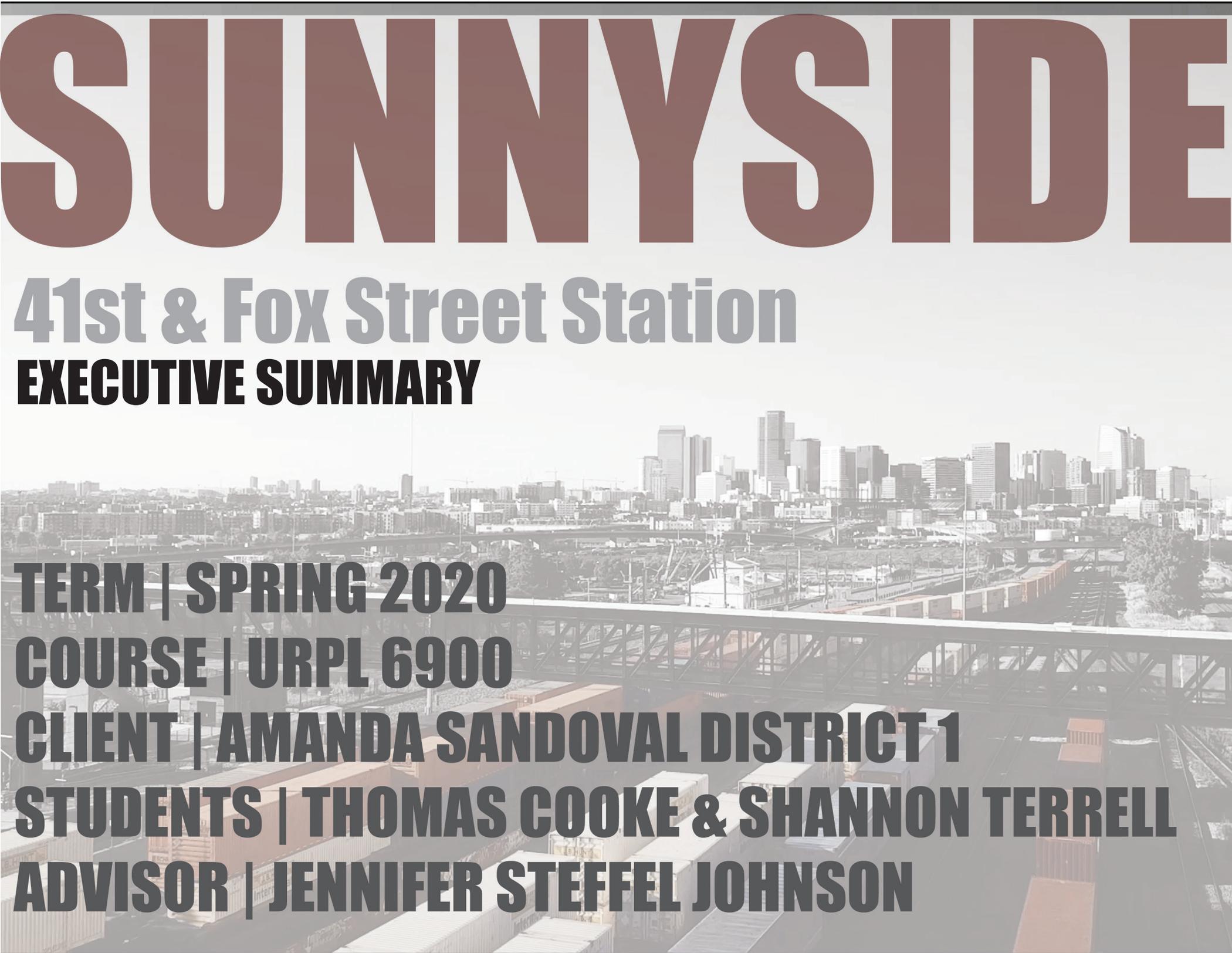


SUNNYSIDE

The background of the slide is a grayscale photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, viewed from an elevated perspective. In the foreground, there is a large industrial area, possibly a train yard or a port, with numerous freight cars and a complex network of tracks and bridges. The sky is clear and light-colored.

41st & Fox Street Station EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TERM | SPRING 2020

COURSE | URPL 6900

CLIENT | AMANDA SANDOVAL DISTRICT 1

STUDENTS | THOMAS COOKE & SHANNON TERRELL

ADVISOR | JENNIFER STEFFEL JOHNSON

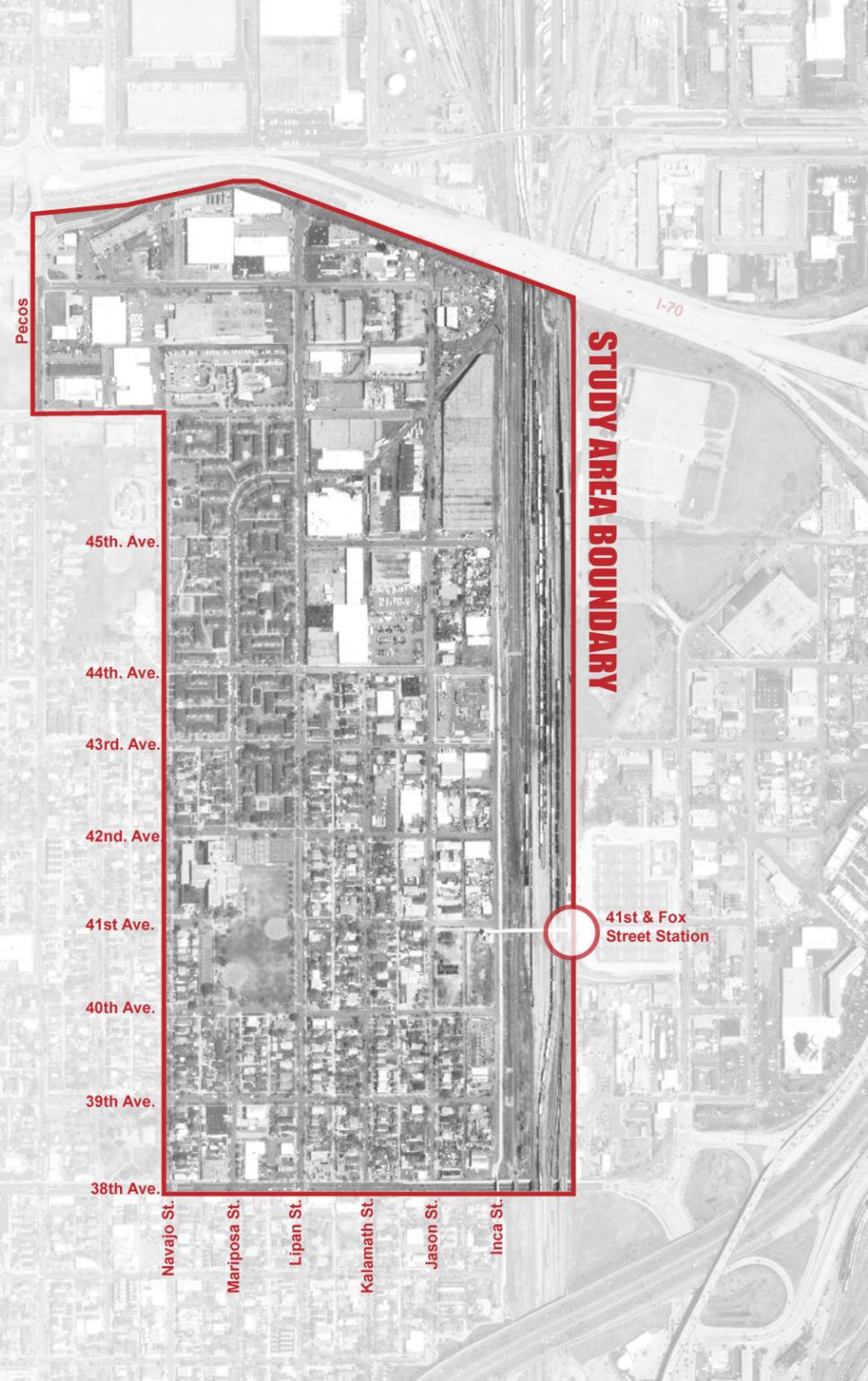
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Denver has been preparing for development around the 41st and Fox Station since the adoption of the Regional Transportation District's voter-approved FasTracks in 2004. The station, being just one stop away from Denver's Union Station, is projected to be a new regional community center and is an ideal location for increased density. Planning efforts are needed to manage growth that is equitable and contributes to the significant investment of this new community amenity.

The 41st and Fox Station is located just north west of Downtown Denver and operates along the B and G light rail commuter lines. The station officially opened in 2019, but initial planning for the 41st and Fox Station Area began in 2004 and a transit-oriented development plan was adopted in 2009. Recent planning efforts have focused primarily on infrastructure and transportation improvements to the eastern side of the 41st and Fox Station, also known as "Fox Station East" or "Fox Island," while the western side of the tracks has not received similar attention.

As with "Fox Island," the western portion of the station area is located within the Sunnyside neighborhood and has significant transportation and land use challenges. While the light rail station is a huge community benefit to the Sunnyside neighborhood, the only access point to the station is a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks, and there is limited west-to-east connectivity from the neighborhood. The 41st and Fox Station Area Plan marks the western portion of the 41st and Fox Station for increased residential density and building heights. Redevelopment has the potential to significantly increase residential density around the pedestrian bridge; however, zoning improvements are needed to promote transit-oriented development, while mitigating externalities of increased density adjacent to low density single-family.



Addressing the needs of the west side of the station area located in Sunnyside is a main concern for Councilwoman Amanda P. Sandoval, who represents District 1 in northwest Denver, and other key constituents. In order to address potential issues, the Sunnyside neighborhood requires a plan to guide future development that activates the pedestrian bridge and elevates the west side of the station area as a community center for the Sunnyside neighborhood.

PROJECT INTENT

This capstone project focuses on urban design and zoning recommendations for the western portion of the 41st and Fox Station Area (Study Area), bounded by Inca Street to the east, 40th Avenue to the south, 44th Avenue to the north, and Lipan Street to the west. Students Shannon Terrell and Thomas Cooke (Capstone Team) will evaluate the effectiveness of the existing plans that currently guide development in this area; analyze the study area in two categories: Transit & Accessibility, Land Use & Zoning; create a set of policy and zoning suggestions for quality development; and offer conceptual design recommendations for a cohesive vision. The report is informed by case studies, background research, subject matter expert interviews, and key stakeholder input.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology focused on identifying existing challenges and opportunities within the study area through examination of adopted plans, background research, interviews with subject matter experts, and analysis of existing conditions.

A series of interviews were conducted with subject matter experts and community stakeholders. The majority of the meetings were concentrated on the future planning initiatives, land use, connectivity, and urban design concepts for the site. A walkability study was conducted with key stakeholders, revealing significant challenges with transportation and the land use network throughout the area. These findings indicate a need for a better connectivity to the station area, an improved pedestrian and bicycling network and safety, green infrastructure, the preservation of the existing industrial character

of the neighborhood, and the buffering of building heights for new residential density.

Further, the Capstone Team learned more about the site by examining long-term plans for the area that were adopted by the City of Denver, including the Denver Zoning Code, the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan (2009), Blueprint Denver, and the Blake Station Amendment Plan. ArcGIS and Sketchup were the primary software that were utilized to further understand the existing conditions and topography of the station area. These findings helped inform connectivity improvements, appropriate zoning updates, and desired built form for the study area.

VISION

The vision for the study area is to encourage a residential mixed-use community for the existing Sunnyside neighborhood that respects existing architectural character, promotes equitable development, improves connection to the 41st and Fox Station, and creates a desirable and vibrant community hub for the Sunnyside neighborhood where visitors and residents can live, work, shop, dine, and play.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 Create a cohesive vision for the station area
- 2 Increase building heights and density to promote community serving amenities and successful transit-oriented development
- 3 Encourage regulations that ensure high quality urbanism and design
- 4 Create better street circulation to promote a positive pedestrian experience
- 5 Encourage residential and commercial development in suitable locations that will spur community growth and cultural interactions
- 6 Preserve natural viewsheds and historic vernacular architecture
- 7 Encourage policy regulations for affordable housing and adaptive reuse to avoid displacement of existing residents and business

41ST AND FOX STATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION ELEMENTS

The report is broken up into two vision elements: transit and access and land use and zoning.

TRANSIT AND ACCESS

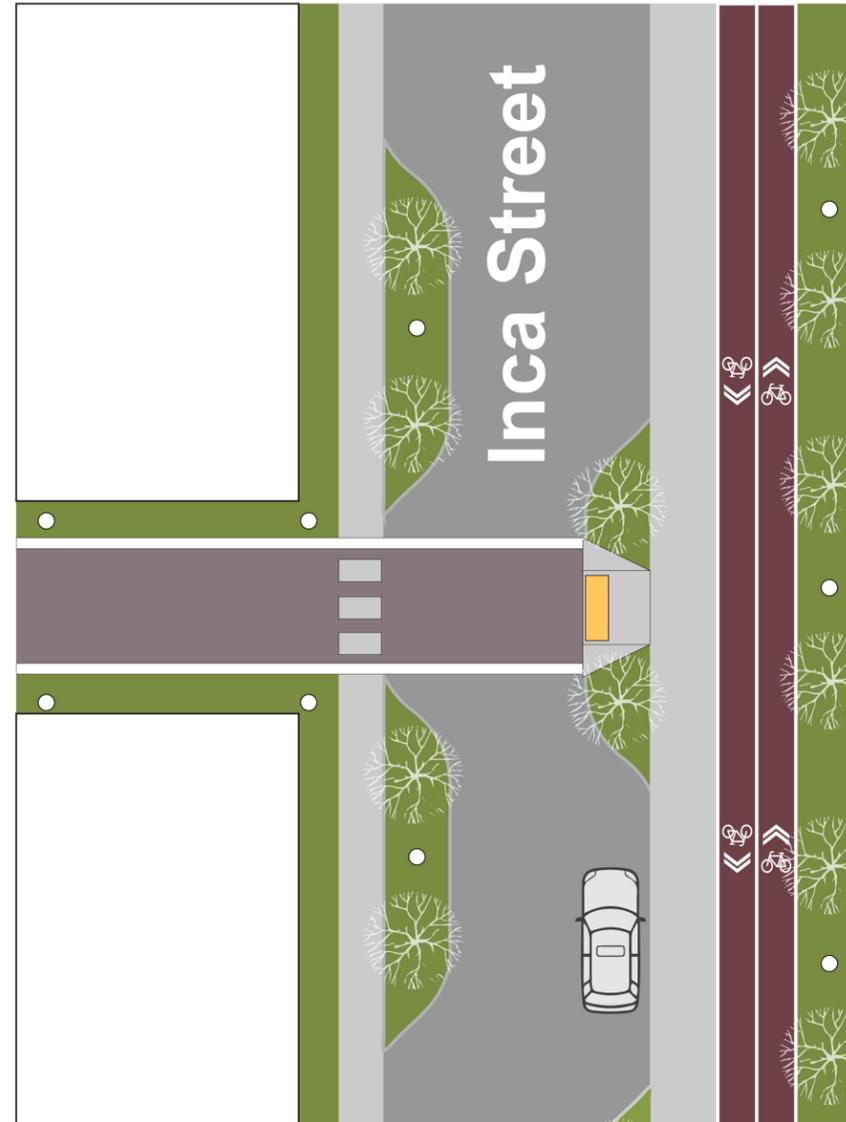
While the study area offers local and regional transit access by means of local bus routes and the commuter light rail, the neighborhood is bounded by major vehicular highways, arterial roadways, railroad tracks, and a disjointed urban grid system. Insufficient connectivity with the surrounding urban network has resulted in a lack of ground floor retail development, and active urban streets. The expansion and integration of pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure within the study area will attract new visitors to the station area while providing improved access to the regional system for existing residents.

The capstone team recommends:

1. The creation of a pedestrian and biker route through Ciancio Park that will enhance W 41st Avenue as a better connection to the pedestrian bridge that leads to the regional transit station.
2. The extension of the Inca Street cycling route north to W. 48th Ave through city-owned easements adjacent to the railroad.
3. Designating street hierarchy in the area that would benefit from improved pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure improvements.
4. The implementation and integration of sustainable stormwater infrastructure by designating streets that would benefit from bioretention and expanded vegetation.
5. The integration of traffic-free streets and pedestrian priority walkways into the existing urban network that will support public gathering events, spurring consumer activity for the surrounding businesses.

INCA STREET REIMAGINED

Added bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and bioretention



LAND USE AND ZONING

Existing land uses were examined based on recommendations from the 41st and Fox Station Area Plan and recently adopted city-wide plans. The 41st and Fox Station Area Plan was adopted in 2009; however, many of the forward-looking zoning recommendations were not implemented. As a result, recent rezoning amendments within the study area have led to sporadic building heights, large floor-area ratios, and incohesive urban design. Future zoning for the study area must protect the existing industrial nature of the site, appropriately transition lower residential density to higher density, and attract economic activity to the area.

The capstone team recommends the following:

1. Rezone the study area to create a clear vision for future development. The team recommends the Urban Center (C) Neighborhood Context to promote residential mixed-use with retail from Inca St to Jason St. The team also recommends the Main Street (-MS) Building Form and Character along W 41st Avenue to create a lively retail center that helps activate the pedestrian bridge. Lastly, Residential Mixed-Use (-RX) is encouraged throughout the rest of the study area to keep development in line with the 41st and Fox Station recommends of medium-to-high residential.
2. Increase building heights based on grade in order to promote transit-oriented development and greater density near the pedestrian bridge. Building heights are encouraged based on grade and step down, from 3 feet closer to Lipan and as high as 8 feet on Inca.
3. Prevent existing industrial displacement by either expanding the industrial mixed-use zone district or designating the area as an innovation/flex district.
4. Encourage the use of zoning tools, such as design and incentive overlays, to incentivize high-quality infill design and leverage infill development by increasing affordable housing and adaptive reuse.



41ST AND FOX STATION CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

C-RX RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE

U-TU-C URBAN TWO UNIT

C-MS URBAN CENTER MAIN STREET

I-MX INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE

C-RX RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

Using Sketchup, the Capstone Team provides a conceptual design of all recommendations from the transportation and access and land use and zoning chapters. The conceptual design includes enhancements through Ciancio Park and along Inca Street with additional green infrastructure and pedestrian-scaled design. Further, zoning is envisioned through the desired built form of each zone district and the adaptive reuse of the existing industrial area to create a complete picture of these recommendations.

41ST AND FOX STATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEXT STEPS GUIDANCE + IMPLEMENTATION

In order to further the recommendations from this report, the following actions are organized by needed steps, partners, and timeframe it would take. These will likely incur a longer process, due to city priority and overall timeliness, but nonetheless help provide a wholistic picture to what actions might be needed to address recommendations and shortfalls in this report.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INPUT

The next step following this report is community input. Due to the limitations for the capstone project, the community was not involved in this report. The capstone team feels that this will be an essential step in diving deeper into what the Sunnyside neighborhood would like to see moving forward.

CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The Capstone Team found that pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is considerably deficient in the study area, resulting in poor connectivity to the rest of Sunnyside neighborhood and surrounding community. Expanding the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure network will improve safety, attract new visitors and residents to the area, enable existing residents to access regional transit, and promote first and last mile solutions to and from the station area.

LAND USE AND ZONING

Currently, developers are combining and rezoning parcels by amending the existing zoning code, resulting in inconsistent zoning and an absence of cohesiveness with the existing conditions of the area. Updating the zoning for the study area will promote recommendations from the 41st and Fox Station Area Plan and create a desirable built environment that encourages pedestrian friendly scale and design.

BUILT FORM

The 41st and Fox Station Area Plan has marked the study area for increased residential density and building heights. Although this recommendation does promote successful principles of transit-oriented development, the City and County of Denver can capitalize on existing topography of the area by incentivizing greater design elements in exchange for taller building heights, greater building design, public plazas, and community serving amenities. Importance should be on preserving the historical character and architectural vernacular of buildings and preserving the natural viewshed.

PRIORITY	ACTION	STEPS	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INPUT				
High	Public Engagement	Conduct Community Meeting		3-6 months
High	Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI)		Community Planning and Development (CPD) Councilwoman District 1 and Staff Sunnyside United Neighbors Inc. (SUNI)	1-2 years
TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS				
High	Orient primary streets East-West	Designate w 41st Avenue, Lipan Street, and W 45th Avenue as primary streets	Public Works	1 - 3 years (+)
High	Improve neighborhood connectivity	Create a pedestrian and bicycle path through Ciancio Park	Parks Public Works	1 - 3 years (+)

PRIORITY	ACTION	STEPS	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
High	Improve pedestrian and cycling network and safety	Install permanent bicycle infrastructure along Inca St	Vision Zero Walk Denver Public Works	2 - 3 years (+)
		Identify missing infrastructure and develop a policy to address missing sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure	Community Planning and Development	
Medium	Improve stormwater management with green infrastructure	Develop a sustainable incentive policy for developers to provide green infrastructure Develop a City-wide policy for improving streetscape near light rail stations	Private Developers Public Works Community Planning and Development	3 - 5 years

41ST AND FOX STATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRIORITY	ACTION	STEPS	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
Medium	Enhance public art and wayfinding	Partner with RTD to help fund and promote art near the station area Develop wayfinding design for Sunnyside neighborhood Explore grants to fund signage through Denver's Vision Zero or Denver Community Active Living Coalition	RTD Art-N-Transit Program Private Consultants Vision Zero Denver Community Active Living Coalition	1-3 years

LAND USE AND ZONING

High	Rezone Study Area	Legislative Rezoning	Community Planning and Development Staff	1 year (+)
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PRIORITY	ACTION	STEPS	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
High	Identify areas suitable for public open space and plazas	Adopt policy incentives for public plazas for infill development	Parks Developers	2 - 3 years (+)

BUILT FORM

High	Encourage high quality design for the built environment	Develop a committee Conduct Community Meeting Amend 41st and Fox Station Area Plan (2009) Create a Design Overlay for the study area	Community Planning and Development Staff Department of Housing Stability Private Consultants Sunnyside community SUNI	1 - 3 years (+)
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PRIORITY	ACTION	STEPS	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
High	Preserve historic buildings through adaptive reuse incentives	Create Incentive Overlay	Community Planning and Development Private Consultants (Market Feasibility Study)	1 - 3 years (+)
Medium	Create incentives for salvaging demolished building materials to encourage sustainable building	Adopt sustainable zoning tools	Community Planning and Development Private Consultants (Market Feasibility Study)	2 - 3 years (+)