LIONHEART

CITY OF ARVADA

ARVADA LIVABLE CENTERS IN TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES SUMMARY

CITY OF ARVADA | FEBRUARY 2026

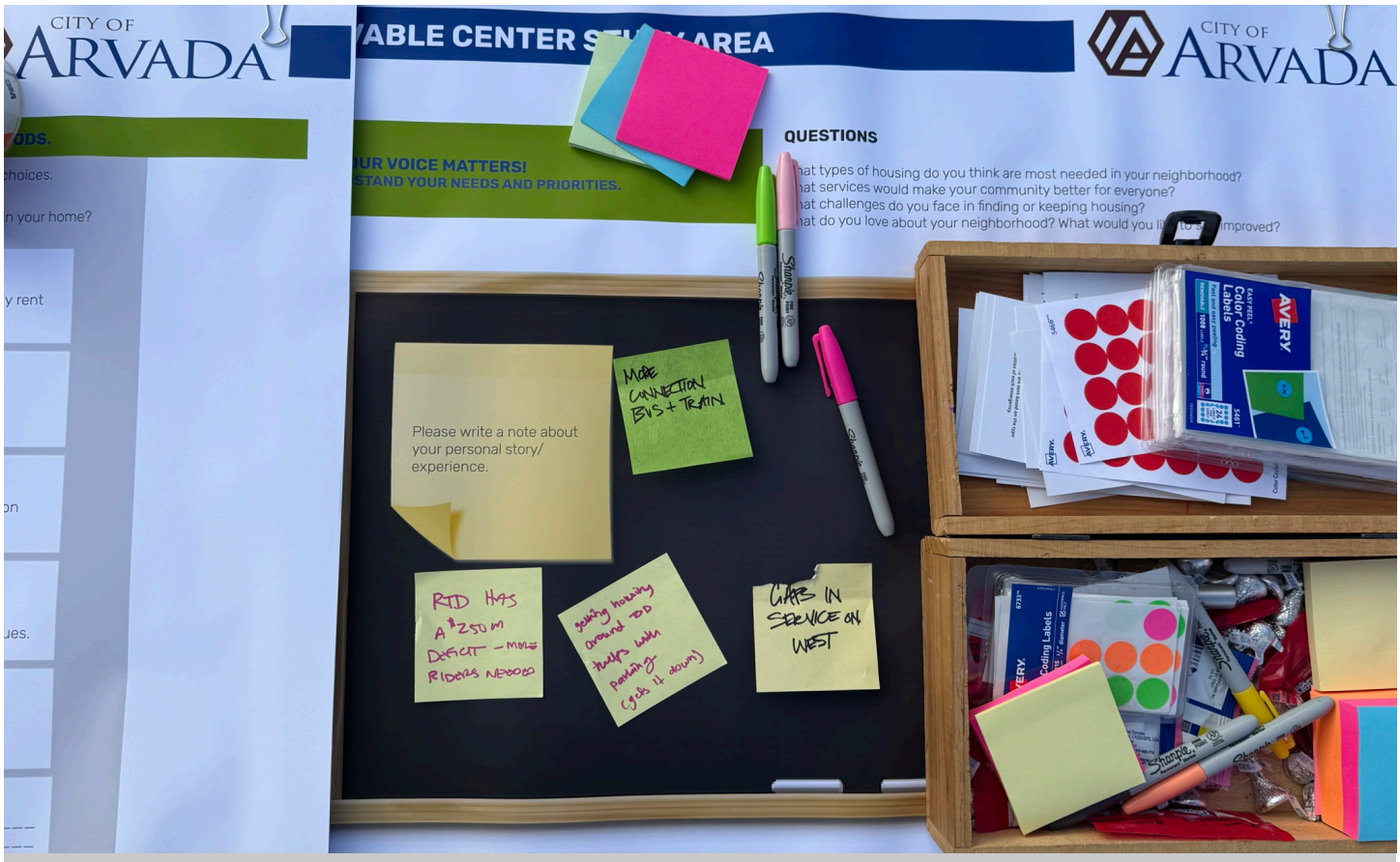
Community Engagement Summary

On February 9–10, the City of Arvada and the consulting team held a Community Engagement Event to provide the community with an update on the progress of the Arvada Livable Centers in Transit-Oriented Communities initiative. The in-person engagement sessions were held at Olde Town Arvada Station, 60th Sheridan–Arvada Gold Strike Station, and Arvada Ridge Station on February 9–10.

The public input received during this effort represents an important source of information for the Arvada Livable Centers in Transit-Oriented Communities study. This document summarizes the feedback collected during these in-person sessions.

40-50 In-Person Visitors over three 1.5 hour sessions during commuter hours & 274 Unique Visitors with 69 contributions

February 2026



In-person participants were invited to review and provide feedback on a series of boards focused on the Arvada Livable Centers stations analyzed in this study but focused on the particular neighborhood of the station where the event was held: **60th/Sheridan–Arvada Gold Strike Station**; Sheridan Blvd & W 62nd Ave; **Olde Town Arvada Station**; Wadsworth Blvd & W 80th Ave; **Arvada Ridge Station**; Independence St & Ralston Rd; and Wheat Ridge/Ward Road Station.

The purpose of this engagement was to gather input from community members and commuters regarding their priorities related to housing availability, safety, and affordability within the station areas and surrounding neighborhoods. The process also aimed to identify strategies to prevent displacement and to better understand the challenges residents face in remaining in their homes and communities.

An additional objective was to explore opportunities to improve housing quality and expand housing options, while also identifying and preserving the most valuable landmarks and defining features of each station area

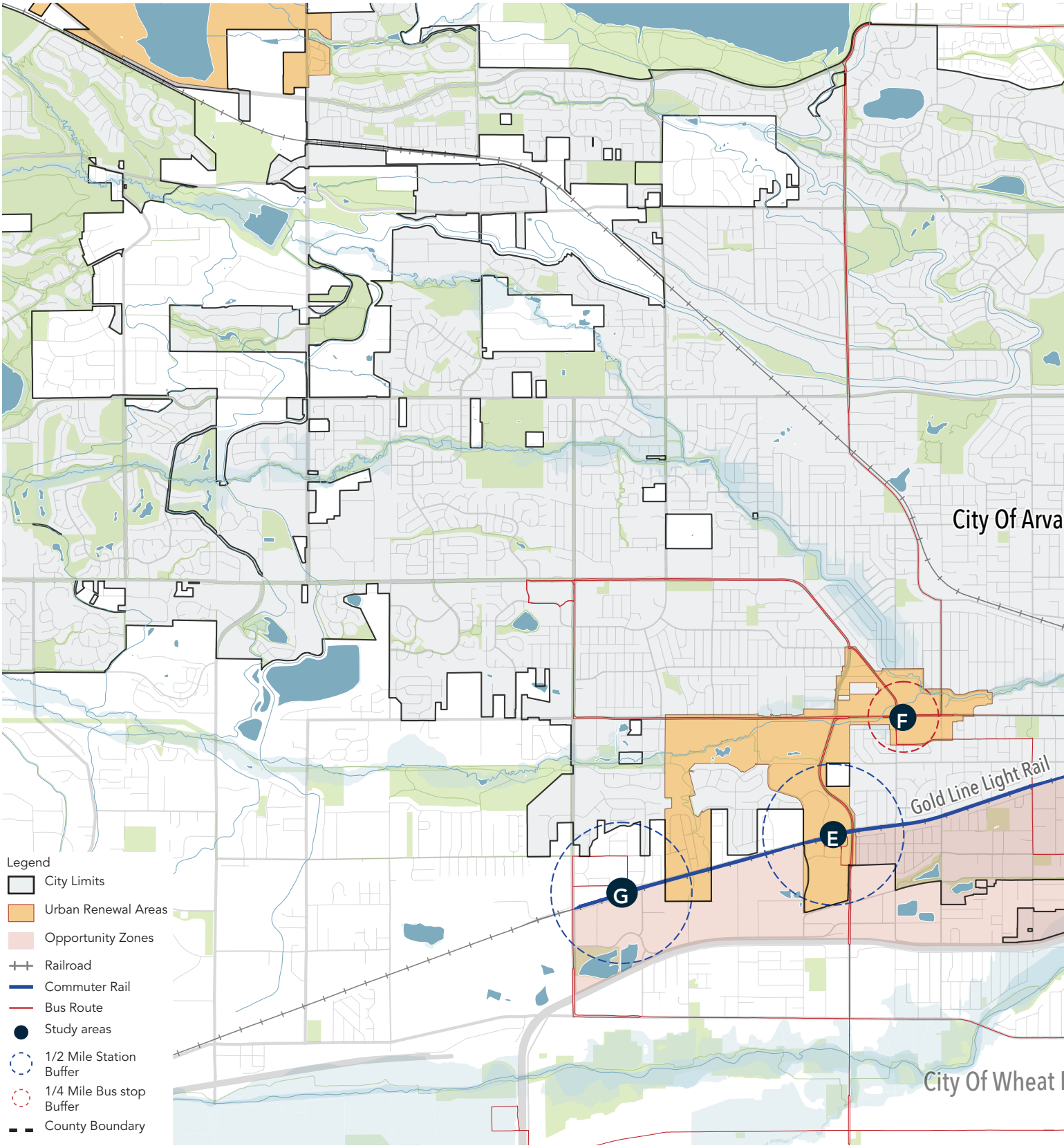


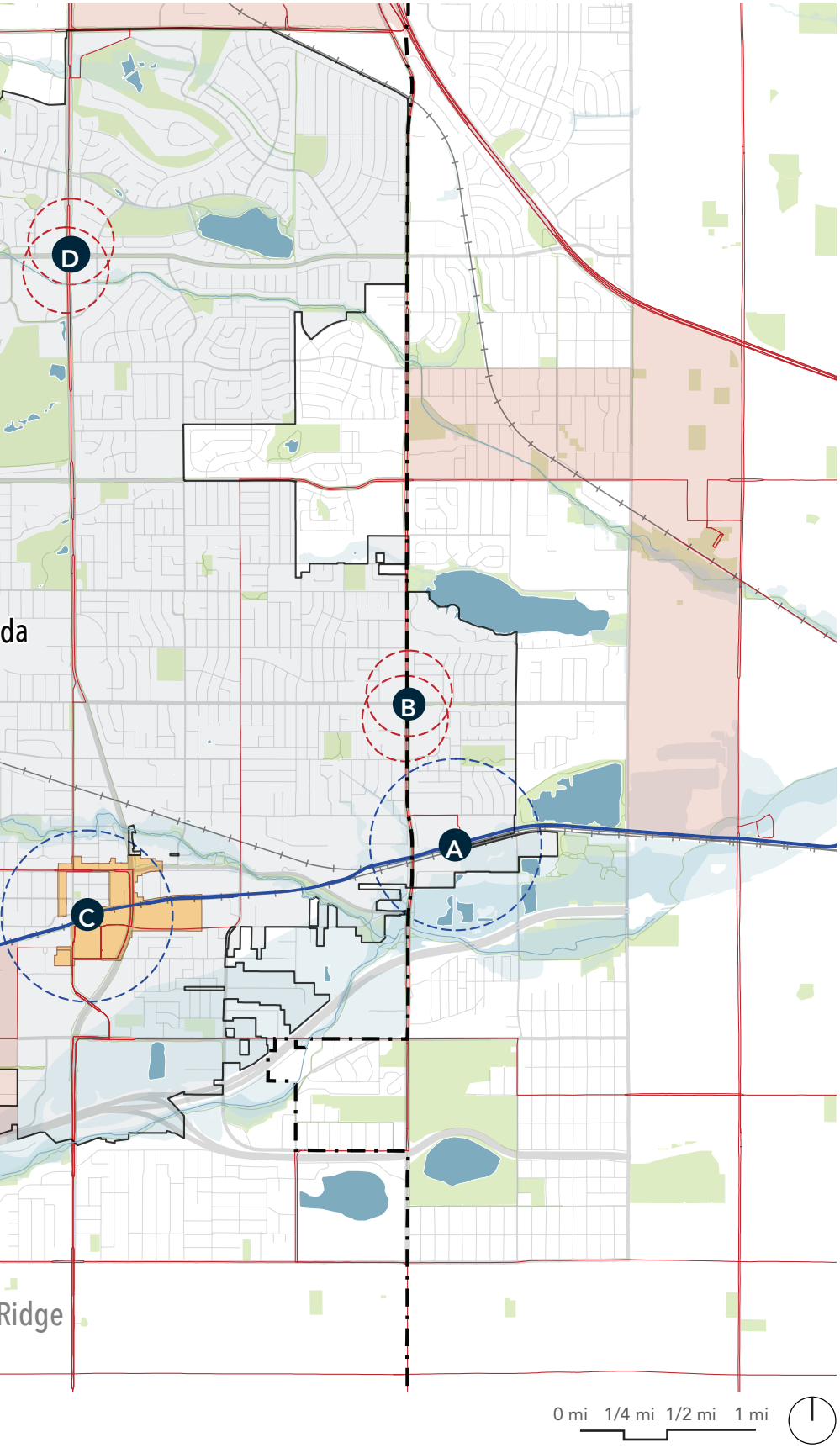


For each transit station analyzed, a dedicated webpage was created, mirroring the engagement boards used during the in-person community meeting. The online pages addressed the same questions presented in the physical format, ensuring consistency between the in-person and digital engagement processes.

1.1. Introduction

DRCOG Arvada Livable Centers Study Area



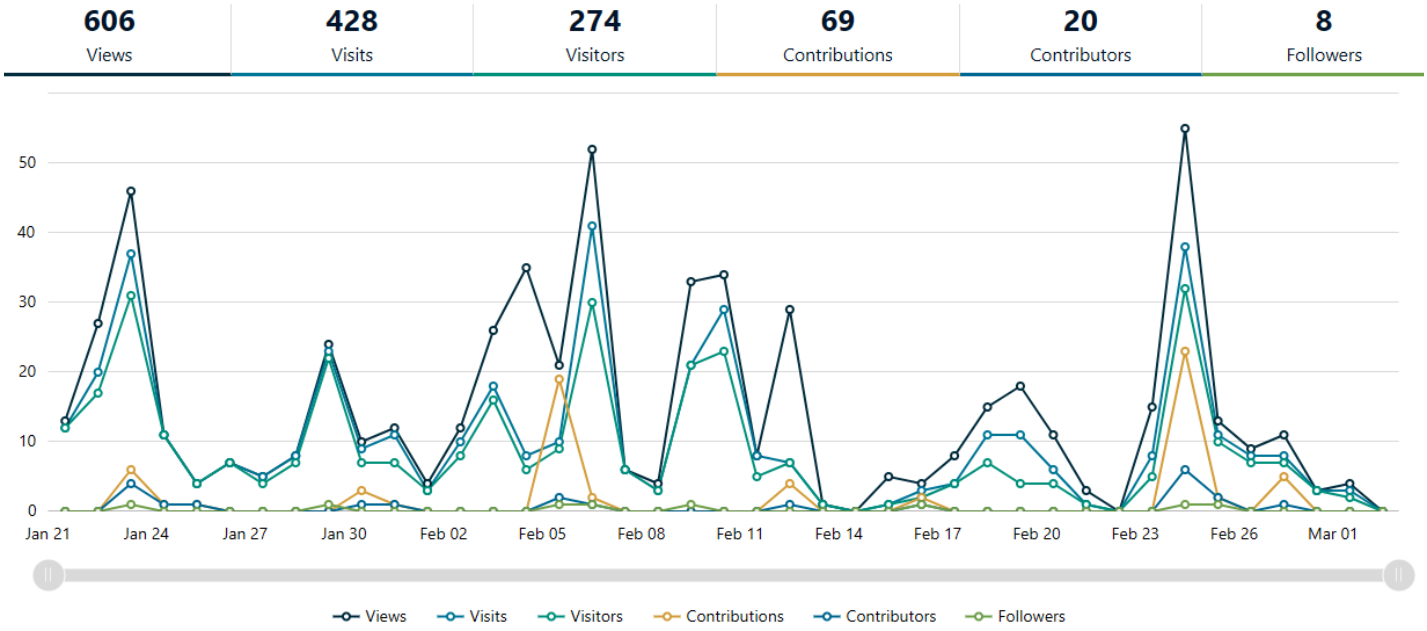


Station Locations:

- A 60th/Sheridan-Arvada Gold Strike Station
- B Sheridan Blvd & W 64th Ave
- C Olde Town Arvada Station
- D Wadsworth Blvd & W 80th Ave
- E Arvada Ridge Station
- F Independence St & Ralston Rd
- G Wheat Ridge/Ward Road Station

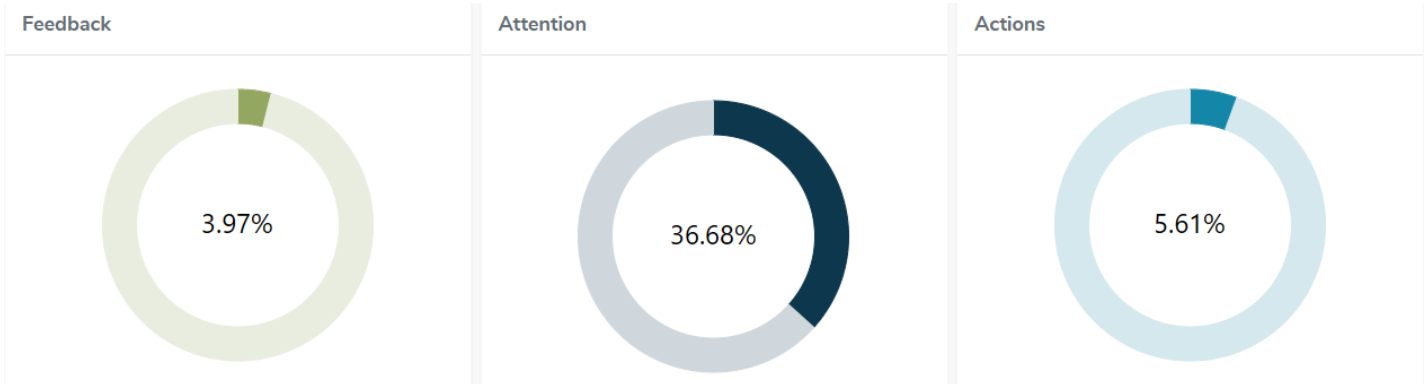
1.2. Website Project Activity Overview

Contribution Activity



The project webpage generated a total of 606 views, resulting in 428 visits from 274 unique visitors. Throughout the engagement period, the platform recorded 69 contributions submitted by 20 contributors, and 8 users elected to follow the project for ongoing updates.

Platform Interaction Overview



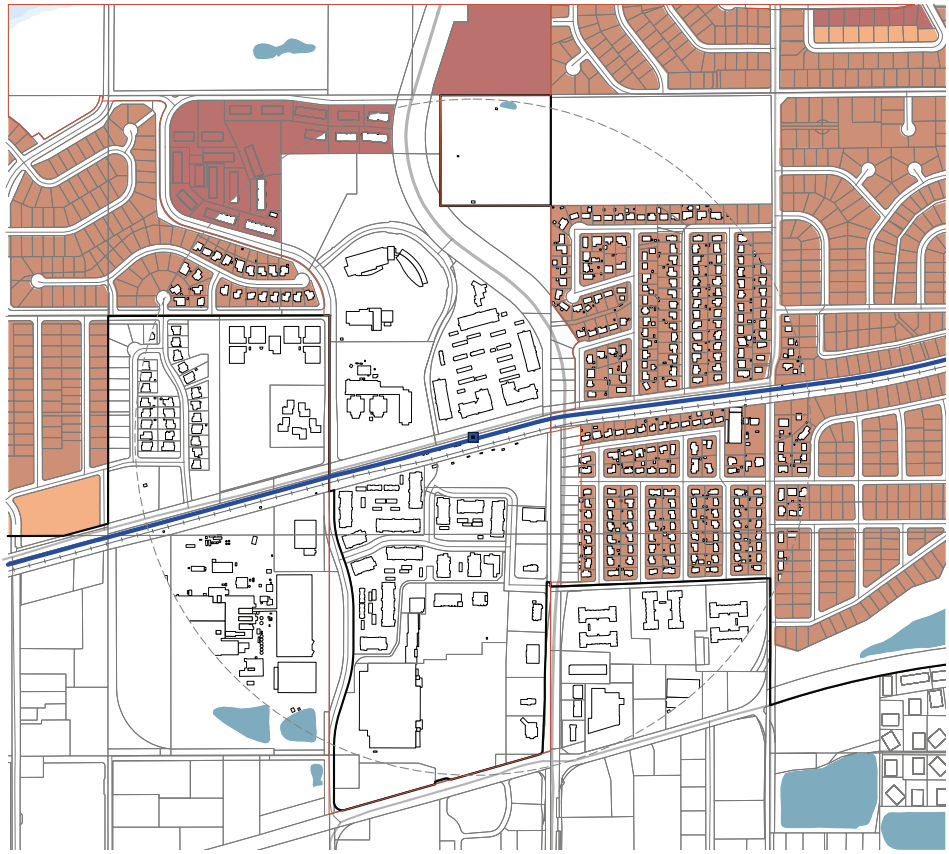
The conversion metrics indicate that while the platform generated solid visibility and user attention, active participation remained limited. Although over one-third of visits lasted at least one active minute (36.68%), only a small percentage resulted in contributions (3.97%) or multiple actions (5.61%), suggesting a gap between content review and active engagement.

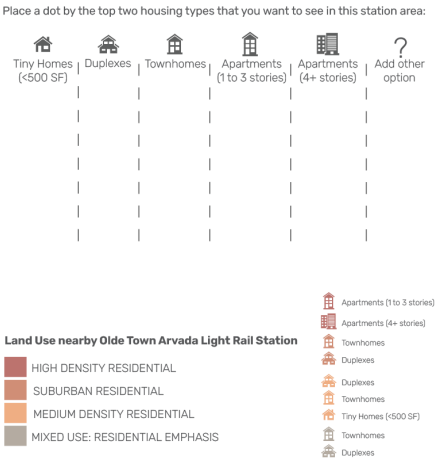
Participation was strongly concentrated in the Social Map tool, which accounted for nearly 70% of all contributions, demonstrating a clear preference for spatial, location-based feedback.

Engagement levels varied by station area, with the 60th/Sheridan–Arvada Gold Strike Station page receiving the highest number of contributions. Overall, interest was distributed across multiple pages, though the intensity of participation differed by location and format.

1.3. On-Site Project Activity Feedback - Arvada Ridge Station

Housing Needs and Afforability - Arvada Ridge Station





This map illustrates the future land use designations from the Comprehensive Plan alongside the current housing types in the area. Residents were asked to select the housing types they would like to see in the station area during the interviews.

Looking at the voting results for preferred housing types in the station area:

Tiny homes: 2 votes

Duplexes: 0 votes

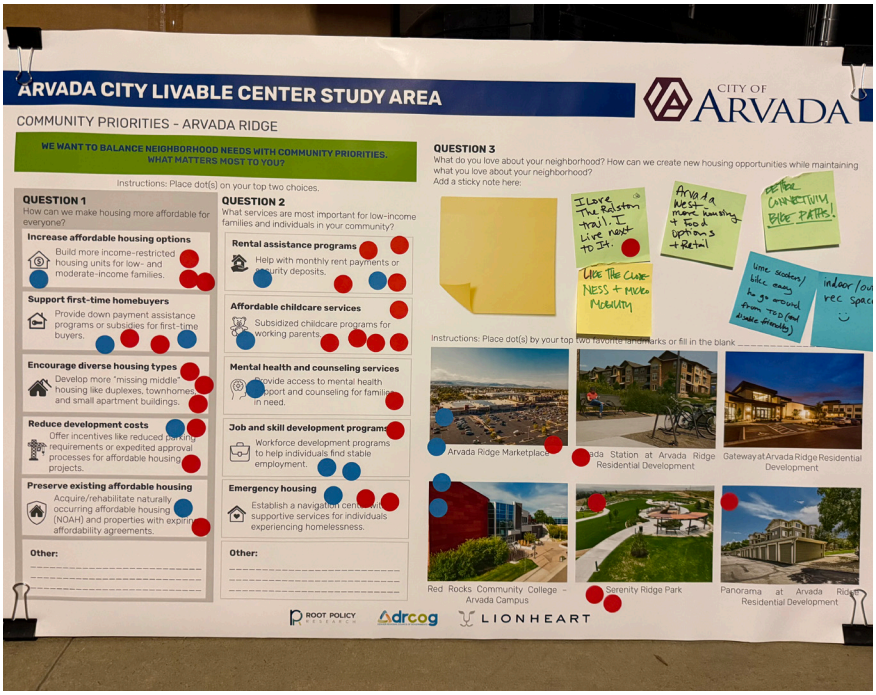
Townhomes: 2 votes

Apartments (1–3 stories): 4 votes

Apartments (4+ stories): 3 votes

The voting results for preferred housing types in the station area indicate a strong preference for apartment-style development. **Mid-rise apartments** (1–3 stories) received the highest support with 4 votes (33%), while **taller apartments** (4+ stories) also attracted significant interest with 3 votes (25%). Tiny homes and townhomes each received 2 votes (17% each), reflecting **moderate interest in smaller-scale housing options**, while duplexes received no votes (0%), suggesting they are not currently appealing to residents. This pattern reveals a community leaning toward higher-density housing, which could support transit-oriented development and increased walkability around the station area. The moderate interest in tiny homes and townhomes suggests there is also some demand for more **human-scale or flexible housing options**, which could help **diversify** the neighborhood and provide alternatives for different household types. Overall, these results indicate that future development planning should prioritize mid-rise apartments while including a mix of smaller housing types to balance density with neighborhood character and resident preferences.

Community Priorities - Arvada Ridge Station



For this board, residents were asked to provide input on three key questions to guide future development in their community. First, they were asked how housing could be made more affordable and accessible for everyone. Second, they were asked to identify the services that are most important for low-income families and individuals in the neighborhood. Third, residents were invited to share what they love about their neighborhood and to suggest ways to create new housing opportunities while preserving the qualities and character they value most. This exercise was designed to capture both practical needs and community priorities to inform balanced and inclusive planning decisions.

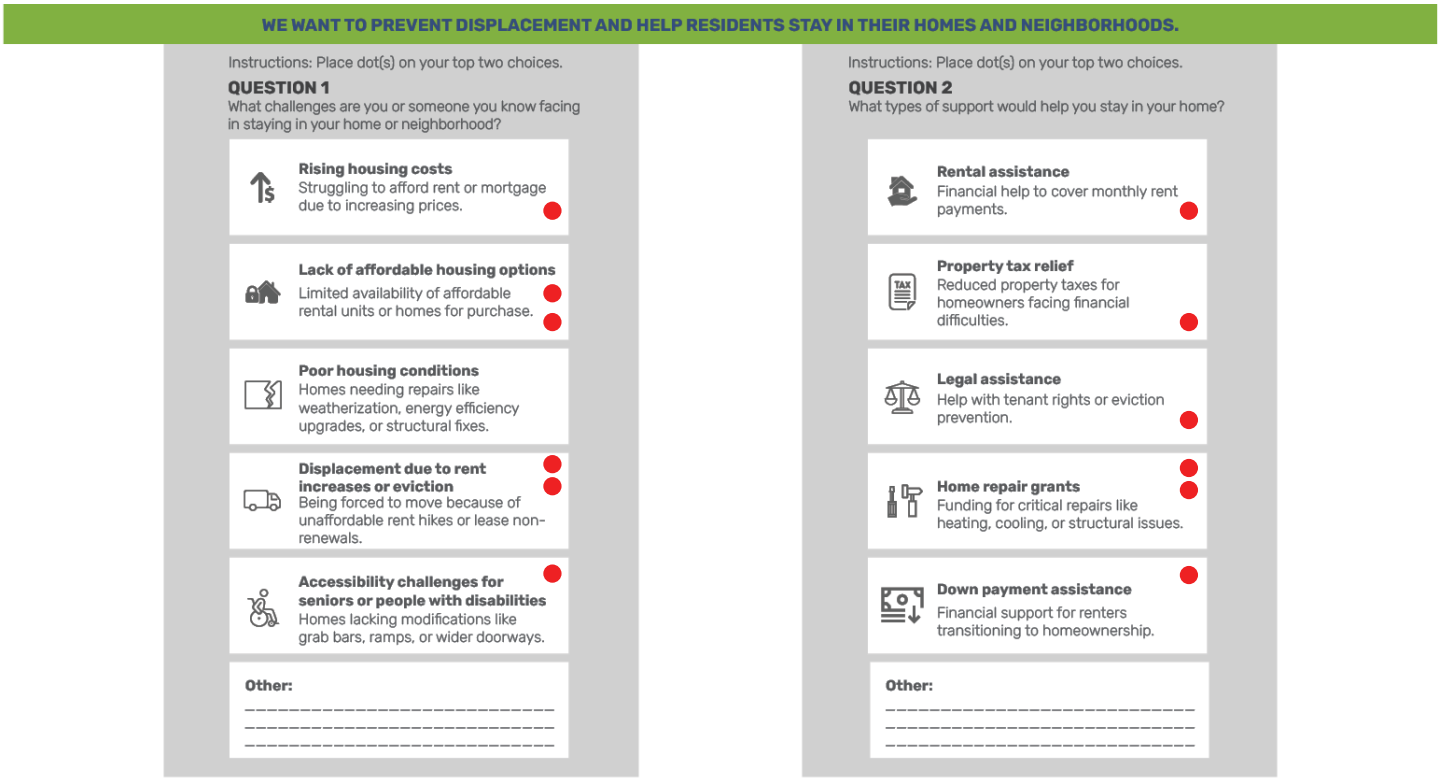
The survey results reflect a community that prioritizes **practical**, **immediate support** for residents over abstract policy changes. In terms of housing, the strongest emphasis is on helping **first-time homebuyers**, indicating that **affordability** and **access to homeownership** are central concerns. There is also notable interest in **increasing the supply of affordable housing** and promoting **diverse housing types**, showing that residents value both **opportunity** and variety in living options.

Regarding **services for low-income families**, the highest priority is **affordable childcare**, underscoring the importance of supporting working parents and families with children. Housing-related supports, such as **rental assistance** and **emergency housing**, are also highly valued, highlighting that stability and security **in living arrangements** remain key community needs. Services like mental health counseling and professional development, while important, are considered secondary to basic family and housing supports.

Finally, the community's **favorite places** reveal **a strong appreciation for public green spaces**. Serenity Ridge Park leads in popularity, showing that **residents value access to outdoor recreation and natural settings**, which is consistent with the results collected in the Arvada Community Survey. **Commercial areas and educational institutions** also receive support, demonstrating the importance of convenient amenities and educational resources. Comments emphasizing connectivity, bike paths, and recreational facilities suggest that residents are thinking about not only the places themselves but also how they are accessed and integrated into daily life.

Overall, these results point to a community focused on **practical well-being**, **family support**, **housing accessibility**, and **quality public spaces**, with an interest in creating a balanced environment where residents can live, work, and recreate comfortably.

Displacement and Stability - Arvada Ridge Station



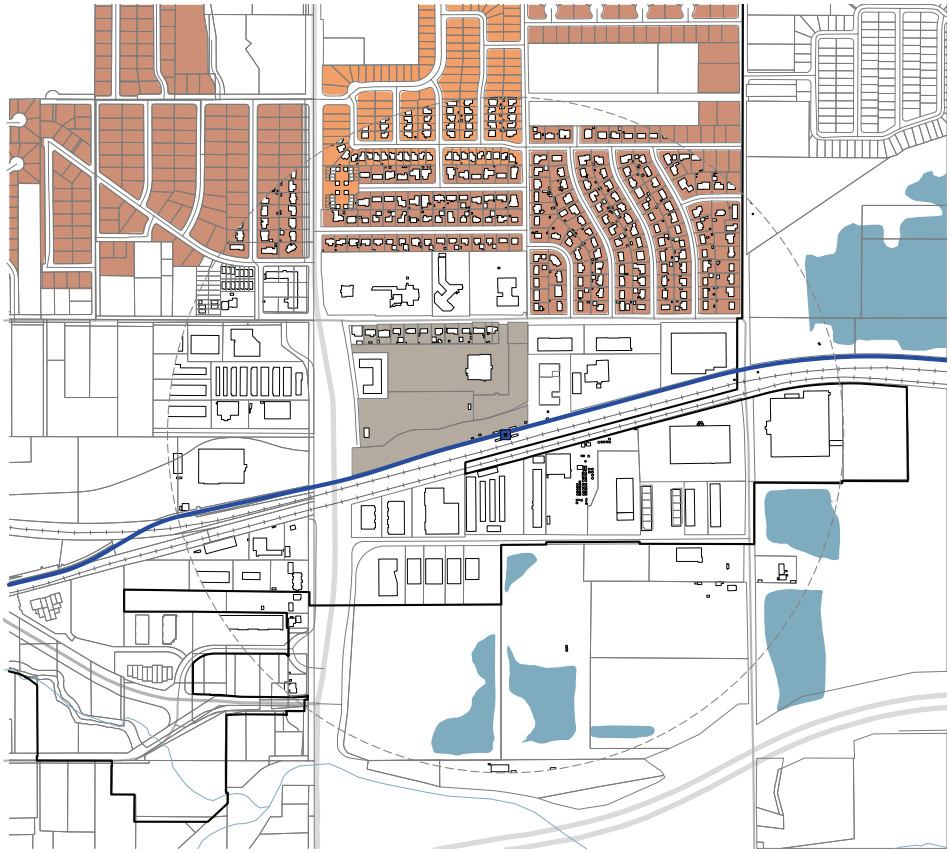
This board asked residents to share their experiences and needs related to **housing stability**. They were prompted to answer two questions: **what challenges** they or someone they know are facing in staying in their home or neighborhood, **and what types of support** would help them remain in their homes. The goal was to gather insights on barriers to housing security and identify practical ways the community can help residents stay where they live.

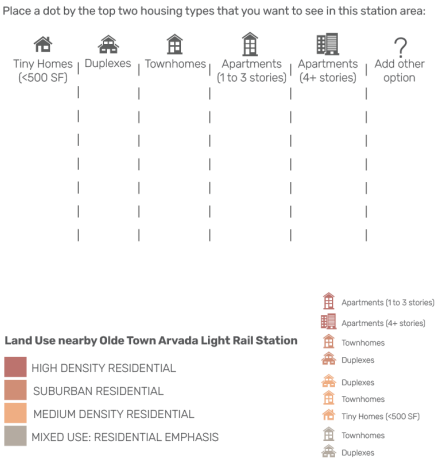
Survey participants identified **rising housing costs**, l**ack of affordable housing options**, **poor housing conditions**, **risk of displacement**, and a**ccessibility challenges for seniors or people with disabilities** as key challenges. The use of multiple red dots highlights that **financial pressures** such as **rent or mortgage increases** and a**ffordable housing availability** are the most pressing concerns. **Housing condition issues** and **accessibility barriers** also received attention, signaling that **residents value safe**, **functional**, and **accessible** homes. Overall, the results suggest that the community is facing significant economic and physical barriers to remaining in their current neighborhoods, with **affordability and accessibility as the primary obstacles**.

Participants prioritized **rental assistance**, **property tax relief**, **legal assistance**, **home repair grants**, and **down payment assistance**. Red dots indicate that **financial support**—covering **rent**, **taxes**, and **transitions to homeownership**—is considered most urgent. Green dots on **home repair grants** show that funding for **critical repairs** is also valued, emphasizing the importance of maintaining **safe and livable housing**. The results reflect a clear preference for **direct**, **practical interventions** that help residents remain in their homes and prevent displacement.

1.4. On-Site Project Activity Feedback - Gold Strike Station

Housing Needs and Afforability - Gold Strike Station





This map illustrates the future land use designations from the Comprehensive Plan alongside the current housing types in the area. Residents were asked to select the housing types they would like to see in the station area during the interviews.

Looking at the voting results for preferred housing types in the station area:

Tiny homes: 0 votes

Duplexes: 2 votes

Townhomes: 6 votes

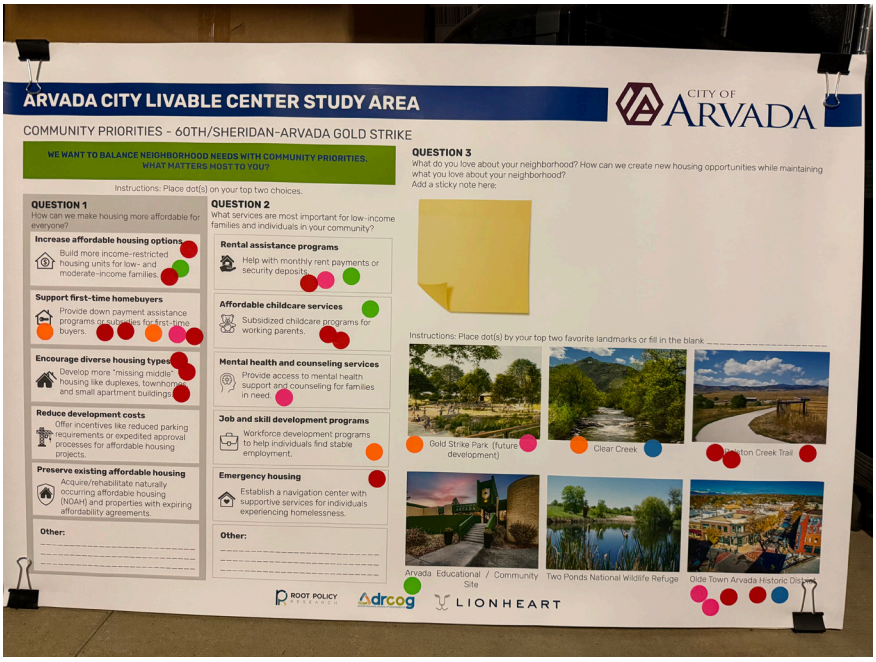
Apartments (1–3 stories): 10 votes

Apartments (4+ stories): 4 votes

The voting results for preferred housing types in the Gold Strike Station area indicate a **strong preference for apartment-style development**, particularly at a **moderate scale**. Apartments (1–3 stories) received the highest level of support with 10 votes (45%), suggesting that residents **favor mid-rise housing that can increase density** while remaining compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Townhomes were the second most supported option with 6 votes (27%), reflecting interest in medium-density housing that provides a balance between individual units and compact development. Apartments with 4 or more stories received 4 votes (18%), indicating a moderate openness to higher-density residential buildings near the station area. Duplexes received 2 votes (9%), showing limited but present interest in smaller multi-unit housing types, while tiny homes received no votes (0%), suggesting this option is not currently a priority for residents.

Overall, the results suggest that residents support increased housing density in the station area, particularly through mid-rise apartments and townhomes. This pattern aligns with typical transit-oriented development approaches, where moderate-density housing near transit hubs can support walkability, accessibility, and a more diverse housing supply while maintaining a neighborhood-scale character.

Community Priorities - Gold Strike Station



For this board, residents were invited to share their priorities for the 60th/Sheridan–Arvada Gold Strike station area by responding to three guiding questions. First, they were asked how housing could be made more affordable and accessible for everyone. Second, they were asked to identify the services that are most important for supporting low-income families and individuals in the community. Third, residents were encouraged to reflect on what they value most about their neighborhood and to suggest ways new housing opportunities could be introduced while preserving the character and qualities they appreciate. Participants placed dots on their top choices and added comments, helping highlight both community needs and local assets that should be considered in future planning efforts.

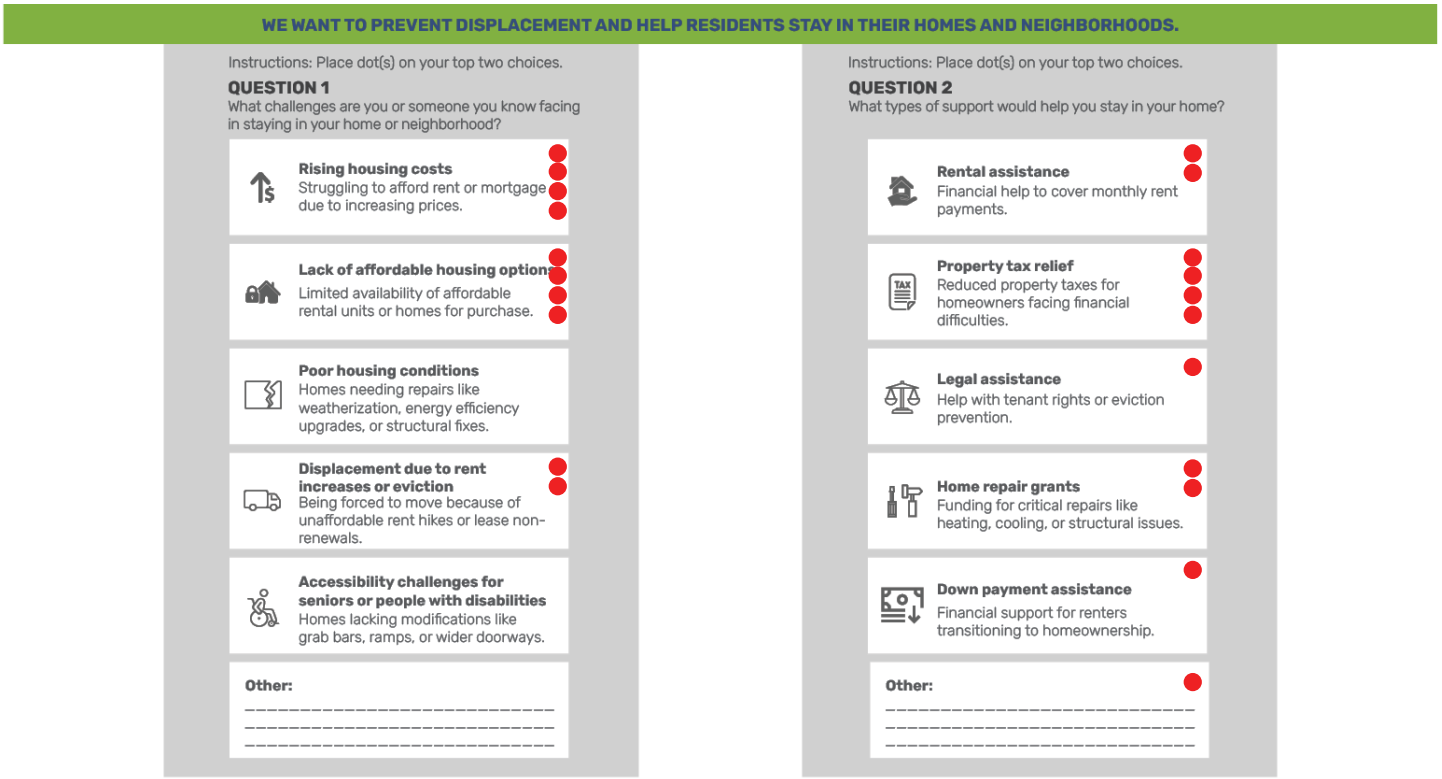
The responses collected on this board highlight a community focused on practical solutions to housing affordability and essential services that support everyday stability. In terms of housing, the strongest emphasis is placed on **supporting first-time homebuyers**, which received the highest number of votes, indicating that many residents see access to homeownership as a key pathway to improving housing affordability. There is also notable interest in **encouraging diverse housing types**, suggesting that residents recognize the importance of expanding housing options such as duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings to better accommodate different household needs. Increasing the overall supply of **affordable housing** also received support, reinforcing the community's concern about maintaining accessible housing opportunities.

Regarding services for low-income families and individuals, **rental assistance programs** and **affordable childcare services** emerged as important priorities. These results indicate that residents place strong value on supports that help households manage essential living expenses and enable working parents to remain in the workforce. **Emergency housing** and **job and skill development programs** also received attention, highlighting concerns about housing stability and economic mobility. While **mental health** and **counseling services** were mentioned, they received comparatively fewer votes, suggesting that residents may currently view basic financial and housing supports as more immediate needs.

The selection of favorite places reflects a clear appreciation for **local parks**, natural areas, and **recreational corridors**. Sites such as Ralston Creek Trail and Olde Town Arvada Historic District received multiple votes, indicating the importance of both outdoor recreation and vibrant community destinations. Natural landscapes like Clear Creek and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge were also recognized, demonstrating residents' strong connection to green spaces and environmental amenities. Together, these preferences suggest that maintaining access to nature, trails, and walkable community centers is an important consideration when planning for future housing growth.

Overall, the results suggest that residents are focused on **practical housing solutions**, **family-oriented services**, and **the preservation of valued community spaces**, emphasizing the importance of balancing new development with the environmental and social qualities that define the neighborhood.

Displacement and Stability - Gold Strike Station



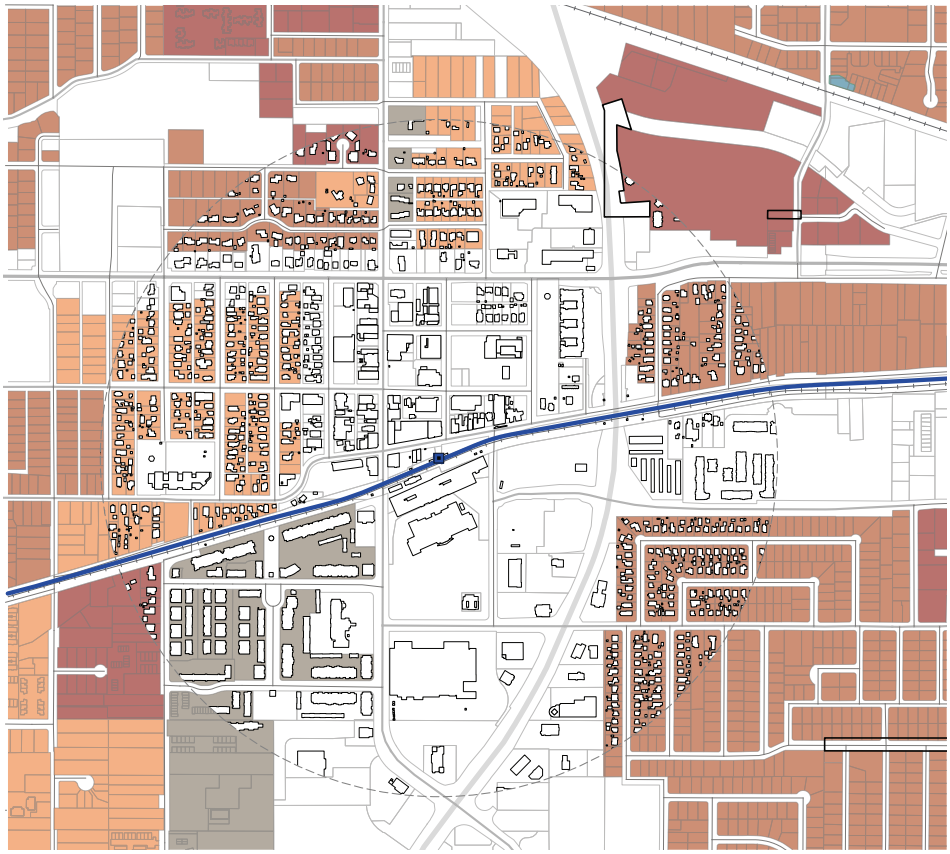
This board asked residents to share their experiences and needs related to **housing stability** and **displacement prevention**. Participants were invited to respond to two questions: what challenges they or someone they know are facing in staying in their home or neighborhood, and what types of support would help them remain in their homes. The goal of this exercise was to better understand the barriers residents encounter and identify practical strategies that could help prevent displacement and maintain community stability.

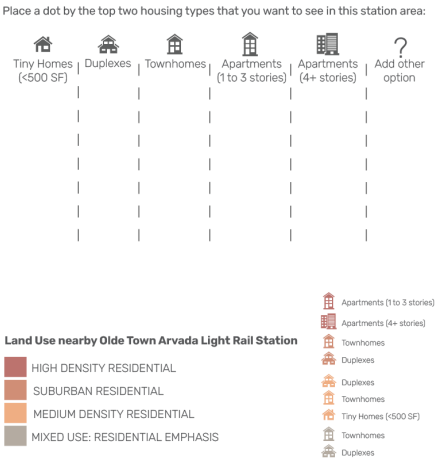
Survey responses indicate that **rising housing costs** and the **lack of affordable housing options** are among the most significant challenges facing residents. These two categories received the highest concentration of dots, highlighting strong concern about increasing rents, mortgage costs, and the limited availability of affordable units for both renters and potential homeowners. **Displacement due to rent increases or eviction** also received attention, reinforcing the idea that financial pressures are a primary driver of housing instability. Additional challenges, such as **poor housing conditions** and **accessibility barriers for seniors or people with disabilities**, were noted as well, suggesting that maintaining safe, well-maintained, and accessible homes is also important for residents seeking long-term stability in their neighborhoods. When asked what types of support would help residents remain in their homes, participants prioritized rental assistance and property tax relief, both of which received multiple votes. These results emphasize the importance of direct financial support to help households manage rising housing costs. **Legal assistance related to tenant rights or eviction prevention** was also selected, indicating concern about the legal vulnerabilities renters may face. At the same time, home repair grants received several votes, showing that residents value programs that help maintain safe and livable housing conditions. Down payment assistance was also mentioned, reflecting interest in programs that support the transition from renting to homeownership.

Overall, the responses suggest that residents see **financial pressures**, **housing affordability**, and **housing maintenance** as the most significant barriers to remaining in their homes. The preferred solutions focus on **practical**, **targeted interventions**—such as financial assistance, legal support, and funding for home repairs—that can help stabilize households and reduce the risk of displacement within the community.

1.5. On-Site Project Activity Feedback - Olde Town Station

Housing Needs and Afforability - Olde Town Station





This map illustrates the future land use designations from the Comprehensive Plan alongside the current housing types in the area. Residents were asked to select the housing types they would like to see in the station area during the interviews.

Looking at the voting results for preferred housing types in the station area:

Tiny homes: 4 votes

Duplexes: 2 votes

Townhomes: 0 votes

Apartments (1–3 stories): 4 votes

Apartments (4+ stories): 2 votes

The voting results for preferred housing types in the Gold Strike Station area indicate that **residents favor a mix of housing options**, with a notable interest in smaller-scale apartments and tiny homes. Tiny homes received the highest support with 4 votes (33%), suggesting a significant interest in compact, low-impact housing. Apartments of 1–3 stories also received 4 votes (33%), reflecting support for mid-rise housing that increases density while remaining compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Apartments with 4 or more stories received 2 votes (17%), indicating moderate openness to higher-density residential buildings near the station area. Duplexes received 2 votes (17%), showing some interest in small multi-unit housing. Townhomes received no votes (0%), suggesting they are currently a lower priority for residents.

Overall, the results show a preference for smaller-scale and mid-rise housing options, indicating that residents are open to increasing housing variety and density near the station, but there is less interest in traditional townhome developments.

Community Priorities - Olde Town Station



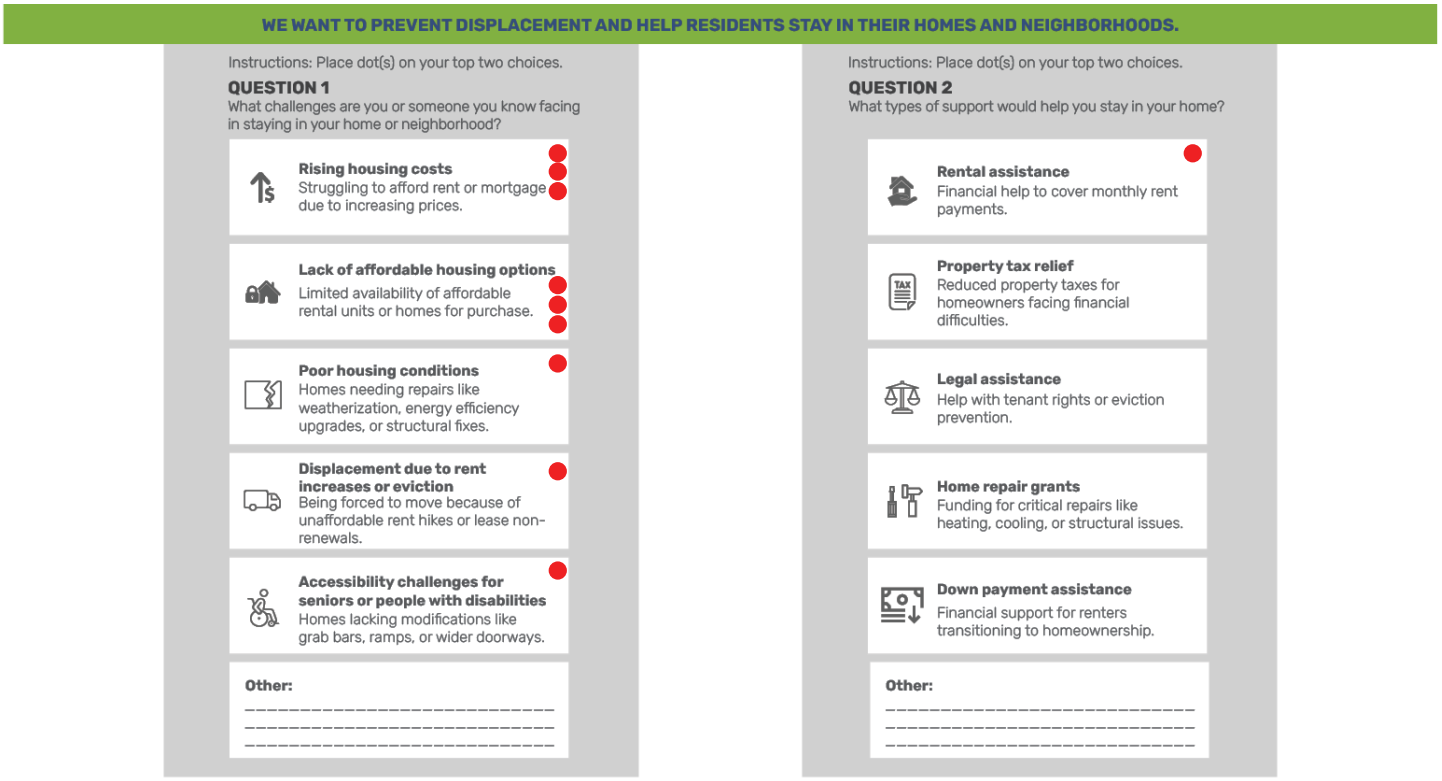
For this board, residents were invited to share their priorities by responding to three guiding questions. First, they were asked how housing could be made more affordable and accessible for everyone. Second, they were asked to identify the services that are most important for supporting low-income families and individuals in the community. Third, residents were encouraged to reflect on what they value most about their neighborhood and to suggest ways new housing opportunities could be introduced while preserving the character and qualities they appreciate. Participants placed dots on their top choices and added comments, helping highlight both community needs and local assets that should be considered in future planning efforts.

The board summarizing community input in the Arvada Livable Center Study area indicates that residents are primarily concerned with practical measures that improve housing access while strengthening everyday support systems. For housing-related priorities, the largest concentration of votes is placed on **increasing affordable housing options**, suggesting that expanding the supply of income-restricted housing is viewed as a central step toward improving affordability. **Support for first-time homebuyers** also receives several votes, indicating that access to homeownership remains an important aspiration within the community. Additional support appears for **encouraging diverse housing types**, such as duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings, reflecting a recognition that a broader housing mix could better accommodate different household structures. **Preserving existing affordable housing** also receives attention, signaling concern about maintaining the affordability of current housing stock. By contrast, reducing development costs attracts little or no visible support on this board.

In the category addressing services for low-income households, several responses cluster around **affordable childcare services** and **emergency housing**, both of which receive multiple votes. These responses point to a strong awareness of the immediate pressures faced by working families and individuals experiencing housing instability. Rental assistance programs and job and skill development programs are also selected, though less frequently, indicating that financial support and employment pathways are still considered relevant but somewhat secondary priorities. Mental health and counseling services appear to receive little or no voting activity on this board. The selection of preferred local landmarks highlights several places that residents associate with neighborhood identity. The Arvada Olde Town Water Tower receives the largest number of votes among the displayed locations, suggesting strong recognition of this landmark within the community. Additional support appears for Olde Town Arvada Historic District, Arvada Flour Mill Museum, and Olde Town Square, indicating appreciation for the historic and civic spaces that structure the town center. Other locations, such as the Shrine of St. Anne and Arvada's McIlvoy House, receive limited or no visible votes in this sample.

Overall, the responses suggest a community focused on expanding affordable housing supply, supporting working families through essential services, and maintaining the historic and civic landmarks that shape the identity of Olde Town Arvada. The priorities visible on the board emphasize concrete housing measures and community stability rather than more abstract policy interventions.

Displacement and Stability - Olde Town Arvada Station



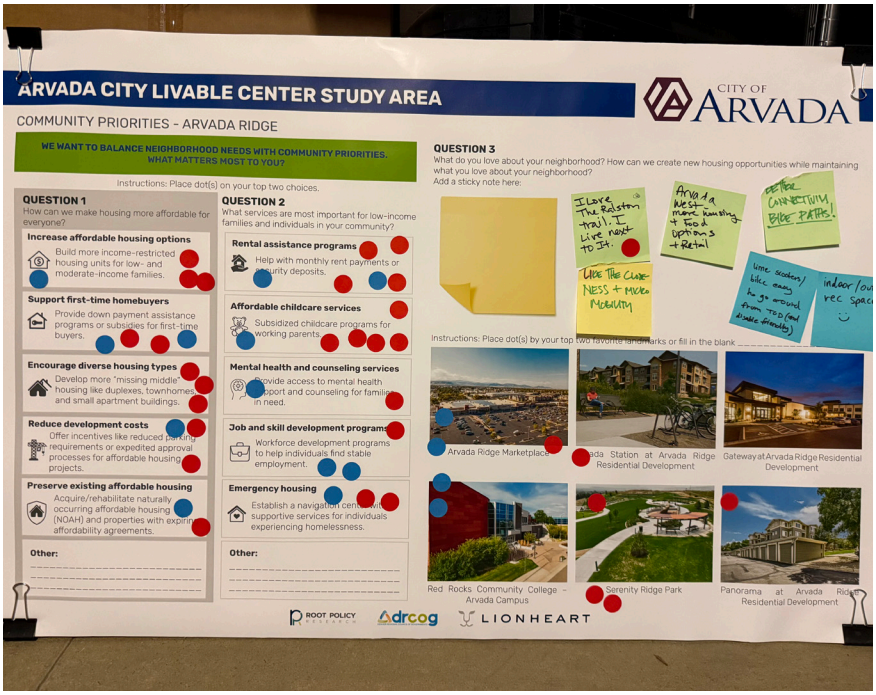
This board asked residents to share their experiences and needs related to **housing stability** and **displacement prevention**. Participants were invited to respond to two questions: what challenges they or someone they know are facing in staying in their home or neighborhood, and what types of support would help them remain in their homes. The goal of this exercise was to better understand the barriers residents encounter and identify practical strategies that could help prevent displacement and maintain community stability.

Survey responses indicate that **rising housing costs** and the **lack of affordable housing options** were the most frequently noted challenges, each receiving 3 votes, highlighting strong concern about increasing rents, mortgage costs, and limited availability of affordable units. Other challenges, including **poor housing conditions**, **displacement due to rent increases or eviction**, and **accessibility challenges** for seniors or people with disabilities, each received 1 vote, suggesting that maintaining safe, accessible, and well-maintained housing is also important for long-term stability.

When asked what types of support would help residents remain in their homes, **rental assistance** received 1 vote, reflecting interest in direct financial support to manage housing costs. Overall, the responses suggest that residents see **financial pressures**, **housing affordability**, and **housing maintenance** as the most significant barriers to staying in their homes. The preferred solutions focus on practical interventions—such as financial assistance and programs to maintain safe and livable housing—that can help stabilize households and reduce the risk of displacement within the community.

1.6. Website Project Activity Overview

Contribution Activity



For this board, residents were asked to provide input on three key questions to guide future development in their community. First, they were asked how housing could be made more affordable and accessible for everyone. Second, they were asked to identify the services that are most important for low-income families and individuals in the neighborhood. Third, residents were invited to share what they love about their neighborhood and to suggest ways to create new housing opportunities while preserving the qualities and character they value most. This exercise was designed to capture both practical needs and community priorities to inform balanced and inclusive planning decisions.

The survey results reflect a community that prioritizes **practical**, **immediate support** for residents over abstract policy changes. In terms of housing, the strongest emphasis is on helping **first-time homebuyers**, indicating that **affordability** and **access to homeownership** are central concerns. There is also notable interest in **increasing the supply of affordable housing** and promoting **diverse housing types**, showing that residents value both **opportunity** and variety in living options.

Regarding **services for low-income families**, the highest priority is **affordable childcare**, underscoring the importance of supporting working parents and families with children. Housing-related supports, such as **rental assistance** and **emergency housing**, are also highly valued, highlighting that stability and security **in living arrangements** remain key community needs. Services like mental health counseling and professional development, while important, are considered secondary to basic family and housing supports.

Finally, the community's **favorite places** reveal **a strong appreciation for public green spaces**. Serenity Ridge Park leads in popularity, showing that **residents value access to outdoor recreation and natural settings**, which is consistent with the results collected in the Arvada Community Survey. **Commercial areas and educational institutions** also receive support, demonstrating the importance of convenient amenities and educational resources. Comments emphasizing connectivity, bike paths, and recreational facilities suggest that residents are thinking about not only the places themselves but also how they are accessed and integrated into daily life.

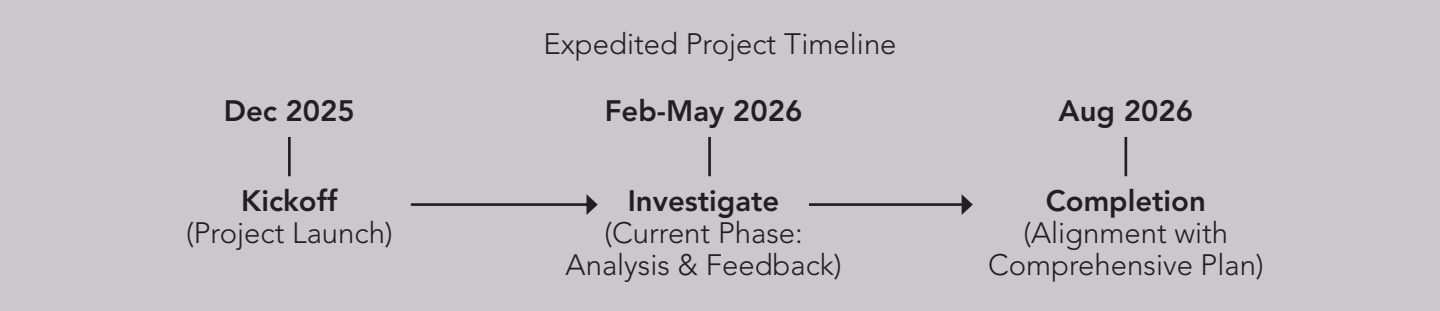
Overall, these results point to a community focused on **practical well-being**, **family support**, **housing accessibility**, and **quality public spaces**, with an interest in creating a balanced environment where residents can live, work, and recreate comfortably.

1.7. Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Highlights

Project Introduction and Goals

The City of Arvada, in partnership with the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), has officially launched the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) study. Developed by a consulting team consisting of Lionheart and Root Policy, this initiative is funded through DRCOG's Livable Centers Program.

The primary objective of the study is to seamlessly integrate land use, housing, and transportation infrastructure. By doing so, the City aims to increase housing and job density within connected centers, enhance multimodal accessibility, and promote a diverse inventory of accessible housing options.



Key Deliverable: The final project output will feature a set of actionable strategies and illustrative maps for designated station areas, accompanied by implementation "recipes" that detail required partnerships, capital improvements, and promotional steps.

Housing Needs and Displacement Analysis

To ensure alignment with broader community goals, the study will actively cross-reference Arvada's Housing Needs Assessment, DRCOG's regional assessment, and existing municipal plans. A key target is identifying specific opportunities within station areas to meet critical city-wide demands, such as establishing rental units for households below 50% AMI (Area Median Income) and creating for-sale homes priced under $350,000.

A foundational component of this phase is a comprehensive displacement risk analysis. This study will evaluate how adding density might affect current residents—with a particular focus on renters. By analyzing indicators such as renter status, low-income thresholds, and housing cost burdens, the team will map vulnerable communities. Crucially, this analysis will weigh future development impacts against existing "business as usual" displacement risks.

Station Area Analysis and Initial Observations

The study evaluates four commuter rail stations and three high-frequency bus stops to capture a diverse range of local conditions and opportunities.

Transit Location	Classification	Initial Observations & Opportunities
Olde Town	G-Line Station	High walkability and strong multi-family inventory. Cost-burdened populations exist on the periphery. RTD does not view the parking garage as a housing opportunity.

Transit Location	Classification	Initial Observations & Opportunities
Gold Strike	G-Line Station	Bisected by the rail line, mixing industrial and residential zones. The existing park-and-ride lot represents a significant infill opportunity.
Arvada Ridge	G-Line Station	Features dense residential zoning with existing multi-family housing. Future plans will respect and incorporate the history of the Ridge Home campus.
Wheat Ridge / Ward Rd	G-Line Station	Contains limited acreage within Arvada boundaries; primary development opportunities fall under Wheat Ridge's jurisdiction.
Sheridan & 64th	Bus Stop Corridor	Displays substantial potential for infill development utilizing underutilized parking structures and lots.
Wadsworth & 80th	Bus Stop Corridor	Highly potential infill area. A dedicated intersection improvement study is kicking off shortly, requiring strict cross-mitigation.
58th & Independence	Bus Stop Corridor	Active development is already underway, presenting immediate opportunities to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity.

Technical Analysis and Strategy

The consulting team highlighted four primary technical lenses driving their strategy formulation:

- **Connectivity & Walkability**: Identified as a baseline challenge in five of the seven study areas. Proposed interventions include trail connections, completing sidewalk gaps, planting shade trees, and executing intersection safety modifications.

- **Parking Dynamics**: A clear tension exists between state-level goals regarding reduced parking minimums and current city/developer standards. The study will focus on optimizing over-parked commercial sites (such as the Target lot at 80th & Wadsworth) and balancing the perceived parking shortage in Olde Town's core against the oversupply south of the transit line.

- **Redevelopment Site Identification**: The team is actively isolating parcels primed for redevelopment, specifically targeting affordable housing placement. Market viability is being assessed using feedback gathered from a specialized developer meeting held on February 10, 2026.

- **Environmental Constraints**: Development within established floodplains (e.g., 58th & Independence) will not be automatically excluded. Instead, these sites will remain under consideration contingent upon proper engineering and stormwater mitigation.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The project features a robust, multi-layered outreach strategy designed to capture diverse public and institutional feedback:

- **Public Pop-Up Events**: Direct commuter outreach was conducted at transit stations, including Olde Town (Feb. 9, 2026), Arvada Ridge, and Gold Strike (Feb. 10, 2026), paired with an active digital survey on the project website.

- **Targeted Focus Groups**: Dedicated stakeholder meetings were successfully held with the HAC. Additional sessions were conducted on February 10, 2026, with "Yes In My Backyard" (YIMBY) groups and local developers to secure specialized market and advocacy insights.

- **Inter-Agency Coordination**: Ongoing alignment is established with RTD (focusing on housing potential at park-and-ride lots) and city teams managing the upcoming Wadsworth & 80th Ave intersection study.

HAC Feedback and Questions

During the briefing, the Housing Advisory Committee provided direct guidance to steering the next steps of the analysis:

- **Inter-Academic Synergy**: Formally coordinate with the upcoming Wadsworth & 80th intersection study group within the next few months.

- **Sub-Area Plan Integration**: Review and incorporate the specific parking studies already documented in existing sub-area planning files.

- **Data Updates**: Integrate the newer affordable housing project data provided and emailed by Mindy Mohr.

- **Geographic Flexibility**: Authorize the consulting team to look beyond the traditional 1/4- and 1/2-mile transit radius when justified by market or spatial conditions.

Next Steps

As the project transitions from the Investigate phase into the Create phase, the workload will be distributed across the following immediate actions:

1. Synthesize all public/stakeholder inputs into data models.
2. Advance the displacement risk analysis ("business as usual" model).
3. Coordinate stormwater mitigation data for floodplain & Wheat Ridge.
4. Draft formal recommendations and the Implementation Action Plan.
5. Return to the HAC in May 2026 to present draft recommendations.

1.8. Developer Focus Group Meeting Highlights

Introductions & Project Overview

The City of Arvada and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) partnered with consulting firm Lionheart to explore housing integration strategies around four transit stations and three prototypical bus stops. Led by Rebecca Leonard, Christine Shine, Jamie Shaw, and Molly Patrick, this study will directly shape Arvada's upcoming Comprehensive Plan through future policy adjustments, new municipal programs, and specific development projects.

Current Market Conditions & Challenges

A sharp consensus emerged that the local housing market is facing unprecedented headwinds:

- **Macro Outlook**: The market has suffered a difficult 18 months, with another 6 to 12 months of stagnation expected before a projected recovery in 2027.

- **Buying Disincentive**: Skyrocketing interest rates have crippled the attached-dwelling market (condos/townhomes). For example, a property renting for $1,950/month carries a $3,500 monthly mortgage, destroying the incentive to buy.

- **Rental Competition**: High vacancy rates have forced landlords to offer aggressive concessions, such as 2 to 3 months of free rent, while high-end single-family homes remain disproportionately strong.

- **Stigma Shift**: Due to ongoing systemic challenges, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is currently viewed by the market as a liability rather than an asset.

Station Area Analysis and Initial Observations

The study evaluates four commuter rail stations and three high-frequency bus stops to capture a diverse range of local conditions and opportunities.

Barrier	Core Issue	Economic Impact
Permitting & Entitlements	Long, unpredictable timelines; poor inter-departmental coordination (e.g., Fire vs. Planning); high staff turnover; anti-development sentiment.	Drives up holding costs and introduces severe project risk.
Exorbitant Impact Fees	Water tap and sanitary sewer fees have tripled over the past two years. "Insane" park fees penalize density.	A single multi-family project was hit with a $2M park fee.
Conditional Use Permits	Mandating a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for residential housing in mixed-use zones.	Triggered a year-long re-approval process for a project that actually reduced its density.
Rigid Parking Minimums	Strict space minimums ignore transit proximity (e.g., requiring 1 space/unit 200 feet from a station and public garage).	Structured parking costs $1.5M for just 17 spaces, even though only ~40% of affordable housing residents own a car.

Barrier	Core Issue	Economic Impact
Mandatory Mixed-Use	Forcing ground-floor retail in areas lacking active commercial market demand.	Results in high commercial vacancy and complicates Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) financing.

Desired Needs in Arvada

To restore development viability, stakeholders outlined eight critical interventions:

- Flexible parking requirements and major reductions near transit.

- Municipal fee waivers for targeted housing types.

- Streamlined review processes accompanied by dedicated project guides.

- Reduced off-site infrastructure burdens and regional stormwater detention solutions.

- Direct local investment to stop the degradation of housing design quality caused by soaring costs.

- A comprehensive city-led remapping of local floodplains.

Transit-Related Security and Ridership

Public Safety Liabilities: Proximity to transit is actively penalized by consumers due to rampant vagrancy and crime. This lowers property values and forces developers to fund expensive, private security measures.

Low Transit Utility: Unreliable service has crushed ridership; a recent developer survey showed only 40% of tenants bothered to renew their free RTD passes.

Proposed Solution: The City must take direct control of station security, potentially integrating police substations. While RTD's planned service frequency doubling in June 2026 is a positive step, it requires a massive promotional campaign to rebuild public trust.

Land Costs & Funding Gaps

Cost Realities: Total development costs per door have soared from an old target of $10,000–$15,000 to a restrictive $25,000–$50,000 due to acquisition, environmental abatement, and required public infrastructure.

Subsidy Layering: Developing affordable housing requires stacking local support (fee waivers, density bonuses) to successfully unlock and leverage state-level grants like DOLA and Proposition 123.

Clean Sites: Stakeholders suggested that when the City acquires land for housing, it should deliver clean, development-ready sites without expecting a direct financial return.

Next Steps

Lionheart will immediately execute the following actions to advance the study into its final phases:

1.Synthesize Developer Data: Immediate.Integrate focus group feedback regarding market barriers, fees, and safety directly into the active TOC study.

2.Evaluate Code & Policy: Spring 2026.Investigate specific regulatory code sections, fee structures, and parking policies to draft formal policy alternatives.

3.Develop Case Studies: Spring 2026.Document successful external models—specifically the Wheat Ridge 90-day approval process and Arvada's land acquisition history—to serve as advocacy tools.

4.Propose RTD Liaison: Spring 2026.Formulate an official recommendation for RTD to establish a dedicated housing developer liaison to accelerate inter-agency approvals.

5.Focus Group Review: May 2026.Share the initial draft of recommendations back with this developer focus group for technical verification and refinement.

6.Finalize Study: August 2026.Complete and deliver the final TOC study to serve as a foundational element of the City's Comprehensive Plan update.

1.9. YIMBY Focus Group Meeting Highlights

Study Scope and Goals

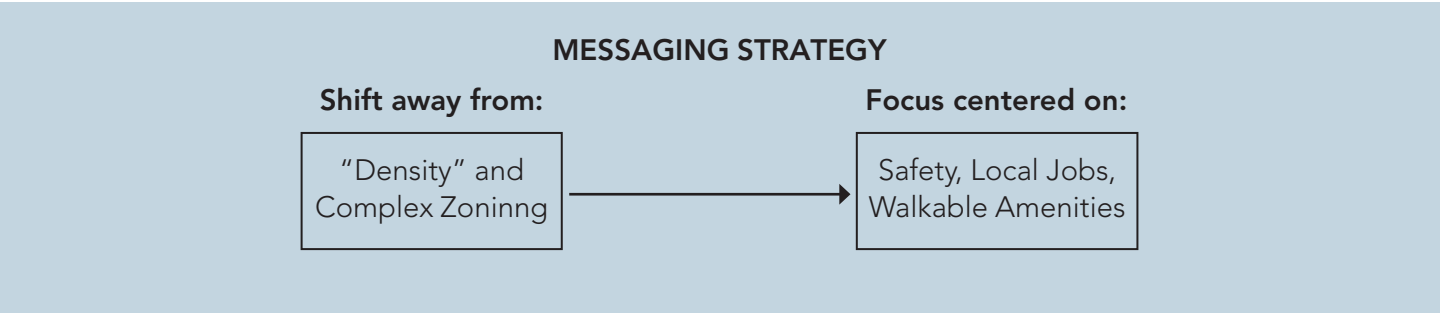
This branch of the study focuses on the intersection of housing, transit, and holistic community livability—specifically examining urban design, connectivity, commercial expansion, and public safety.

Core Mandate: Establish definitive, actionable connection strategies for seven key nodes (four rail stations and three high-frequency bus stops).

Strategic Vector: Use transit-oriented areas as a baseline to forge a working consensus between developers, municipal staff, and community advocates to directly inform Arvada's upcoming Comprehensive Plan.

Community Engagement and Messaging

To build local trust and avoid unnecessary friction, stakeholders established a clear public communication framework:



The Framework: Frame all development benefits through the "Three E's": Economy, Environment, and Equity (a core priority for groups like Arvada for Progressive Action).

Tactical Outreach: Utilize high-traffic venues like May Farmers' Markets for public tabling. Target renter populations (such as residents at The Russell) who represent natural allies for "Missing Middle" townhome options.

Local Leadership: Partner with Brady Porterfield-Finn (Neighborhood Engagement Coordinator) to tap into the Neighborhood Leader Network. Specifically engage influential leaders like Karen DeAguero (Arlington Meadows) early to prevent common procedural alignment bottlenecks.

Affordable Housing and "Missing Middle"

The committee highlighted clear socioeconomic and geographic disparities across Arvada:

- **Geographic Divide**: West Arvada exhibits strong anti-density sentiment (NIMBYism). East Arvada (bordering Adams County, near 64th & Sheridan/Gold Strike) has a higher Latino population and suffers from explicit safety concerns and a distinct lack of basic amenities.

- **Amenity Distribution**: Major municipal and recreational "apex facilities" are concentrated in the north and west, requiring a car to access. Future development must distribute amenities equitably, adhering to the economic principle that "retail follows rooftops" (using Olde Town as the baseline model).

- **Gentle Density**: Simply adding high-cost housing fails to fix structural affordability. Strong interest exists from mixed-income developers targeting 50% to 120% AMI. The messaging must champion "missing middle housing" and "gentle density" via humanizing, personal affordability stories.

Infrastructure, Connectivity, and Urban Design

Advocates identified critical design and environmental opportunities across the transit nodes:

Location / Focus	Identified Infrastructure Deficiency	Proposed Design Solution
Major Corridors	Sheridan & Kipling roads create severe, unsafe pedestrian barriers that isolate neighborhoods from transit.	Prioritize trail connections and sidewalk gap completions.
Olde Town Station	A major design flaw leaves the west side of Vance Street without a sidewalk, discouraging public garage use.	Install dedicated pedestrian paths along Vance Street to improve safety.
Gold Strike Station	Features a massive, underutilized RTD parking lot and purely functional drainage facilities.	Repurpose the parking lot for infill housing; transform detention ponds into "blue-green" community plazas (partnering with CSU/DUG).
Transit Stops	Basic bus stops are aesthetically poor and uninviting, suppressing potential transit ridership.	Upgrade stops with structural greenery, shade trees, and commuter amenities.

Zoning and Development Process

The committee recommends that the City of Arvada shift from a reactive posture to a proactive leadership role in land planning:

- **Eliminate Uncertainty**: The current Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requirement for mixed-use zones inserts developer risk. The City should implement an objective, standards-based approval process.

- **Expand the Housing Palette**: Scale up the city's "Housing Palette" framework (Section 2-1-8) to allow gentle infill density within traditional single-family Residential Neighborhood (RN) zones situated near transit infrastructure.

Amenity Deficiencies

The Problem: There is a critical, documented shortage of everyday retail necessities—particularly full-service grocery stores—near current transit hubs.

The Fix: Instead of waiting for the market to adjust, the City must proactively attract vendors by providing targeted market data directly to commercial developers and issuing a formal industry Request for Information (RFI).

Harrison's Advocacy Guidance (YIMBY Arvada)

Follow-up alignment from YIMBY Arvada outlined concrete organizational next steps:

- **Strategic Integration**: Coordinate May Round #2 outreach events with YIMBY Arvada's scheduled "Themed Happy Hours" with City Councilors, utilizing George as the primary point of contact.

- **Parking Truths**: Right-sizing parking minimums is critical. Recent projects built to rigid current standards show that at least half of their vehicle parking spaces sit entirely empty, while nearby bike racks are completely full. YIMBY Arvada strongly advocates for early implementation of active on-street paid parking management.

Next Steps

Lionheart will immediately execute the following procedural items across May and August 2026:

1.Secure RTD & BID Assets: May 2026.Obtain RTD's formal TOD policies for the Gold Strike lot and secure farmers' market tabling slots via the Olde Town BID.

2.Execute Target Engagement: May 2026.Map local neighborhood groups and connect with Arlington Meadows leadership to build out a unified, proactive outreach network.

3.Draft Policy Recommendations: June 2026.Formulate proactive municipal strategies for grocery recruitment, infrastructure funding models, and "Housing Palette" expansion into RN zones.

4.Develop Design Standards: June 2026.Begin drafting objective urban design standards to establish a streamlined, fast-track development approval process.

5.Adapt Maintenance & Safety Models: Summer 2026.Research Boulder's resident-led park programs and formally integrate evacuation/wildfire safety protocols (drawing from Marshall Fire lessons learned) into all recommendations.

6.Finalize Comprehensive Plan Stream: August 2026.Deliver the finalized study to serve as a baseline for the upcoming City of Arvada Comprehensive Plan update.