired, constructed, or leased facility used to operate a revenue-producing enterprise.
- Qualified Replacement Facility - A facility in which a business has invested at least \$3 million or 300 percent of the investment in the old facility.
- Qualified Expansion Facility - An expansion that qualifies under "new business facility" and isn't considered a "replacement facility."

In addition, any company requesting a rebate must be a primary employer - a company that sells a product or service outside of Jefferson County (bringing new dollars into the County) and pays average salaries of over \$33,394 (excluding top management). JEC will also perform an economic impact analysis to demonstrate that the project will bring a positive revenue return to Jefferson County.





## STATE INCENTIVES

### *Enterprise Zone Program*

Colorado's Enterprise Zone (EZ) program provides tax incentives to encourage businesses to locate and expand in designated economically distressed areas of the state. The Northwest Subarea is also located within a state-designated Enterprise Zone and is eligible for associated state incentives.

Additional state incentives are available for commercial development that creates new jobs.



## CHAPTER 9 | IMPLEMENTATION

Many of the goals, policy recommendations, and action items from the original 2006 plan have already been implemented. The tables below summarize those accomplishments and outline the remaining action items that are essential to implementing the Northwest Subarea Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION ITEMS - 2006		
ACTION ITEM	COMPLETE	NOTES
1. Revise City Charter to remove restrictions on height and density.	YES - 2009	As part of the Kipling/I-70 Corridors Urban Renewal Area, the subarea was exempted from height and density restrictions in the City Charter.
2. Create a transit-oriented zoning overlay district.	YES - 2010	Mixed use zone districts were adopted by City Council in 2010 and contain a TOD sub-district that is specifically designed for the Northwest Subarea. The MU-C TOD zone district includes features such as reduced parking ratios, no maximum residential density, and building form standards to promote higher-density TOD development.
3. Develop illustrated design guidelines.	YES - 2010 and 2011	The MU-C TOD zone district, adopted in 2010, contains architectural and site design standards with illustrations to ensure high-quality development. As the TOD zoning is applied to the subarea, those design guidelines will apply. In the meantime, the subarea is subject to the Traditional Overlay standards in the Architectural and Site Design Manual (updated in 2011) which also contains illustrated design guidelines. The Streetscape Design Manual, adopted in 2011, contains illustrated design guidelines specific to the subarea to ensure that new roads will have a high quality streetscape.
4. Create a special district or districts in the subarea to provide a mechanism to finance, construct and maintain public improvements.	YES - 2012	In 2012, the owner of the former Jolly Rancher property formed a metropolitan district that covers the 14-acre site. City Council approved the service plan for the district and a special election in the fall of 2012 finalized the formation of the district. In the future, the district will hopefully be expanded to encompass a more significant portion of the subarea.



## IMPLEMENTATION ACTION ITEMS - 2013

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES	NOTES
1. Expand the special district (metropolitan district) to encompass as much of the mixed use TOD area as possible.	Private developers in the subarea, with support from City of Wheat Ridge - Economic Development and Community Development	A metropolitan district was formed in 2012 for the former Jolly Rancher property. It could be expanded through a special election to include a larger area, thereby expanding financing options for infrastructure improvements.
2. Pursue a potential City-initiated rezoning to MU-C TOD for part or all of the subarea.	City of Wheat Ridge - Community Development	The MU-C TOD zone district would allow and encourage the type of pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development envisioned for the subarea.
3. Develop a new, more appropriate parkland dedication formula for higher-density development.	City of Wheat Ridge - Community Development, with input from Parks and Recreation	The Zoning and Development Code includes formulas for calculating parkland dedication and fees-in-lieu. The formulas are currently calibrated for low-density residential development and do not match the vision for compact, higher-density development in the subarea.
4. Consider development of a public art program for the station and surrounding open spaces.	City of Wheat Ridge - Parks and Recreation, Cultural Commission, and Community Development - with RTD	Public art could enhance the station and contribute to a quality gateway into the City at Ward Road Station. It could also be integrated into future open space.
5. Pursue funding sources, including regional and federal grants, for planned pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the subarea, including the future pedestrian bridge that will cross the tracks to the south.	City of Wheat Ridge - Public Works, Community Development	This item will entail cooperation with other jurisdictions/entities including Arvada, Jefferson County, and CDOT.
6. Build a financial model for future commercial development on the south side of the station	Private Developers and financial professionals with City of Wheat Ridge - Economic Development and Community Development	The area on the south side of the tracks has the potential to be a primary employment center, and planning will be key to ensuring a balanced mix of businesses in this area.



NORTHWEST SUBAREA PLAN