

# Commerce City Engagement Summary Report

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Prepared by:



Prepared for:





*Community Attributes Inc. tells data-rich stories about communities  
that are important to decision makers.*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background and Purpose

Commerce City is undertaking an Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). The EDSP complements existing and ongoing economic development planning and supports City Council's goal of promoting a balanced, thriving and inclusive city economy that cultivates, attracts and retains business. A vital part of the economic development strategy is equitable and inclusive engagement with stakeholders throughout Commerce City to inform strategy recommendations to advance the City's economic goals and objectives. This document provides a summary of engagement activities undertaken and findings gathered and synthesized from October 2023 through May of 2024. The activities, findings and recommendations described in this document are integrated into ongoing analyses and inform the economic development strategies and actions in the EDSP.

## Organization of This Report

**Methodology** provides a description of the strategies implemented as part of the engagement process.

**Summary of Findings** serves as a comprehensive overview of feedback received thus far throughout the engagement process.

**Findings by Engagement Type** summarizes stakeholder engagement activities feedback by engagement activity.

**Appendices** contains detailed engagement activity content and individual responses, as well as technical analyses.

## Methodology

The engagement plan for Commerce City's Economic Development Strategic Plan included three categories of outreach activities to seek public and stakeholder input on the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for economic development in Commerce City.

The first component of engagement was direct engagement, which included multiple listening sessions with city residents, members of the public and elected officials, interviews with City Council, meetings and focus groups with the Planning Commission, and EDSP Advisory Group, and other focus groups with key stakeholders. Participants for these were identified in collaboration with Commerce City staff. Through these engagement initiatives, Commerce City residents and community members were given an opportunity to shape the content of the strategic plan. The second phase of engagement involved an online presence, which was used to publicize in

person engagement activities and collect responses to an online survey. The third phase of engagement includes a public presentation and comment period prior to adoption of the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Engagement activities involved residents, property owners, renters, public and private sector workers, business owners and managers, members of city boards and commissions, and individuals from similar community or industry interests and/or diverse representation to speak to common issues. In addition, four focus groups solicited additional detailed feedback on specific key topics including planning commission, development and property ownership, Hispanic business community, major employers, commercial and industrial real estate, and future impacts and upcoming trends.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following key findings are aggregated across engagement activities and represent the diverse and interconnected priorities of the Commerce City community. They act as valuable insights into the city's economy and outline community perspectives.

### Commerce City's Economic Identity / Vision

- **Geographic Advantage:** Commerce City is geographically well-positioned, with proximity to significant landmarks and hubs such as Denver International Airport (DIA), Downtown Denver, and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.
- **Reputation and Perception:** There are concerns about Commerce City's current perception within the metro area. Some participants in this project desire to improve the city's reputation, aiming to shift the perception of Commerce City to a vibrant, innovative, and desirable place to live and work, or a center for innovation and creativity.
- **Diverse Economic Vision:** A common theme for Commerce City's future economy is the desire for a diverse economic landscape that includes various amenities and supports small and local businesses, aiming for a balanced development that meets the needs of all residents. Participants envision a future where Commerce City is a complete community, providing employment opportunities and amenities such as third spaces, recreation, health-centered locations, senior living, libraries, retail, sports fields, and other facilities.
- **Distinct Economic Identity:** Another common theme is the need for thoughtful consideration regarding Commerce City's economic identity and future direction. Participants emphasize the importance of establishing a distinct economic identity for the city. While the draft comprehensive plan outlines Commerce City as a technology corridor, some participants feel there is a need for a clearer definition and alignment with specific industries such as Life Sciences or emerging technologies.
- **Regional Differences:** The differences between the northern and southern parts of the city create distinct needs and wants. Residents of the northern range in Commerce City often express a desire for more services, amenities, public facilities, while core city residents more often express a desire for more restaurants and greater investment. The interests of the core city may not be as well represented as those of the northern range. Acknowledging and addressing the different needs and priorities of these distinct regions of Commerce City is an important strategic consideration.

## Economic Development Priorities

- **Infrastructure:** There is a fair amount of consensus on the need to invest in infrastructure in Commerce City, including road maintenance, traffic calming, streetlights, parks, and transit service. Many participants note that improved infrastructure would not only benefit residents but also attract more businesses and contribute to a broader tax base.
- **Environment:** Another priority for many in Commerce City is addressing environmental concerns and promoting clean air and water in Commerce City. Many participants advocate for a safe and sustainable environment, highlighting sustainable planning, development, and industry.
- **Retail, Services, and Amenities:** One of the themes for economic development that emerged during engagement activities is for the city to expand offerings in retail and services, especially in the northern range. Participants identified a range of desired businesses and facilities in Commerce City, including shopping centers, facilities like gyms and libraries, dining options, service providers, recreational spaces, and entertainment venues, highlighting the community's desire for accessible and diverse offerings and indicating a focus on enhancing the commercial landscape to meet growing demand. Healthcare access may be one particular category for focused attraction.

## Commerce City Industry

- **Economic Diversification and Innovation:** Commerce City is currently heavily invested in industrial, warehousing, and fossil fuel sectors. There is a common desire for diversification into industrial, commercial, and supportive industries, with some participants emphasizing clean energy, or emerging technologies such as quantum computing, semiconductors, and healthcare technology. Still other participants envision Commerce City as a leader in environmental sustainability and a technology hub, moving beyond its industrial image to attract diverse businesses.
- **Emphasis on Sustainability and Innovation:** Existing businesses in Commerce City are becoming increasingly focused on sustainability and electrification in their operations, including exploration of self-driving technology, automation, and promotion of sustainable energy use. Increased collaboration and partnership between the city and major employers to address infrastructure needs, particularly in transportation and power supply, may build up the strength of Commerce City's business-friendly economic development ecosystem as well as help companies to embrace automation and electrification.
- **Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs:** Many participants view support for small businesses and entrepreneurial

activities as a key strategy for economic growth in Commerce City. Important aspects of supporting local businesses include addressing bureaucratic and compliance challenges and cultivating an inclusive economic development ecosystem. According to participants representing and supporting small businesses, including multicultural and home-based businesses, economic development policies should be inclusive. The city may also prioritize efforts to communicate, partner, and validate the contributions of community-based organizations who support small business in order to retain them, as some, like Adelante, are considering relocation due to a lack of support at the city level.

- **Importance of Communication and Collaboration.** A consistent and committed relationship with the city, with regular meetings and open dialogue, is valued by the business community in Commerce City to address shared challenges and opportunities.
- **Support for Business:** High city taxes and fees, along with unaffordable commercial rents, are concerns for participants who represent business interests in Commerce City, hindering growth and investment in Commerce City. Businesses express a need for support in various areas, including shared space, assistance with opening or expanding a business in Commerce City, and access to capital.
- **Proximity to Denver International Airport (DIA):** For many participants, Commerce City's proximity to the DIA presents opportunities for air and cargo-oriented businesses. Although, access limitations within the airport may hinder potential growth. Coordination with DIA is necessary due to shared borders, and "through-the-fence" access could improve logistics and economic activity but is likely to require negotiation.

### Workforce and Jobs

- **Local Job Creation:** Some participants hope to create more local job opportunities to reduce commuting, increase local spending, and encourage more community involvement in Commerce City. Thoughtful development of undeveloped spaces and creating sites which attract businesses are both suggested as ways to expand industry and increase local job offerings.
- **Labor Availability and Competition:** Business representatives highlight a shortage of qualified and skilled employees living within Commerce City as a pressing issue that is hindering growth. Employee retention and rising labor costs are also concerns.
- **Rising Housing Costs:** Affordable and workforce housing are seen as crucial to attracting and retaining employees for business representatives. Others see affordable housing as important to prevent displacement of existing Commerce City residents.

## Development in Commerce City

- **Opportunities in Development:** A common idea amongst the residential and business survey participants for Commerce City's future involves developing more mixed-used, pedestrian scale centers or community spaces, and beautifying the city. With approximately 36 square miles of vacant developable land and key sites such as the 72nd Avenue RTD station, Greyhound Park and surrounding areas, Derby, and land adjacent to the Dick's Sporting Goods Park, land and development are recognized as important assets and opportunities for Commerce City's expansion and growth.
- **Challenging Development Climate:** Development professionals' express frustration with Commerce City's development climate, calling Commerce City the "most difficult place" to develop in the Denver Metro. They cite bureaucratic hurdles, inconsistent rules and regulations, and unpredictability in the approval process, especially at the City Council level, as major barriers to development.
- **Roadblocks to Desired Development:** According to the development community, Commerce City offers a favorable market for diverse developments, including residential, retail, commercial, and industrial projects, but the city struggles to attract desired commercial and retail development because of the lack of sufficient residential rooftops, Council resistance to approving new residential projects, and the city's declining reputation in the development community.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** A common theme for participants in the development focus group is the need for a more functional collaboration between Commerce City's economic development staff, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and other economic development actors. Participating developers call for greater collaboration between the city and developers, emphasizing the need for positive relationships and clear, fair processes to repair the city's reputation in the development community.

## FINDINGS BY ENGAGEMENT TYPE

The following section lists key themes from various stakeholders, organized by the engagement activity.

### Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council Meetings

An Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) was convened and met three times in order to provide high-level direction to the development of the strategy and review in-progress work and engagement activities. The members of the Advisory Committee reflect staff from multiple different departments and backgrounds at Commerce City. The EDAC was asked to provide general oversight to ensure the creation of the Economic

Development Strategic Plan was not missing important components or stakeholder perspectives. The EDAC contributed insights, ideas, and direction to the planning process for the Commerce City EDSP and raised specific issues, such as the environment and consensus building among Commerce city's diverse community. In addition, the EDAC helped develop and refine the vision statement and goals that are foundational to strategy development.

CAI also engaged the City Council and Planning Commission (PC) in Commerce City through various methods. Willing City Councilmembers were engaged through individual listening sessions at the onset of the project. City Council met three times throughout the process of developing the EDSP; once in January of 2024, once in March, and finally for a presentation of the final EDAP in June. In these meetings, City Council was informed of the progress on the project and given opportunity to submit feedback and comments. To engage with Commerce City's Planning Commission, a focus group discussion was held at one of the PC's public meetings. Further information on the listening sessions and the focus groups is included in upcoming sections of this report, as well as in Appendix C.

## Individual Listening Sessions

This section summarizes input received from City Council members engaged during the initial wave of listening sessions (orientation interviews) conducted from October of 2023 to January of 2024. Individual listening session interviews oriented the early direction of the EDSP and helped to identify Commerce City's perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

- **According to listening session participants, Commerce City's flagship strength is its advantageous location.** Positioned nearby to Downtown Denver and at the crossroads of various critical regional transportation hubs and nodes, such as the Denver International Airport (DIA), Commerce City is offers central access for businesses and workers alike. The city is also proximate to major assets such as the Rocky Mountain National Wildlife Refuge and Dicks Sporting Goods Park. In addition to convenient regional accessibility, Commerce City boasts a culturally and ethnically diverse population, including a strong, Latino-rich population.
- **In terms of weaknesses, the disconnect between the northern range and the core city is identified by some participants as a challenge.** Also, despite having impressive trails, parks, and outdoor opportunities, some participants mention that these assets are not effectively promoted or well-known, suggesting a need for better marketing and utilization of existing resources. Finally, according to participants, surrounding communities may offer a threat to

Commerce City's economic vitality, potentially siphoning buying potential from its residents.

Based on the feedback received in the individual listening sessions, some of the focus areas regarding Commerce City's industry and economy may include the following.

- **Some participants emphasize the need for thoughtful consideration regarding Commerce City's economic identity and future direction** in order to establish a distinct economic identity for Commerce City. While the comprehensive plan outlines a vision for Commerce City as a technology corridor, there may be a need for clearer definition and alignment with specific industries.
- According to some listening session participants, **Commerce City's economy is heavily dependent on fossil fuels**, particularly with the presence of Suncor, which contributes significantly to the city's revenue, sales tax, and job opportunities. Not every participant agreed that the energy sector was foundational to Commerce City's economy, and some participants expressed concerns about pollution from local refineries, raising potential concerns about violations of EPA standards.
- **Several participants describe interest in diversification of Commerce City's economy**, especially within industrial, commercial, and supportive industries. Some suggestions for targeted investment or diversification include clean energy, Life Sciences and emerging technologies. One vision for Commerce City includes promoting the city as center for sports by leveraging the sports fields with off season utilization options such as lacrosse, rugby, and women's professional soccer.
- **According to some participants, Commerce City's proximity to the DIA presents opportunities for air and cargo-oriented businesses**, though access limitations within the airport grounds act as barriers. Other industries to target may include aviation and airport adjacent, or supportive industries, such as flight simulators, fuel, training, hotels, tourism, and clean energy ventures.

According to individual listening session participants, some recent trends in Commerce City which may affect the economy and economic development efforts include the following.

- **Many listening session participants describe a growing demand for services in Commerce City**, especially in the northern range, while revenue generation lags, posing a challenge for the city's financial sustainability.
- **Some listening session participants describe the rise of remote work** and how it creates demand for more coffee shops and

workspaces in Commerce City. According to one participant, neighborhood bars, a prominent feature in Commerce City, have benefitted from the recent allowance of food trucks, especially newer bars in the northern range.

- Many listening session participants hear Commerce City residents, from both northern and southern regions, express a desire for **more venues that cater to families, kids, and teens to provide community spaces for leisure and socializing**. They also hear language around keeping tax dollars local, indicating a preference for some residents to support local businesses and initiatives. According to listening session participants, another priority for many residents in Commerce City is addressing environmental concerns and promoting clean air and water.
- According to listening session participants, the interests of the northern range are well represented within the City Council, and these often include **a desire for improved amenities and services, including a grocery store, restaurants, neighborhood-serving establishments, and shopping options**. Some residents in this area also express frustration with perceived excessively high taxes, often attributed to metro districts.
- Some listening session participants also describe opposition among some of Commerce City's northern range residents and some City Council members to solely increasing residential development in the northern range to accommodate population growth. Instead, these groups are described as **desiring balanced growth and mixed-use development in the northern range in the future**.
- **According to listening session participants, residents in core city tend to express a desire for more investment, and more diverse development and services**, particularly in the restaurant sector. Some participants wonder what opportunities there may be to celebrate Commerce City's cultural diversity and make the core city an ethnic hub.

When it comes to economic development strategy in Commerce City, listening session participants gave the following feedback.

- **According to participants, there may be opportunities to improve collaboration and functional relationships** between Commerce City's economic development staff, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and other economic development actors.
- Some participants desire proactive economic development activities, such as more aggressive pursuit of leads and representation in regional economic development discussions. This is described as Commerce City showing initiative and being forward-thinking in order to match the efforts of other, nearby cities in economic development.

- Some suggestions for maximizing economic development in Commerce City include participating in **regional workforce development, designing programs to help businesses expand and thrive within Commerce City, and gathering data** on why businesses choose not to relocate to Commerce City through interviews, in order to inform strategies for attracting desired businesses.
- **Commerce City's identity, reputation, and character are emphasized by many participants** as crucial elements in shaping future economic development strategies. These participants raise concerns about the current perception of Commerce City within the metro area, desiring to improve the city's reputation and to be seen as a center for innovation and creativity. Suggestions for strategies to restore pride in Commerce City included attracting more CEOs and businesses to set up home base within the city limits, or applying arts, events, and activations as marketing and branding tools.

Individual listening sessions on development and investment opportunities in Commerce City reveal the following.

- **Many individual listening session participants describe potential for future growth and expansion in Commerce City due to the significant amounts of vacant, developable land.** The plots adjacent to Dicks Sporting Goods Park are highlighted by some as an untapped opportunity, as they have not been developed as planned. While some participants hope that development in the North or the new NAIOP challenge featuring the space will spur progress on the project, but others describe the development as a cautionary tale to inform future development projects.
- **The Derby area is viewed by some as an area of opportunity for future development** in Commerce City, particularly with the idea of developing a walkable hub. Some participants note that the area containing and surrounding Derby, initially planned as a tech center, has evolved into assorted warehouses, reflecting a shift in economic development.
- There is **mixed consensus on the former Greyhound Park development**, with some participants describing the project as a success and others describing concerns about displacement risks and about the city being able to maximize economic development potential in development projects.

## Online Survey

In coordination with Commerce City, Community Attributes deployed an online survey, targeted to residents and businesses owners in Commerce City. The aim of the survey was to assess the public's perception of Commerce City's relative strengths and weaknesses, and to elicit strategic

insight from those who know the city well. The survey was made publicly accessible from December of 2023 through March of 2024 via the project website and was advertised through several methods, including social media. The link to the survey was also disseminated by the city and its partners, including:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Cultivando
- Latina Engagement Taskforce Cohort #5
- Adelante
- Citizens Public Safety Advisory Board
- Cultural Council
- Derby Review Board
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission
- Environmental Policy Advisory Committee
- Housing Authority
- Parks, Recreation & Golf Advisory Committee
- Planning Commission
- Quality Community Foundation
- Senior Commission
- Youth Commission
- Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Veterans Commission
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP)
- Adams County Economic Development Division
- Adams County Regional Economic Partnership (AC-REP)
- North Metro Small Business Development Center
- E-470 Public Highway Authority
- Commerce City Historical Society
- Denver International Airport (DEN)
- HOA Outreach
- Dave Polley
- JR Ridings (BREDAC)

The survey contained questions pertaining to Commerce City’s current economy, as well as visions for its economic future. Translation of the survey was also available in Spanish. In the end, 212 responses were received, representing input from a diverse array of backgrounds, professions, and sectors. Key findings from the survey are summarized below. Survey questions and graphs describing the responses are included in their entirety in [Appendix A](#).

## Respondent Demographics and Information

- Most respondents (55%) live within Commerce City limits but work outside of the City, while another one-third (33%) both live and work in Commerce City.
- While 22 zip codes were listed, 81% of respondents live in the zip code 80022.

## Summary of Survey Responses

- When asked about their vision for the economic future of Commerce City, many survey respondents describe more restaurants and dining options, an additional grocery store, thriving retail and shopping, and more entertainment in the city.
- The city’s top goals around economic development, according to respondents, are to attract new businesses in traditional and emerging industries, to expand offerings in retail and services, to improve access to jobs that pay livable wages or improve upward mobility, and to support small businesses, including multicultural, and home-based businesses.

- Respondents identified the city’s strengths as accessibility to regional infrastructure and transportation modes, proximity to downtown Denver, and the current workforce base in the transportation, distribution and logistics sector. The Denver International Airport and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge were recognized as assets affecting Commerce City.
- Survey respondents identified the most prevalent issues facing the City as insufficient incomes and wages earned by City residents, the over-reliance of the city’s economy on a few big industry sectors, and the rising housing costs which increase risk of resident displacement. Other weaknesses identified include the economic disparity of opportunities across the city, and the imbalance of shopping and dining options.
- Survey respondents most often selected future development opportunities near DIA as the most critical opportunity the city has at its disposal. Development and investment in key sites throughout the city, including the 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue RTD station, Greyhound Park and surrounding areas, Derby, and land adjacent to the Dick’s Sporting Goods Park, was selected as the next most promising opportunity that Commerce City can leverage.
- Other opportunities selected often by survey respondents include increasing the number of businesses in the city and available office space, both of which would in-turn increase the base of jobs available to residents.
- Many respondents identify high cost of doing business and concerns about development in Reunion as equity and diversity issues.
- The most common ideas that respondents had for the city included lowering taxes, developing more mixed-used, pedestrian scale centers, developing community spaces, and beautifying the city.

## Business Respondent Demographics and Information

- Thirty-four of the survey respondents self-identified as representing a business interest in Commerce City. Of the businesses represented, the majority (17) have been in operation for over a decade. Seven were in business for 1-2 years and eight have been in business for 3-5 years.
- A broad range of industries was represented by survey respondents, with the most common industries represented being construction, professional services, and real estate.
- The majority of businesses (18) identified as having less than four staff, while three businesses have over 100 staff. 13 businesses had plans to expand and five had plans to open a new location. Twenty-five of the businesses are locally owned, 15 are family-owned, seven are employee-owned, seven are woman-owned, four are minority-owned, and two are publicly traded.

- About half of businesses were conducted fully remotely while the other half of businesses mostly worked in-person.

## Summary of Business Survey Responses

- Respondents representing business interests indicate that a shortage of qualified and skilled employees living within Commerce City is the most pressing issue hindering business growth. Employee retention, rising labor costs, excessive city taxes and fees, and largely unaffordable commercial rents are also high concerns.
- When it comes to industry specific challenges, a broken or lengthy development process is described by 17% of business responses and lack of suitable, affordable space for small businesses is described by 11% of business respondents.
- Of businesses who have faced challenges with the city's processes, 27% describe Commerce City as anti-development or anti-business, another 27% describe expensive process delays, and 13% describe receiving a rejection from City Council after significant time and investment had already been spent.
- When asked how businesses can be supported in Commerce City, respondents most often selected options for shared space, assistance with opening or expanding a business in C3, and access to capital.

## Public Listening Sessions (Studios)

Public listening sessions invited members of Commerce City's public to attend a group meeting, which aimed to collect feedback and facilitate discussion on the EDSP. Six total Public Listening Sessions were held in Commerce City, organized into two rounds, in which the first round focused on visioning and the second round focused on goals and strategies. Each round of Public Listening Sessions held three meetings, to provide ample opportunity for residents from different areas of the city or with different schedules to attend. One meeting was held in Bison Ridge recreation center in the northern range, another was held in Eagle Point recreation center in the core city, and the final meeting was hosted virtually.

The following includes key themes drawn from all Public Listening Sessions, for more information and record of all individual responses see [Appendix B](#).

### Public Listening Session Round 1: Visioning

The first round of Public Listening Sessions was conducted in February of 2024. This round of Public Listening Sessions was focused on envisioning Commerce City's economy of the future, developing a vision statement, and identifying major economic themes and goal areas for the strategic plan. This open house event allowed community members to drop in at any point during the two-hour timeframe to engage with nine interactive stations in which five stations asked questions on visioning and four stations asked questions on

themes and goals. For the virtual session, an interactive powerpoint presentation allowed participants to give feedback on the same questions as the in-person events.

### **Key Themes on Vision**

- Participants at the Bison Ridge public listening session described Commerce City as dynamic and small town while participants at the Eagle Point public listening session said that Commerce City has potential, has bad air, and is “difficult” or “hillybilly”. Virtual participants describe Commerce City as complex, segregated, and high potential.
- When asked what they love about Commerce City, participants from all locations express love and appreciation for Commerce City’s community and location.
- Many participants identify Commerce City’s best assets as an advantageous location, the DIA, available land and space, and diverse and friendly community.
- When asked about their vision for the economic future of Commerce City, participants often described a complete community where residents can gain employment and have places to go after work. Visions often included third spaces, healthy restaurants, recreation opportunities, health supportive institutions, senior living opportunities, libraries, retail shopping, sports fields, and amenities. Other visions for Commerce City included centering environmentally friendly practices, completing more community engagement, supporting small and local businesses, and improving Commerce City’s image.

### **Key Themes on Goals**

- Participants in all three public listening session locations rated each of the draft goal areas highly. These goal areas included:
  - A High-Functioning Economic Development Ecosystem
  - A Strong Community Identity
  - Leveraging Key Development Sites
  - Retail, Amenities, and Family-Oriented Spaces
  - An Economic Identity and Target Clusters
  - Housing Affordability and Cost of Living
  - Workforce Training and Living Wage Jobs
  - Infrastructure Investments (Transportation, Parks, etc)
  - Environmental Sustainability
- Infrastructure investments, environmental sustainability, and retail, amenities, and family-oriented spaces were rated highest while a strong community identity and a high functioning economic development ecosystem showed less priority.

- When asked what goals were missing from the above list, participants listed items such as:
  - Development issues in Commerce City, including uncertainty around property rights and City Council, the moratorium on metro districts, lengthy entitlement processes, increasingly high fees and challenging building codes
  - Derby redevelopment
  - Public health
  - Sports and recreation opportunities in Commerce City
- When asked what industries Commerce City should target, participants listed technology, clean energy, transit, hospitality, financial, manufacturing, senior care, and amateur sports. Further, many participants describe the desire to support local businesses in Commerce City and several participants hope that future job growth occurs in the office, retail, industrial, and government sectors.
- Participants describe desired businesses in Commerce City as; Shopping (Grocery, Big Box, and Local), Facilities (Gym, Senior Center, Library, etc), Dining (Healthy Options and Sit Down Restaurants), Services (Dry Cleaners, Gas Stations), Recreation (Sports Fields, Parks, and a Bandshell), and Entertainment (Movie Theater, Dave and Busters).

### **Other Key Themes**

- There is a fair amount of consensus among participants from all locations on need for investment in infrastructure in Commerce City, such as needed road maintenance, traffic calming, streetlights, and transit service.
- Some “big ideas” from participants included ideas to develop certain areas of the city with an economic development focus. Derby was an area of focus, as was Tower Road.
- A recurring topic was families commuting to other towns for afterschool sports and extracurriculars. Many participants describe sports fields and family friendly activities in Commerce City as high priority investments. Similarly, another recurring theme is Commerce City losing out on potential consumer spending and revenue that could be generated locally

## **Public Listening Session Round 2: Vision, Goals, and Strategy**

The second round of Public Listening Sessions was conducted in March. In addition to soliciting community feedback on the strategic direction of the EDSP, community members were asked to provide their reaction and input to a draft vision and goals. After a brief presentation, participants were asked to work through a consensus building activity in small working groups. The activity socialized the draft vision and goals language, as well as provided space for participants to begin suggesting strategies and actions.

## **Vision Statement Feedback**

- Suggestions for words to describe Commerce City’s community included welcoming, energetic, diverse, continuously growing, and inclusive.
- Many participants wished to highlight locally-owned shops, businesses, and destinations in the vision statement. Others wished to highlight accessibility of economic resources and opportunities.
- Some expressed a preference for the entire vision statement to be written in one language only
- Some participants wished the vision statement to include opportunities to be active or recreation activities.
- Others wished to highlight an economy which gives residents access to desired things.
- Some participants expressed preference to replace the word “global” with “bustling”.
- Others disliked the phrase “corner of the region”, preferring to using phrasing which keeps Commerce City central.

## **Goals and Prioritization Feedback**

This section will first summarize the goals presented to public listening session participants and second present the feedback received on that goal during listening session discussion or activities.

### **Goal 1. Complete Community.**

*This goal is meant to encapsulate community desire for more retail goods and services, entertainment, for more uses catering to families, teens, kids, seniors, and the importance of spending locally.*

- This goal was given the top priority by participants overall for Commerce City.
- Comments on this goal specify that more grocers, retail, and restaurants are the priority. A suggestion is given to collaborate with target, or large entities who “are trying to reach out and help”.
- Also important to some participants in this goal was affordable housing and healthy establishments.
- Some participants desire for this goal to have an education and workforce development emphasis.

### **Goal 2. Enterprise and Opportunity.**

*This goal is meant to describe a fair and predictable regulatory environment, support for small business and entrepreneurship, and opportunities for upward mobility.*

- Overall, participants rated this goal as the second priority for Commerce City.
- Comments on this goal describe a flexible land use code along with a fair and easy to understand tax code that is readable at the 101 level.

- Other items highlighted for this goal were vocational training opportunities, equity, support for development, and a focus on incentivizing businesses that the community wants to see.

#### Goal 3: Approachable.

*This goal is meant to work towards a future where the city is clean and safe. It envisions Commerce City as enjoyable, attractive, and inviting with a positive identity and regional reputation.*

- This goal was rated third priority by public listening session participants.
- Comments on this goal highlight desires to lower poverty rates and reduce unhoused populations.
- Some participants describe a desire to bridge the gap of differences between the north and south parts of the city and unify the community to make “One Commerce City”.

#### Goal 4. Innovative and Industrious.

*This goal describes an approach to supporting industry growth in Commerce City, prioritizing innovation within legacy industries, pursuing opportunities in new sectors, taking a proactive approach to securing investment, and leveraging assets and land.*

- This goal is rated as the fourth priority for participants.
- Some participants highlight a desire to diversify Commerce City’s industries and to attract new industry in the city.
- Some opportunities for new or expanded industry listed included, primary employers, medical tech, green tech, manufacturing, and airport city.
- Assets and land are also considered important pieces for this goal by some participants.

#### Goal 5. Collaborative and Can-Do.

*This goal involves having productive community conversations, developing strong relationships with partners, receiving a high ROI on economic development investments, and an engaged community.*

- Ranked last for importance, some participants had questions surrounding this goal, like, who is the city partnering with for mutual benefit?
- Some participants believe that ideas involving marketing and promoting existing economic development programs and resources were important to this goal.
- Other participants thought that this goal could also be about connecting northern and southern neighborhoods in Commerce City.

#### **Other Themes and Comments**

Other comments and feedback collected during the second round of public listening sessions are outlined below:

- Some participants describe a desire for higher density economic development.
- Some comments include consideration for what is or what could be Commerce City's centerpiece or keystone.
- Some ideas surrounded economic incubation.
- Some participants want to see a sales and use tax revamp.
- Desire for increased connectivity through transportation network was an item discussed as well.

## Focus Groups

Four focus group discussions were conducted, with each focused on a different aspect of Commerce City's economy. These aspects included Commerce City's Planning Commission, Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Major Employers, and Developers and Property Owners. Stakeholders for the focus group discussions were identified in partnership with city staff. The following contains key findings from these meetings.

### City Planning Commission Focus Group

A City Planning Commission Focus Group meeting was held during a public meeting. Five commissioners were in attendance and participated in a roundtable discussion. Discussion covered a wide range of topics, including infrastructure, economic diversification, community engagement, and addressing the commuter culture. Participants shared ideas for how Commerce City could transform its image, attract new industries, and create a vibrant community that retains residents and attracts businesses.

- According to some members of the planning commission, there's a need for **increased community engagement and outreach** to gather feedback from all parts of the city during the EDSP process, including both the north and south regions. Participants suggest utilizing various communication platforms, such as social media, neighborhood apps, and even traditional methods like postcards, to ensure broader participation in planning processes.
- Some commissioners describe a **perception issue with Commerce City, often associated with industrialization and pollution**. Widely, the commissioners hope to change this image and attract more diverse businesses and residents. Suggestions to combat this stigma included promoting the city's unique attributes and focusing on new development strategies that go beyond traditional industrial zones.
- **Flexibility in planning and land use is emphasized by some commissioners** to allow for diverse economic development. The northern range is mainly residential, and there's a call for more flexibility to encourage job creation and industrial growth.

- **The planning commissioners also discussed the possibility of Commerce City moving beyond its industrial image** and attracting new types of industries to diversify its economy.
- **Some commissioners described how Commerce City residents often commute to Denver for work.** Suggesting Commerce City is viewed as a "bedroom community," these participants push to create more local job opportunities to reduce commuting and encourage more local spending.
- **The focus group also discussed the possibility of developing the areas around the airport** and creating spaces that attract businesses. Some participants also see this as a way to shorten commutes, increase local employment, and increase community involvement.
- **Some commissioners see infrastructure as a top priority for economic development.** There are ongoing issues with road conditions, inadequate transportation access, and the lack of amenities, especially in newer areas like the northern range. Participants noted that improved infrastructure would not only benefit residents but also attract more businesses and contribute to a broader tax base.
- **Environmental issues were discussed by commissioners, particularly concerning industrial pollution and public safety.** Some commissioners advocated for a safe and sustainable environment in Commerce City's vision for the future, suggesting future efforts focus on clean air, proper lighting, and well-maintained roads. These discussions highlighted sustainable planning and development, with a focus on long-term environmental health and diverse housing options to ensure affordability.
- **Education was identified by some commissioners as a critical factor in supporting economic growth.** Suggestions to support education in Commerce City included bringing community colleges and vocational training to the area to create a skilled workforce and attract new businesses.
- **Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurial activities is also viewed as a key strategy for economic growth** by some commissioners. Improved infrastructure, better roads, and reduced development fees are seen as ways to encourage entrepreneurship. Participants suggested exploring mixed-use zoning and community colleges to foster job growth and innovation.
- **Some planning commissioners emphasized the importance of healthcare access and other essential services** in Commerce City. Noting the lack of healthcare facilities within Commerce City, requiring residents to travel significant distances for medical care, these commissioners describe how attracting healthcare-related

businesses would support the community's well-being and future development.

## Small Business and Entrepreneurship Focus Group

Small business owners, entrepreneurs, and economic development actors working with small businesses and entrepreneurs were invited to join a focus group. Discussion surrounded the small business and start up ecosystem in Commerce City, needs of local business owners and entrepreneurs, and opportunities or strategies for Commerce City to collaborate and cultivate a supportive and sustainable small business ecosystem.

- When it comes to city support for small businesses, **participants in the small business and entrepreneurship focus group appreciate that the city has invited businesses to participate** in focus groups and round tables, and that they work to provide access to resources at local, state, and chamber of commerce levels.
- According to many participants, one of the biggest current economic **challenges for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Commerce City is bureaucracy and compliance**. The complexity of permits and how requirements vary across different districts, causes confusion and acts as a major barrier for small businesses. When it comes to government contracting, in particular, some participants point out a gap in understanding the requirements for being a contractor for government agencies. According to participants, many businesses lack guidance on the necessary steps.
- **Some participants describe challenges for small businesses to obtain capital**. Incentives that are in place are often not well-publicized or not made accessible to smaller entities who could really benefit from them.
- **A lack of cohesive marketing efforts by the city to promote small businesses is another concern brought up by some participants**. Although some efforts have been made to promote local business, they are not comprehensive or targeted, missing an opportunity to support and partner with small and local businesses.
- **By investing in place-based strategies, many participants believe that the city can create a sustainable environment for small businesses to thrive**. This could include enterprise zone tax credits, co-ops, and pro-grams to help businesses own their real estate.
- Many participants in this focus group believed that it is essential for **the city to engage more deeply with business owners** to understand their needs and tailor pro-grams accordingly. The focus group emphasized the importance of follow-up and continued collaboration to ensure progress and address ongoing concerns.
- **Some participants describe how small businesses need assistance with AI** and other technological items to ensure

businesses are operating well in the current market and are prepared for the future. Collaboration with technology hubs and industry conventions may be opportunities to give these businesses valuable insights.

- **Some participants in this focus group see opportunities in areas like quantum computing, semiconductors, and healthcare technology emerging.** They describe an opportunity for the city to explore these and connect local entrepreneurs with these trends.
- **When it comes to cultivating an economic development ecosystem to support small businesses and entrepreneurs, some participants feel that Commerce City could do more.** Building up direct partnerships with key stakeholders is an essential step. Another important step is to define economic development in Commerce City with inclusivity baked in. Economic development policies should be inclusive, ensuring support for small businesses at all stages.
- **On suggestion was for the city to conduct an assessment to understand what resources are available and where the gaps are before introducing new programs.** It is also suggested that Commerce City investigate and leverage existing state resources. By coordinating better with state-level programs, Commerce City can bring support to its local businesses.
- Keeping key stakeholders or partners in economic development engaged may be an important strategy for Commerce City moving forward. Some stakeholders, like Adelante, are considering moving to other cities due to a lack of support from Commerce City. **According to some focus group participants, for the city to retain such stakeholders, it must make an effort to communicate, partner, and validate their contributions.**
- Participants representing community based organizations that support small businesses and entrepreneurs in Commerce City **hope to see commitment and accountability from the city following the completion of the EDSP.** They suggest publicly showing progress on tangible goals, perhaps through a public dashboard, to track progress and help the city to express commitment to its partners.

## Major Employers Focus Group

Executives and managers from top employers in Commerce City were invited to join a focus group. Discussion in this group highlighted the need for ongoing collaboration and communication between businesses and the city, and included suggestions on how Commerce City can improve its partnership with employers.

- **According to participants in this focus group, Commerce City's central location is a key advantage**, with proximity to customers, major transport routes, and infrastructure like railroads and airports.
- **The city's affordability for housing and business development is also appealing to employers** and contributes to its growth potential, as it attracts a larger labor pool. Some participants rely on more residential growth in the city to support projected labor requirements.
- Some challenges listed by some of Commerce City's major employers include **coordination with neighboring municipalities, traffic congestion, and infrastructure issues**. Some participants discuss disruption caused by railroad blockages, particularly on 96th Avenue, which affects employee commute times and business operations. They describe a desire for infrastructure improvements to address these disruptions.
- **The availability of labor is a concern for many employers** as well, who describe competing for workers with other employers. There is also pressure from state-level regulations that impact labor costs and benefits. To meet the labor demand, there's a need for more affordable and workforce housing to attract employees to the area.
- For energy-related businesses, a challenge can be the **rapidly changing regulatory environment** which creates uncertainty and challenges in compliance.
- **When it comes to industry trends, the focus group reflected a positive outlook for growth and expansion** within Commerce City, with many employers describing plans for expansion and growth.
- **According to many participants, there's a need for more collaboration and partnership between the city and major employers to address infrastructure and other issues**. The city is encouraged to invest in infrastructure to support business growth, particularly in transportation and power supply, which are crucial for companies embracing automation and electrification moving forward.
- **According to some participants, the relationship between Commerce City and the DIA requires coordination due to shared borders**. While there is potential for "through-the-fence" access to improve logistics and potential for economic activity, this will likely require negotiation and possibly additional costs.
- **Many of the major employers in the focus group discussed the increasing emphasis on sustainability and electrification in their industries**. Whether it be exploration of self-driving technology, evolving operations with automation and electrification, a transition to more fuel-efficient and electric vehicles, or promotion of sustainable aviation fuel, these trends indicate a shift toward more environmentally conscious practices and innovation in technology and energy use. Employers also highlighted their efforts in corporate social

responsibility, mentioning community investment programs, charities, or efforts to reduce environmental footprint.

- **Finally, participants in the major employers focus group stressed the importance of continued and ongoing communication and collaboration between the business community and with city officials.** They value a consistent and committed relationship with the city, with regular meetings and open dialogue to discuss shared challenges and opportunities.

## Developers and Property Owners Focus Group

Participants in this focus group represent a wide range of roles in development in Commerce City, including developers, property owners, homebuilders, designers, and other stakeholders working in Commerce City. The discussion largely surrounded challenges related to the development climate in Commerce City as well as the potential for growth and development in the city.

### Commerce City's Current Development Climate

- **All participants in the developers and property owners focus group expressed frustration with the development climate in Commerce City, with some citing it as one of the most difficult places to do business** in the Denver metro area. Issues mentioned included bureaucratic hurdles, inconsistent rules and regulations, and unpredictability in the approval process, especially at the City Council level.
- **Many participants indicated that Commerce City's reputation in the development community has declined over the past few years.** These participants explain that while Commerce City used to be one of the better places to do business in the Denver Metro in the development community, in the past five years it has become known as one of the most difficult cities to work with. Several factors were identified as contributing to Commerce City's poor reputation, including inconsistent and unpredictable approval processes, frequent rule changes, and a lack of transparency in development procedures. These participants also explain how this decline in reputation has had a direct impact on attracting development and business to the city, explaining that developers and property owners are less likely to invest in an environment where the rules are unclear, and the approval process is unpredictable.
- **Many of these focus group participants highlighted a challenging relationship with the City Council,** characterized by unpredictability, inconsistency, and a lack of respect for developers and experts. Many participants reported that projects, even those that comply with existing rules, are often turned down by the City Council, sometimes at the last hour.

- **Developers emphasized the importance of respecting existing master plans, zoning, and property rights and allowing by-right projects to proceed without City Council interference.** Several participants suggested that the unpredictable nature of the city's approval process and the frequent denials of projects could expose Commerce City to legal risks. They noted that some developers were either considering or already engaged in lawsuits against the city due to, what is perceived to be, inconsistent or arbitrary decisions.
- **Developers and builders describe difficulty associated with the lack of clear and consistent processes for development,** with rules and fees changing frequently and unpredictably. There is also a perceived lack of outreach from the city when making changes, with developers often feeling blindsided by new requirements or fees.
- **According to many participants, delays at the city level for paperwork, permits, or entitlements contribute to the city's challenging development climate.** Examples are given such as waiting over six years for entitlements, waiting over a year for a development agreement, or going through nine reviews over two and a half years. However, developers explain that the unpredictability of the process is the primary concern, saying that they can work with long timelines as long as they have some certainty.
- **A high fee load is also a concern to some developers.** These participants noted that fees in Commerce City are relatively high compared to other municipalities in the Denver metro area. Several participants expressed frustration with the lack of transparency in how fees are structured and used, with some fees not being clearly tied to services provided by the city. For example, a water acquisition fee which does not grant access to water or water credits, or a parks fee, when many parks in Reunion are built and maintained by metro districts and not the city.
- **The moratorium on metro districts is seen by many participants as a significant barrier to future development and a cause for increasing home prices in Commerce City.** Similarly, the introduction of additional fees and requirements, such as new sprinkler requirements, make it more challenging to maintain affordability. Developers express a desire to be included in discussions on new fees or requirements to share their expertise and collaborate before adoption.
- **Some participants in this focus group point out that Commerce City has struggled to attract its desired commercial and retail development,** while other nearby areas, like Aurora, have been successful. The developers agreed that attracting retail and commercial businesses requires a critical mass of residential rooftops. Some participants in the focus group describe how council resistance to approving new residential projects causes retailers to be uncertain

about the potential for growth of the consumer market in Commerce City, making them reluctant to invest there. Some participants express a desire to deliver retail, services, or entertainment uses in the city, as well as frustration due to an inability to attract builders or clients in those spaces.

- **Despite challenges, many developers and property owners note that Commerce City has significant potential for development, especially given demand,** proximity to the DIA, and the relative affordability of land. With the right policies and a more business-friendly approach, participants expect that Commerce City could attract a wide range of developments, including residential, retail, commercial, and industrial projects.
- **Participants unanimously call for greater collaboration between the city and developers, with a focus on building positive relationships and working together to achieve common goals.**
- **The focus group participants also unanimously suggested that the city establish clearer and more fair processes.** This included providing early-stage feedback on projects to reduce the risk of last-minute rejections. One suggestion was to adopt a preliminary plat process, which would allow developers to get initial feedback from the City Council before investing heavily in a project. Some participants continue to suggest that after the City Council weighs in on the preliminary plat and a project proceeds, staff should be trusted to finish out the process.
- **Despite the current negative reputation, several participants suggested that there is an opportunity for Commerce City to change its approach and repair its reputation.** Other cities, like Aurora, have managed to turn around their reputation by becoming more business-friendly and engaging with developers in a more collaborative way. Participants urged Commerce City to take similar steps to improve its standing and collaborate more with the development community.
- Finally, some participants draw attention to a large piece of land owned by Walmart at the corner of 104th and 470. While Walmart has held it for many years, they have not developed it. These participants explain that this plot creates uncertainty which affects the ability to attract other retail and commercial businesses nearby. Other participants suggest that Walmart's reluctance to develop its property in Commerce City might reflect broader issues within the city's development climate.

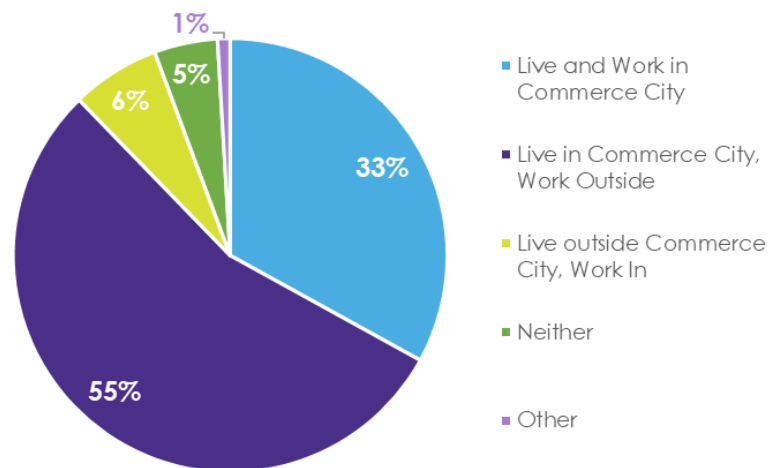
## APPENDIX A: DETAILED SURVEY ANALYSIS

In coordination with Commerce City, Community Attributes deployed an online survey, targeted to residents and businesses owners in Commerce City. The survey contained questions pertaining to Commerce City’s current economy, as well as visions for its economic future.

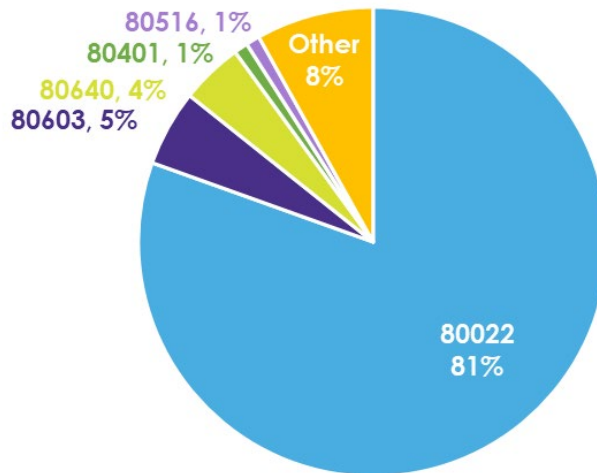
The survey was made publicly accessible from December of 2023 through March of 2024 via the project website and was advertised through several methods, including social media. The link to the survey was also disseminated by the city and its partners. Translation of the survey was available in Spanish. In the end, 213 responses were received, 34 of which represented business interests in Commerce City.

### Survey Questions and Results

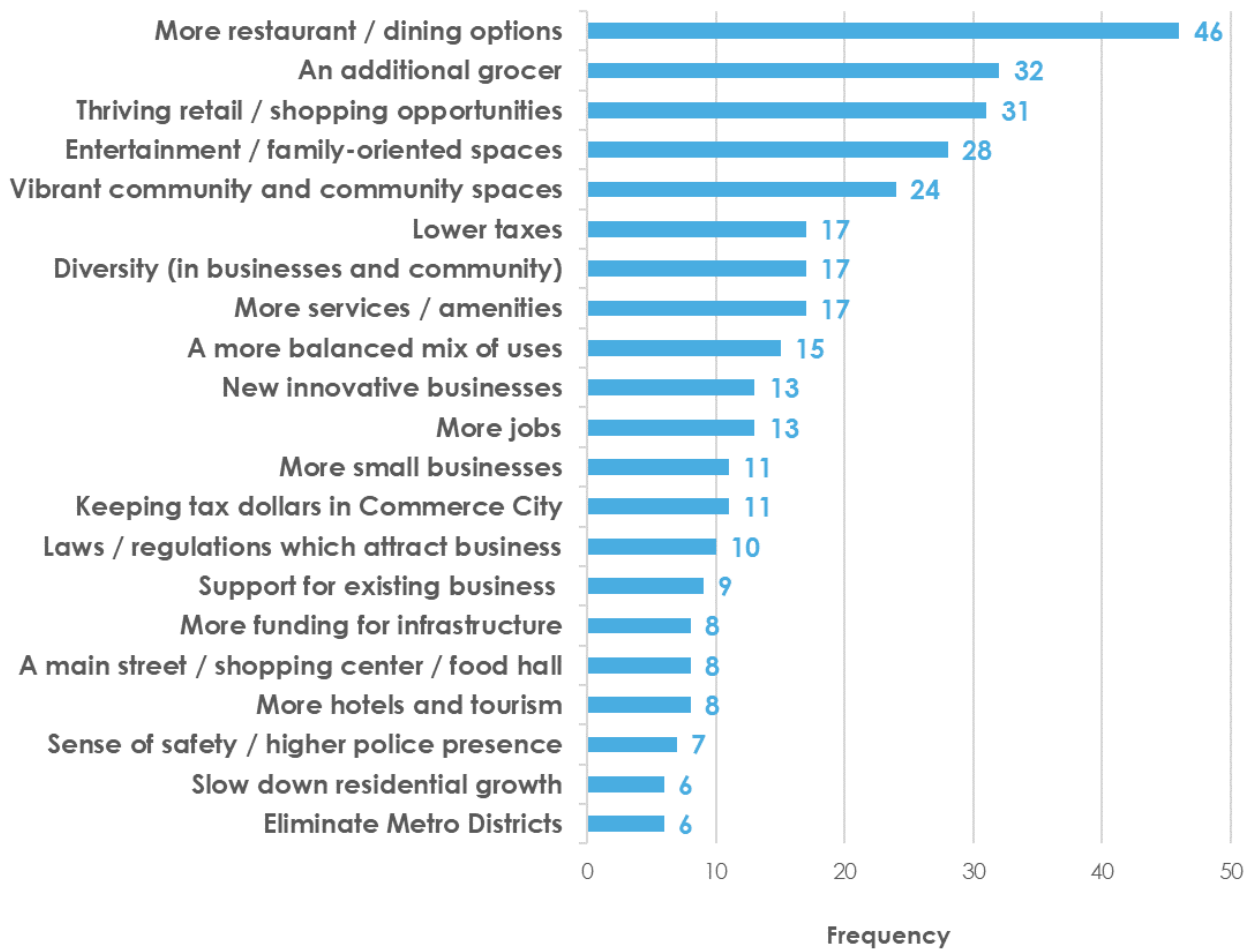
#### 1. Where do you live and work?



#### 2. In what zip code do you reside?



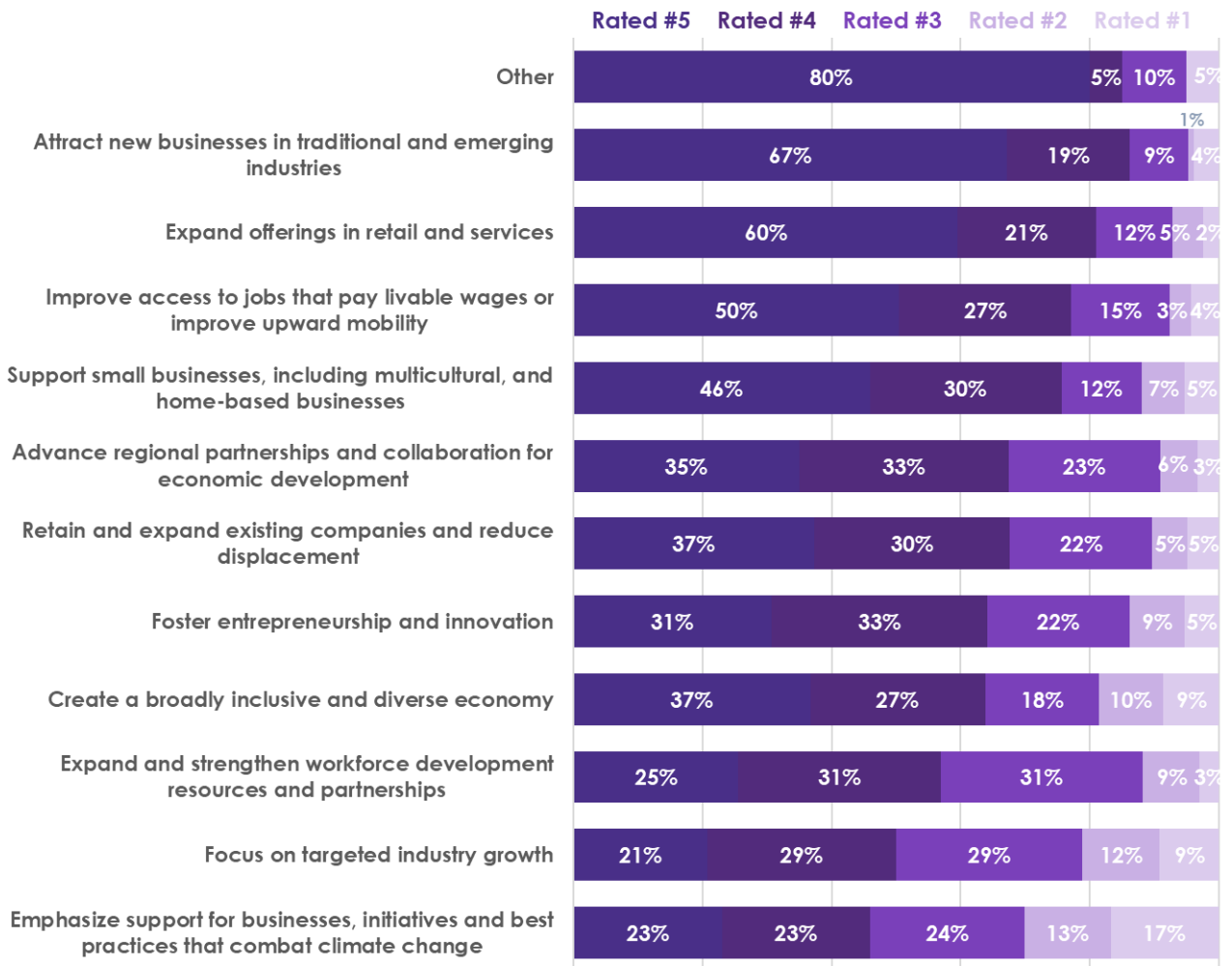
### 3. What's in your vision for Commerce City's economy of the future?



**Highlighted Responses:**

- I would love to see more restaurants, stores, and community resources come into the area, so that our taxes and jobs can be locally sourced. A main street area like Orchard Town Center, Pearl Street Mall, or Cherry Creek would be well supported and great!
- Making Commerce City a desirable destination location. Building a unique model of support for affordable housing and retirement communities. Finding an alternative and replacing Suncor as an economic driver.
- I hope to have a more inclusive community in that we can shop, eat and play all within our own community. Very rarely can we stay inside Commerce City to do all three.
- To thrive with businesses that best suit the needs of our growing community. Diverse family friendly areas and businesses that reinvest in our community.
- Business is the engine for economic success providing jobs and tax revenue. Therefore the city should do whatever it can to create laws and regulations that help businesses thrive. The 9.25% use tax is the highest in the State
- Capitalize on DEN 100 strategic plan and get tax reinue to Commerce City
- "Clean air. Green space. Bike trails that can serve recreation and commuting. In general, provide infrastructure so that businesses and employees will prefer to live and work in Commerce City. Work on quality of life, and business will follow.
- A safe, prosperous city for all residents. The ability for residents that rent a home in the community to buy a home in the community. To have more options for teens to work and gather.

**4. What are the most important goals and / or strategic considerations from an economic development perspective for the City of Commerce City in the next five years? Please rate the following from 1=not important at all to 5=very important.**



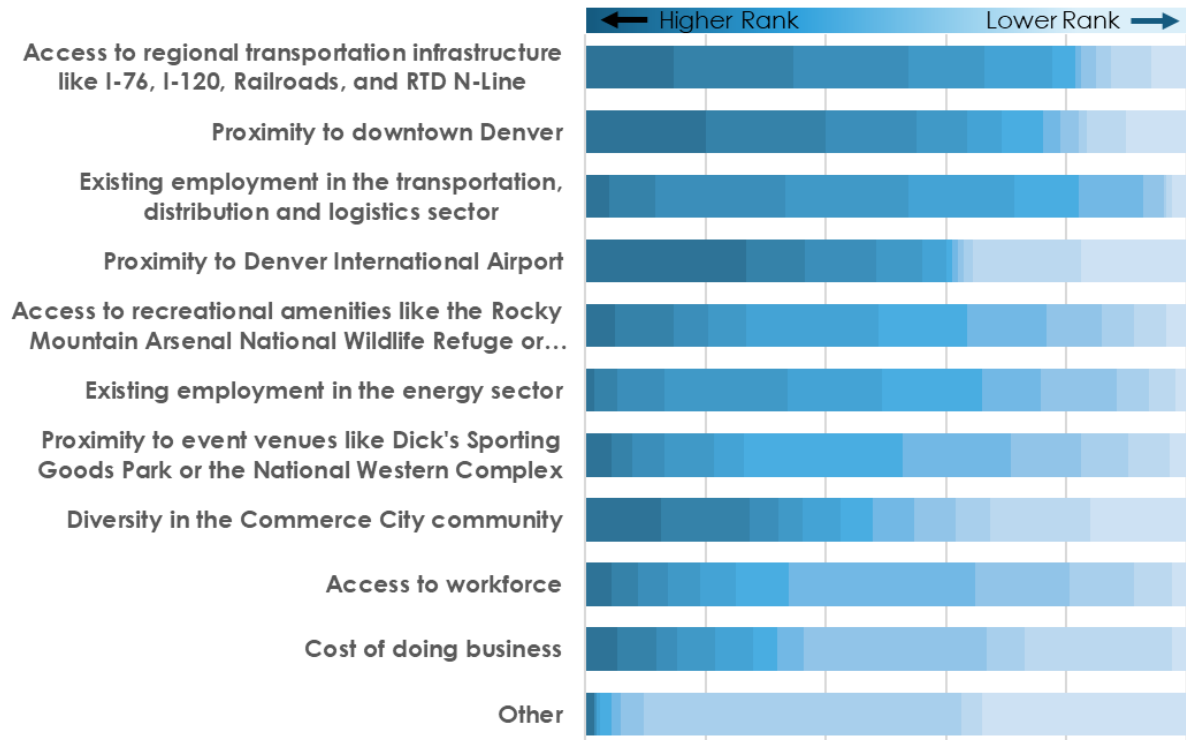
Here, the other category includes write in responses, the majority of which fell under the “expand offerings in retail and services” category, though with greater specificity. Other themes had to do with public safety, lowering taxes, or specific projects.

Highlighted responses:

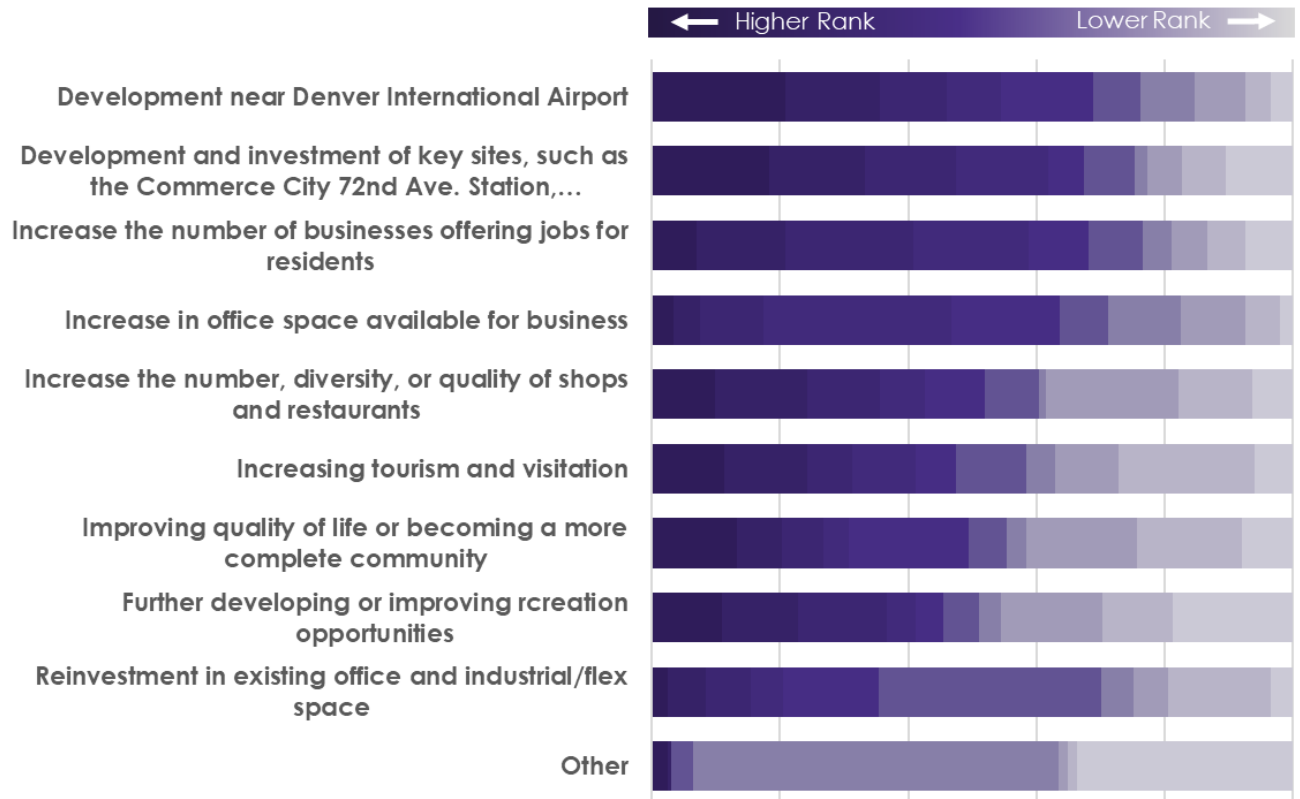
- Allow responsible residential growth that will attract retail and services businesses
- Provide affordable housing in all product types, including new construction of condos and townhomes
- Safety, homelessness, drug camps, crime.
- by adding "green policies and social agendas", you are going to fail to develop a plan that will bring jobs here. My own company has decided against any more CC initiatives. Your fees rip off businesses. I opened my own business in Thornton.
- Anythink Library, Costco, Trader Joe's, date night restaurants!

- Bring employment, education, and health care into the north part of the community
- Build a city owned indoor shooting range
- There is an opportunity to purchase the Dottie Bakke House to create a larger museum gathering space for the community. Preservation with new building would be a good place to start. Again the current City Council does not see the benefit of t
- Besides building homes and fast food establishments, we need a much greater diversity of economic opportunity than houses and cheeseburgers!.
- Open space- supporting healthy lifestyle
- I would like to see the city explain why Adams county gets more money than the city when it comes to property taxes. Next I would like to see what we can do as residents to change that so we can funnel that money to the city to support these business'sp.
- MORE RESTAURANTS AND A MOVIE THEATER IN REUNION PLEASE
- Establecer muchos empleos para personas si documentos
- Childcare assistance so families can go to work. Help residents that are living in their vehicles, in the safe lots, obtain permanent housing.
- An area where people can gather, kids can play and teens can hang out.
- Add some sort of amusement park or entertainment destination since we have so much land
- Stop turning away national chains that want to move to our community.
- Focus on quality of life, arts, sports and crime addressed.
- Provide low cost spaces for vendors
- When I moved to commerce city in 2011 my taxes were 700 and home insurance was 1200. Now it's 3500 for ins- no claims filed and my taxes are 2100. My house payment has doubled because of this
- We need more stores - we have to go so far and even though Stapleton and Northfield aren't far , why should we be supporting Denver with our needs ?
- There is a huge opportunity for corporate offices to be near DIA. There's a huge tourism opportunity being so close to the airport
- More Grocery Stores
- support for seniors 1) better taxes rates including property tax breaks  
2) more senior programs to help seniors retain their lifestyle on a fixed income

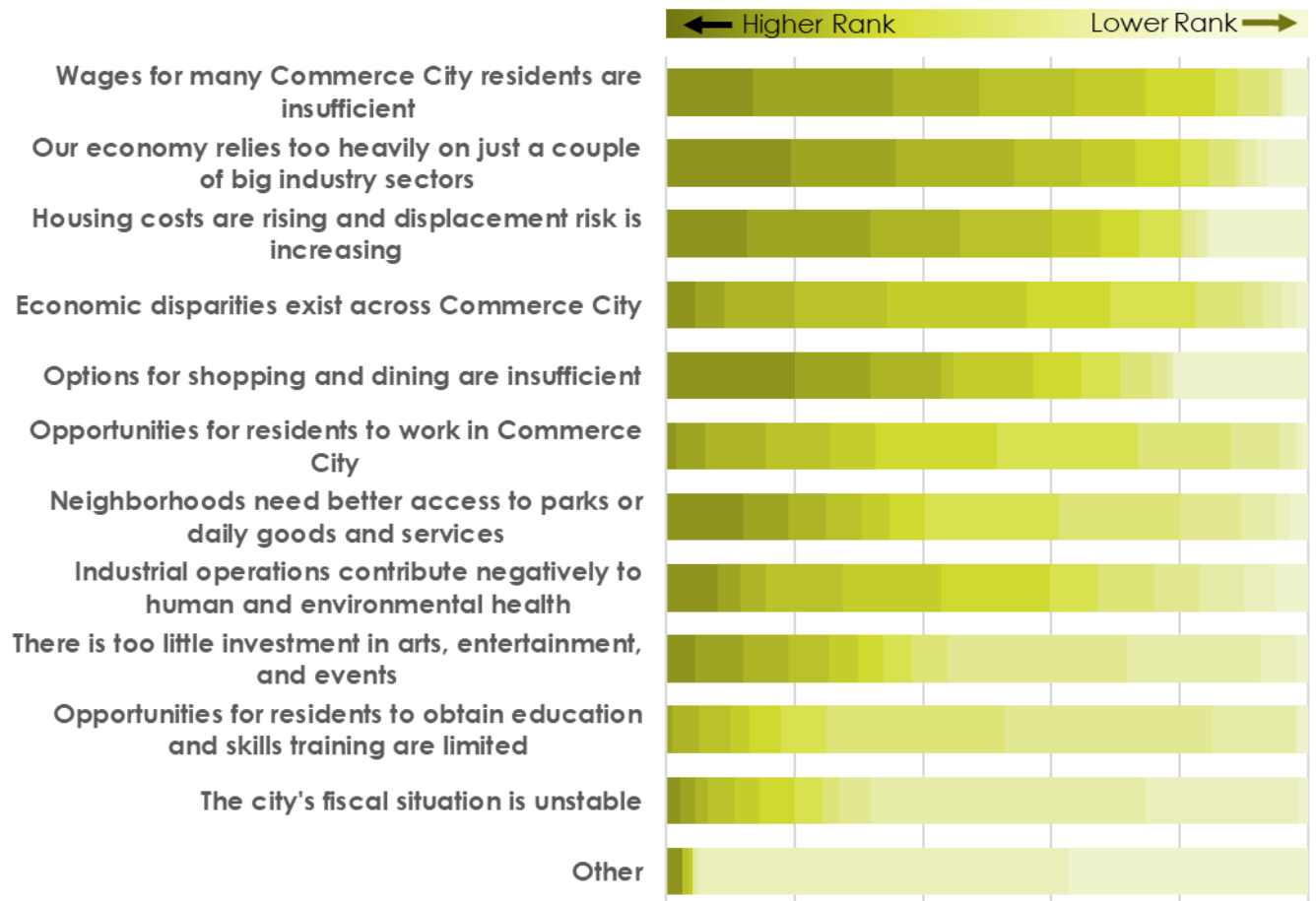
**5. Please rank these strengths and assets in order of their importance for Commerce City's economic future.**



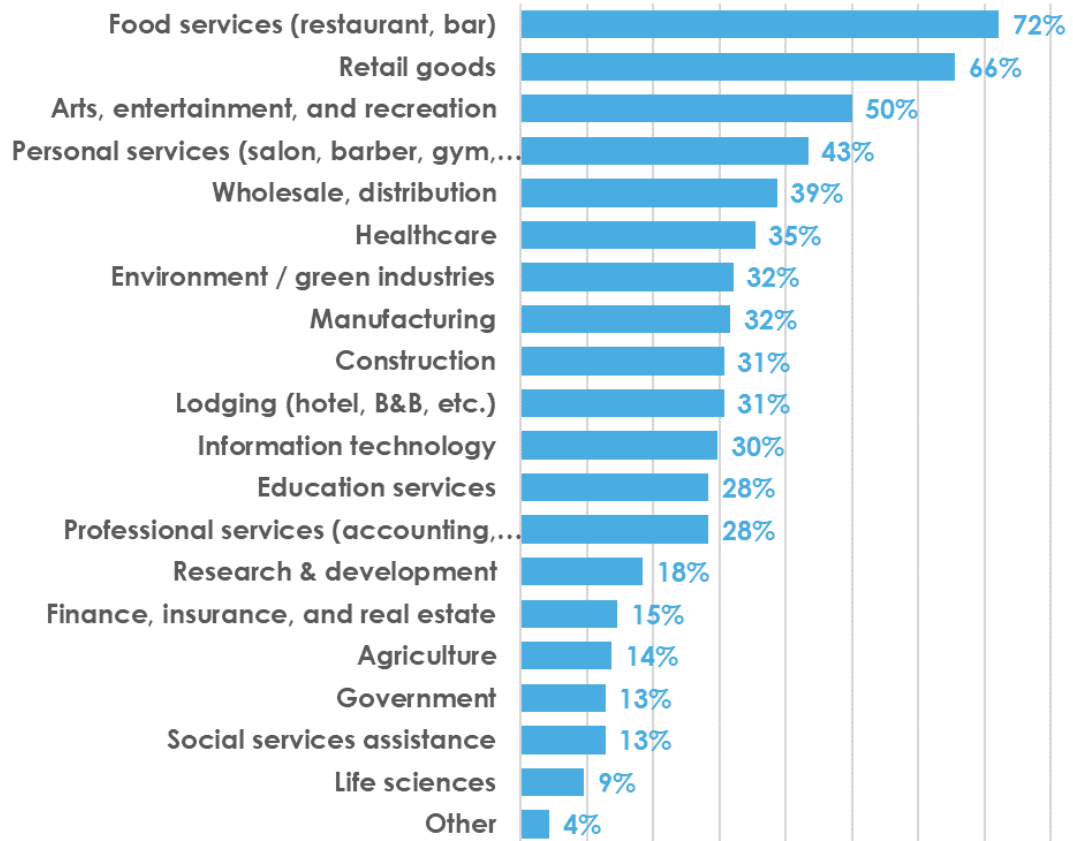
**6. Please rank these opportunities by level of priority for investment.**



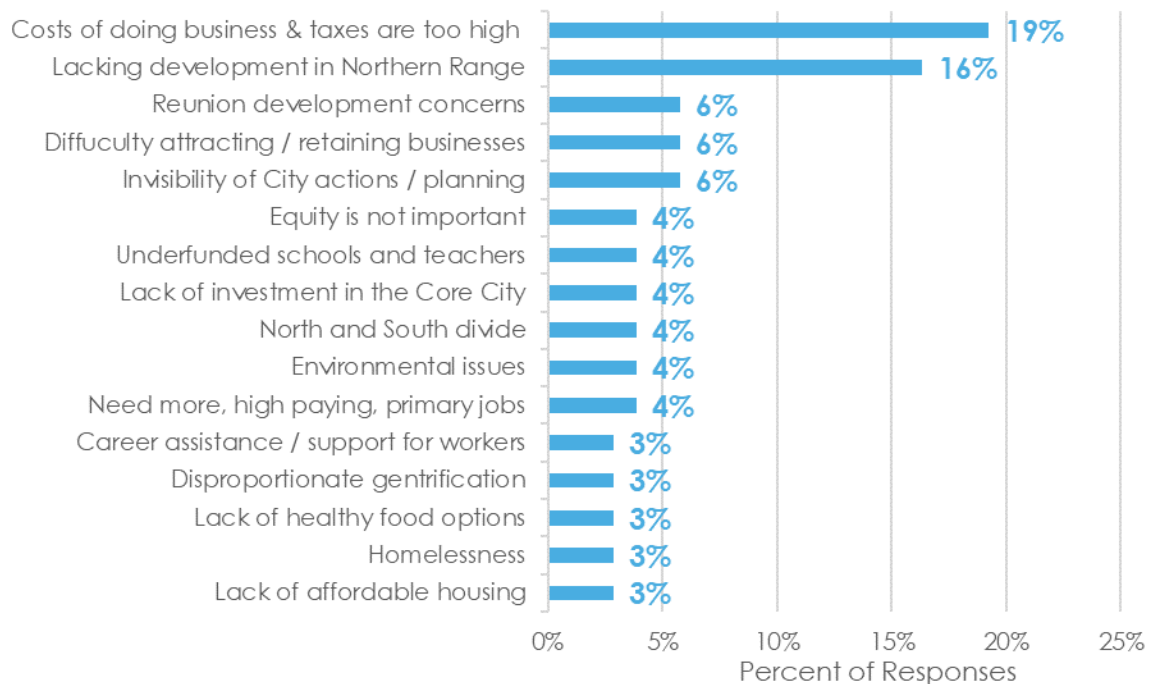
**7. Please rank these weaknesses, threats and economic challenges based on how urgently Commerce City needs to address them.**



**8. What types of businesses would you like to see expand or locate to the City of Commerce City? Please select all that apply.**



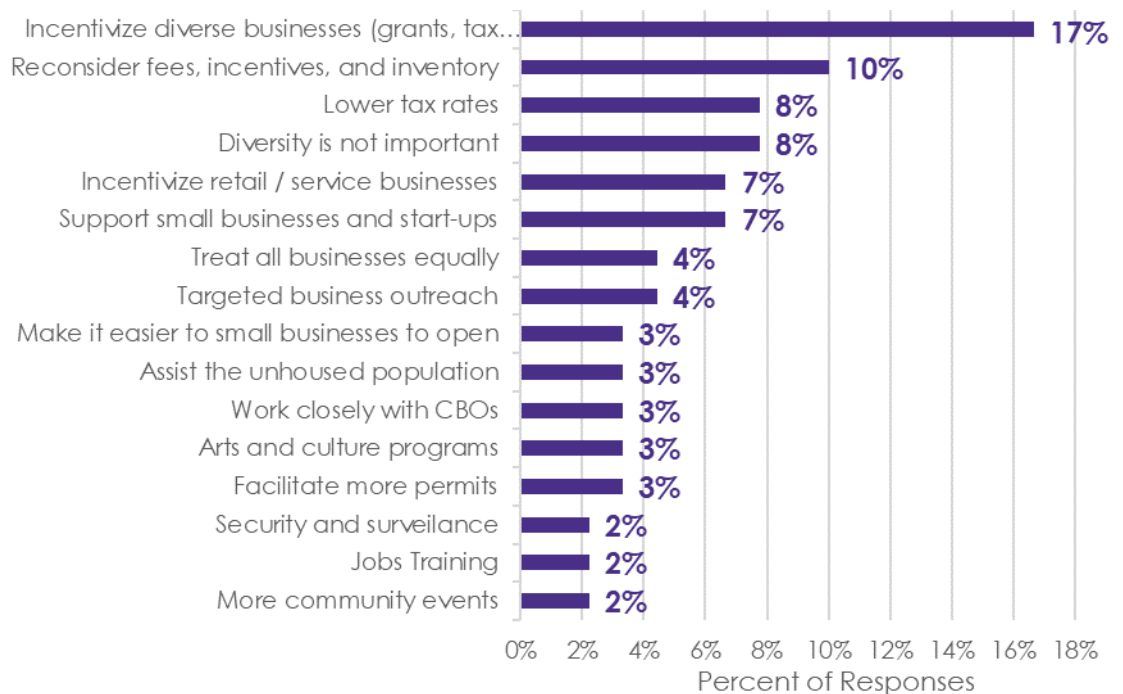
**9. What concerns do you have, if any, regarding equity in economic development in Commerce City?**



### Highlighted Responses:

- Our tax rate is too high to allow most new businesses a chance to open within the area. Local small businesses are moving to Brighton, Thornton, Denver, etc because of the excessive taxes here and lack of retail space.
- I am a teacher and I have to work in another district due to the extremely low pay for teachers here and the outrageous cost of living in reunion.
- It has become almost impossible to develop anything in Commerce City due to the policies of Council, and the taking of property rights. All of the businesses I speak to refer to the City as anti-Commerce City.

### 10. What are some specific ways in which the city can support diversity among businesses or business owners in Commerce City?

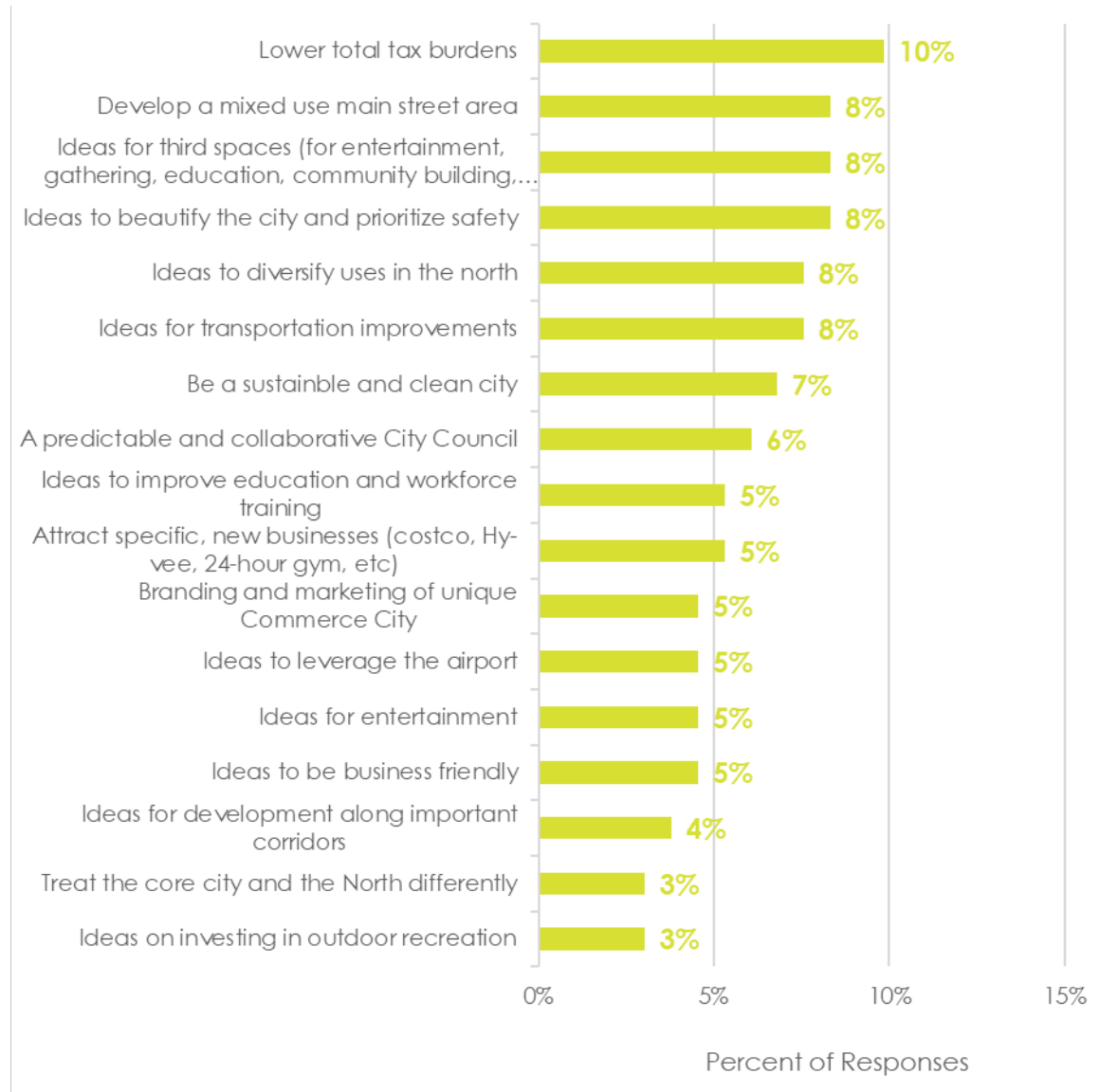


### Highlighted Responses:

- CC needs to have a bottom up review of our fiscal plans. The Planning and Economic Development teams need to accept the reality that we are not competitive and the underlying fees are stagnating growth of inbound businesses.
- Stop putting in daycares, nail salons and auto shops. Bring in boutiques, better food choice and for fucks sake, MORE GROCERY STORES!

- Que los requisitos no sean tan exigentes en los pequeños negocios y exista más apoyo para mejora los negocios pequeños. Y en los negocios que contaminan devén cumplir con los requisitos establecidos por las leyes si no que sean cerrados. (*The requirements should not be so demanding on small businesses and there should be more support for the improvement of small businesses. And businesses that pollute should comply with the requirements established by law or else they should be closed.*)

#### 11. What is one ‘big idea’ you have for Commerce City?



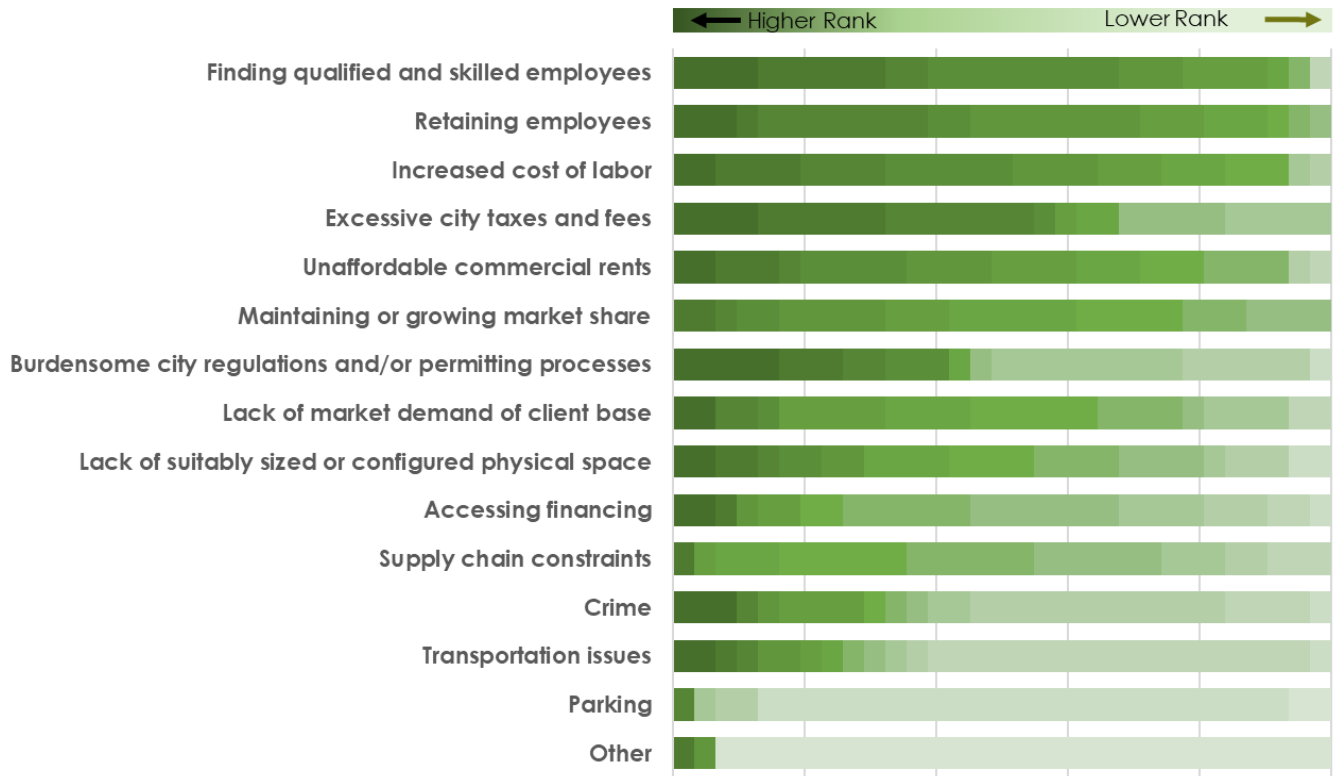
#### Highlighted Responses:

- Use the airport to attract clean high tech manufacturing and RandD. This produces excellent jobs. Train residents to fill these jobs.
- Implement solar/wind farms in unused/open space.

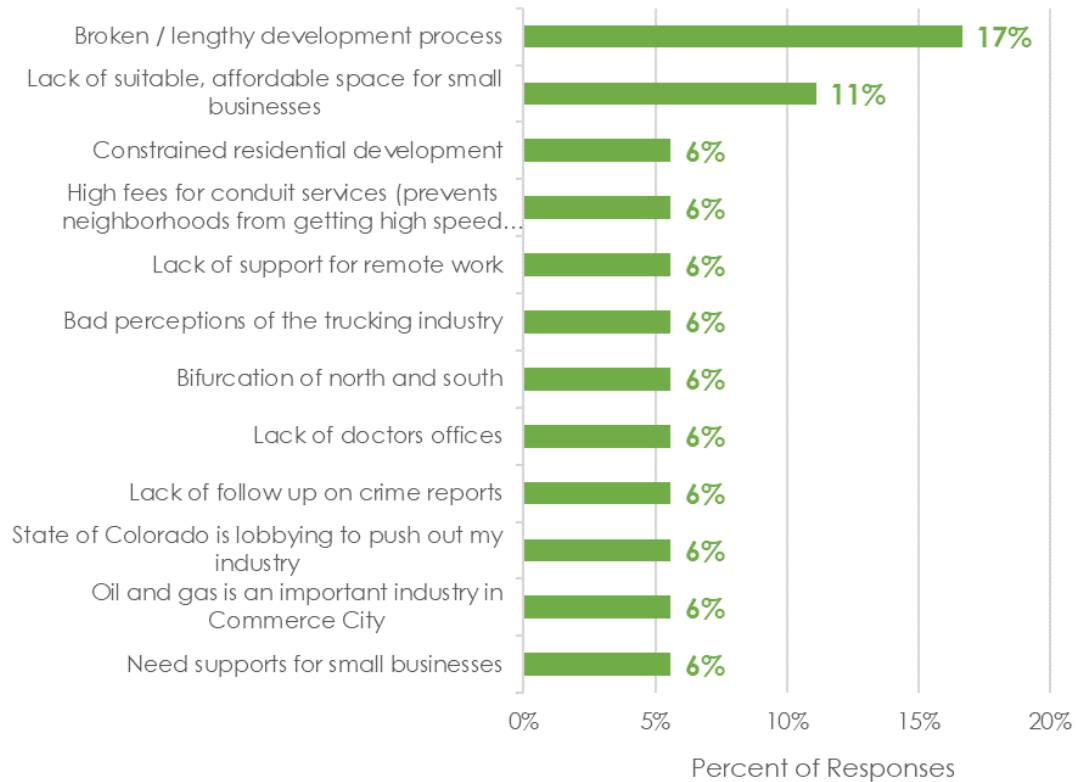
- Maximize the proximity that we have to DIA and fully seek out and obtain new businesses, retail, services, recreation, etc. All areas surrounding CC seem to have it together, yet, CC is stagnant. We are spending our money elsewhere due to lack!
- Have the lowest taxes of all of metro Denver
- Building a community grow house and vegetable gardens around an affordable retirement mini house community and central cooking / meeting and educational exhibition space where old teach the young people and visa versa.
- to make it how it used to be back in the day when derby fair derby daze and other significant stuff was around.
- Preserve the Dottie Bakke House and make it a gathering place, welcome center and museum for the Commerce City residents.
- A more coordinated effort to “sell” the city and its advantages to decision-makers who will be able to appreciate those advantages.
- Create a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community where people grow old, and instead of moving to a purpose-built retirement community in the suburbs or the sunbelt, they stay at home and in the community where we live. “Aging in place,” as we grow frail.”
- Make Suncor stop killing us.
- Abolish the codes involving '70s view of landscaping. Native grasses are over 8' tall. Multi stem sunflowers, dandelion, thistle and milkweed are vital for birds and insects. Re-tool "Neighborhood Services" to provide a service not a means of harassment.
- I don't know, somehow lower the property taxes so people don't have to move out of reunion.
- Commerce city as a whole is known only for suncor. It is negatively affecting development in the area, I am sure. you see the comments on social media and that is the only thing people associate our city with. Need to get away from that. Clean it up!
- Invite Hy-Vee Inc to come to commerce city, they have been looking to expand to colorado for some time now
- Create an electric city. Start marketing to green based businesses, and require all new construction to have a portion of their land include electric charging stations. Use solar power to power more of our street lights, bus stops. Electric charging stat.
- Que la diversidad del idioma no sea una barrera para el crecimiento de la ciudad en trabajos, y oportunidades de apoyo para ver una hermosa ciudad ❤️( *That language diversity is not a barrier to the city's growth in jobs, and support opportunities to see a beautiful city* ❤️)
- Fix the roads , pick up trash , get rid of homeless hangin out at stores . It's embarrassing and I bet reunion don't have this problem. It seems reunion gets everything and the original commerce city is always last

- Partner with schools to support the workforce pipeline and create more job opportunities so people can live and work in Commerce City and create a self-sustaining ecosystem of education and employment.
- Having a central community spot. A lot of us were drawn here with the hope of a food hall, sports fields, trails/parks and entertainment. I know the builder pulled out but the city could build confidence from residents if they delivered on this.
- Do something with the warehouse spaces off 104th st
- A concert venue, something similar to The Mission Ballroom. It will attract businesses as well as something fun for residents instead of having to travel to red rocks, Pepsi center and downtown Denver in general. Also a public market could help as well.
- Bring in more family activities at reasonable prices for the community. Lower property taxes! Help make this city an affordable, safe, fun, healthy place to raise a family and grow old in
- City Council should listen and rely more on the experts they higher to consult the. Rather than believing they know better than the experts.
- Una ciudad más limpia, sin tanto crimen, con más oportunidades y mejor educación para los niños (*A cleaner city, without so much crime, with more opportunities and better education for children*)
- Me gustaría ver una comunidad más unida para todo (*I would like to see a more united community for everyone*)

**12. Please rank these challenges according to their importance for your business.**



**13. Please describe any challenges, issues, or needs specific to your industry that the city should be aware of.**

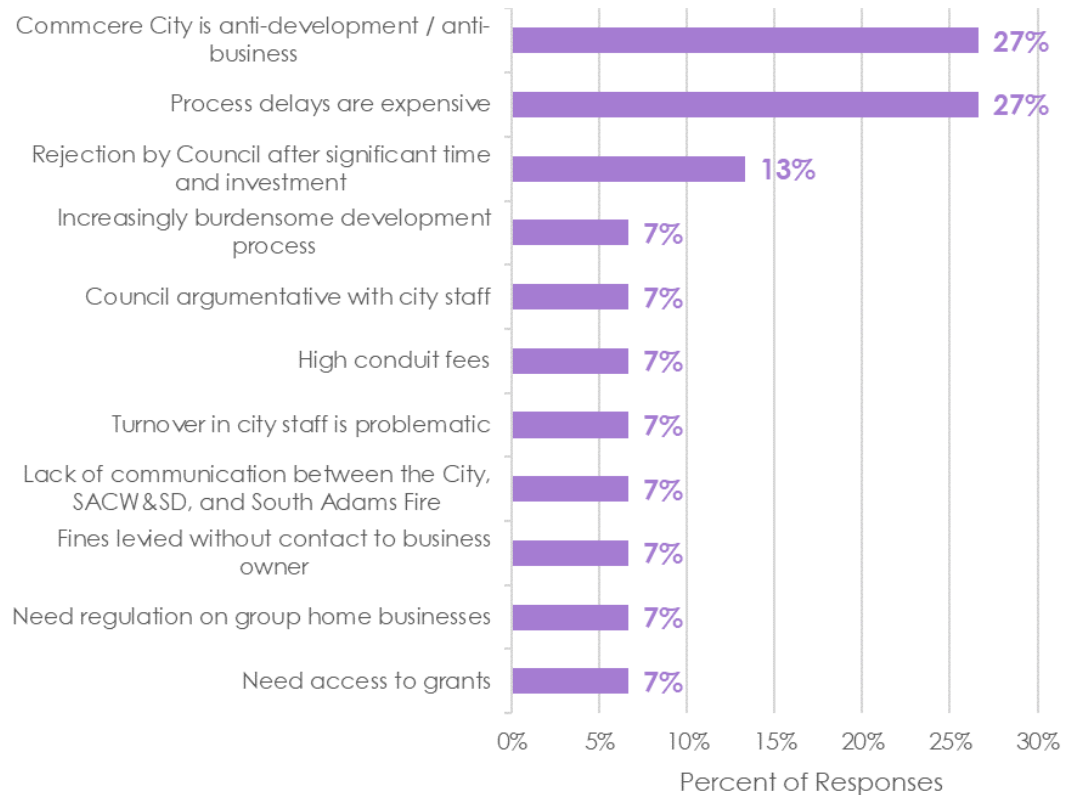


#### Highlighted Responses:

- Commerce City charges very high fees for conduit usage. This has caused entire neighborhoods from getting high speed Internet. You have doomed the older area of Commerce City to not being able to have modern services to start or run their businesses.
- It took me 15 months to get a building permit. Impacting me financially and leaving me only a few months to build in order to meet my construction loan timeline. If I had known in advance the length of time it took would have rethought about building.
- The trucking industry is great in Commerce city. It has been since 1977. Please stop saying industry is bad, dirty and unhealthy. No one seemed to mind all the industry that kept America alive during COVID.
- Basically anything in the southern part of the city. Commerce City operates as two cities, with no downtown. We have two of everything: 2 school districts, 2 shopping districts, 2 rec centers, 2 downtowns,
- On average it takes well over two years to get a project entitled and permitted even if it administrative, already has zoning, and is a permitted use.

#### 14. If your business has experienced challenges with the city's development regulations or permitting or licensing processes,

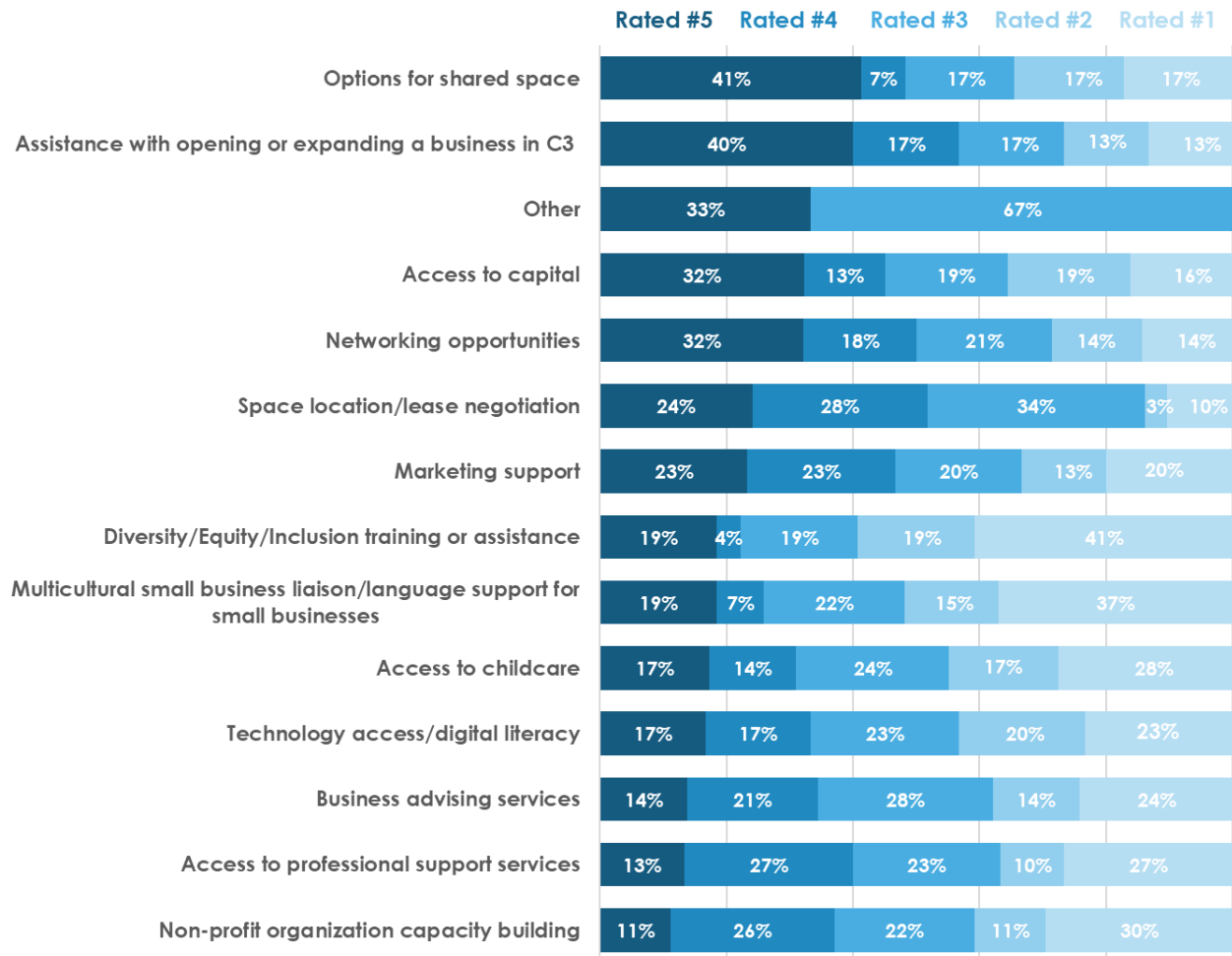
**please describe them here. Please be as specific as possible and share what impact these challenges have had on your business.**



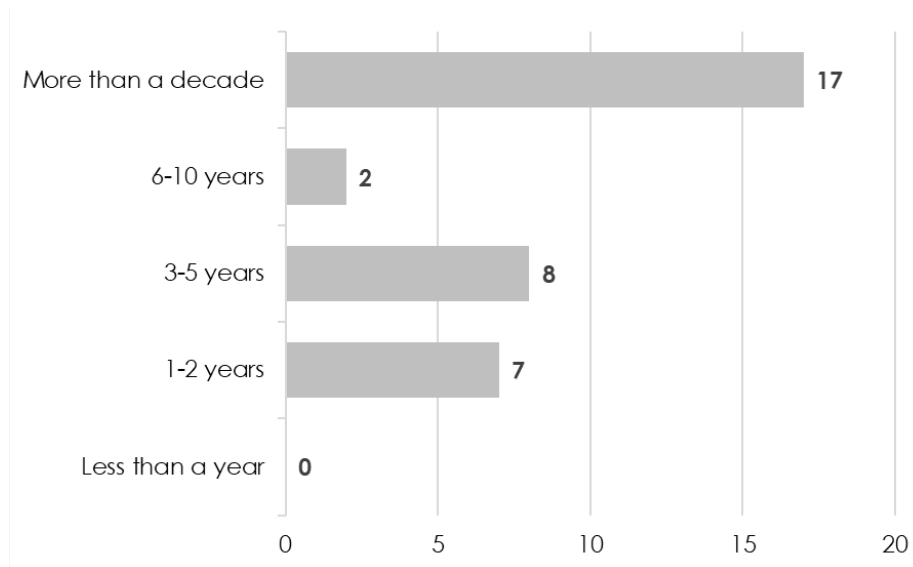
### Highlighted Responses:

- Council hearings where council members were arguing with their own staff about things they are not qualified to criticize. For example, at one recent hearing a councilor argued with the head of city engineering about the methodology of traffic studies.
- After spending 2 years and over a million dollars navigating the site planning process, our plat was denied by the Mayor and city council after multiple hearings. Until Mayor/CC change I will not work with Commerce City in developing residential housing.
- C3's development process has become increasingly burdensome. There is vocal anti-development support. SACWSD has rules that are overwhelmingly cost prohibitive and lack common sense (requiring individual taps for multi-tenant commercial buildings, etc).
- While doing development plans there appears to be a constant turnover in City Planners and processing building permits lacks. Need better communication between Commerce City and SACWandSD and South Adams Fire
- We had a project that the City gave us a Zoning Verification Letter saying we met zoning and had Administrative Process. Then City Council turned it down for NO reason. We lost 3 years and over \$1 million dollars.

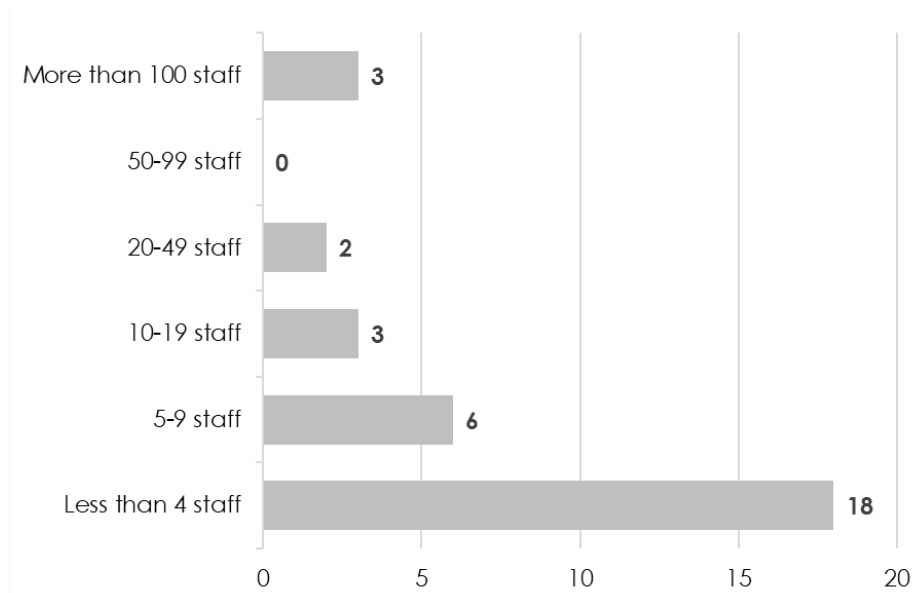
**15. Which of the following business services would be a priority for your business? Please rate the following from 1=not important at all to 5=very important.**



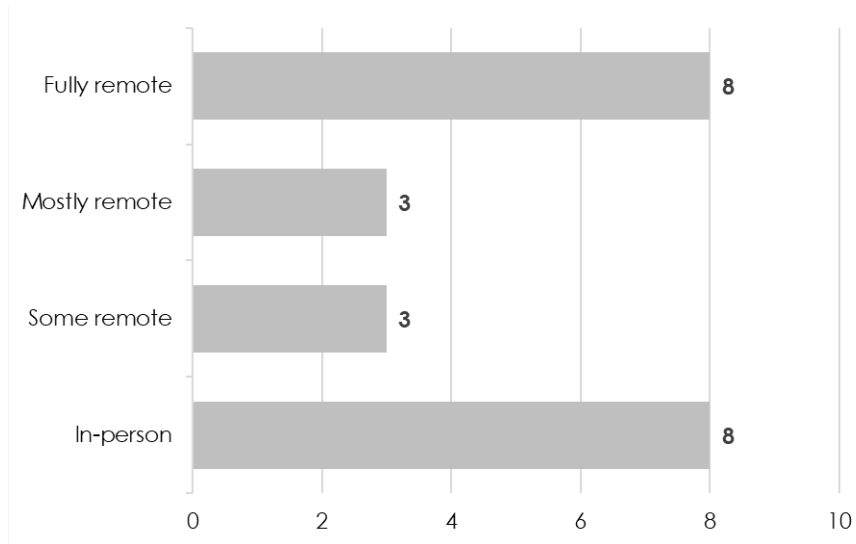
**16. How long has your business been in operation in Commerce City?**



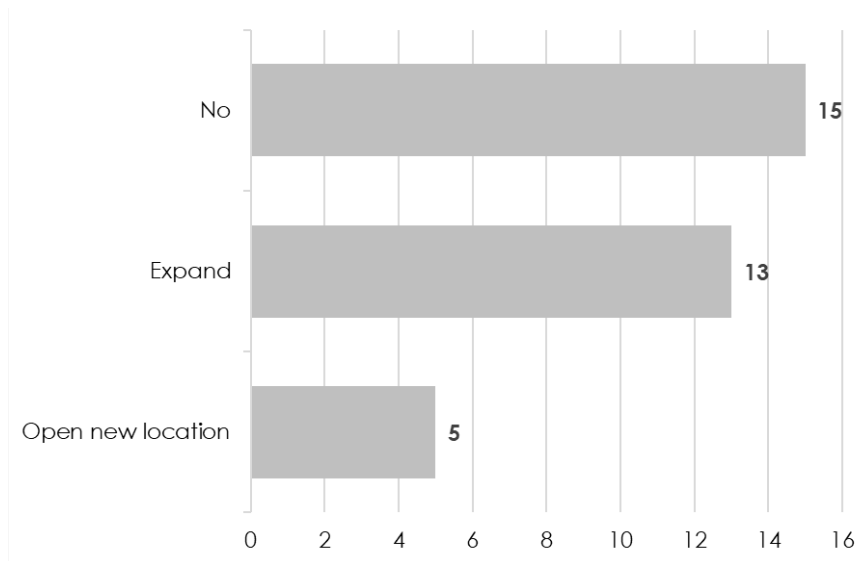
**17. How many employees does your business have in Commerce City today?**



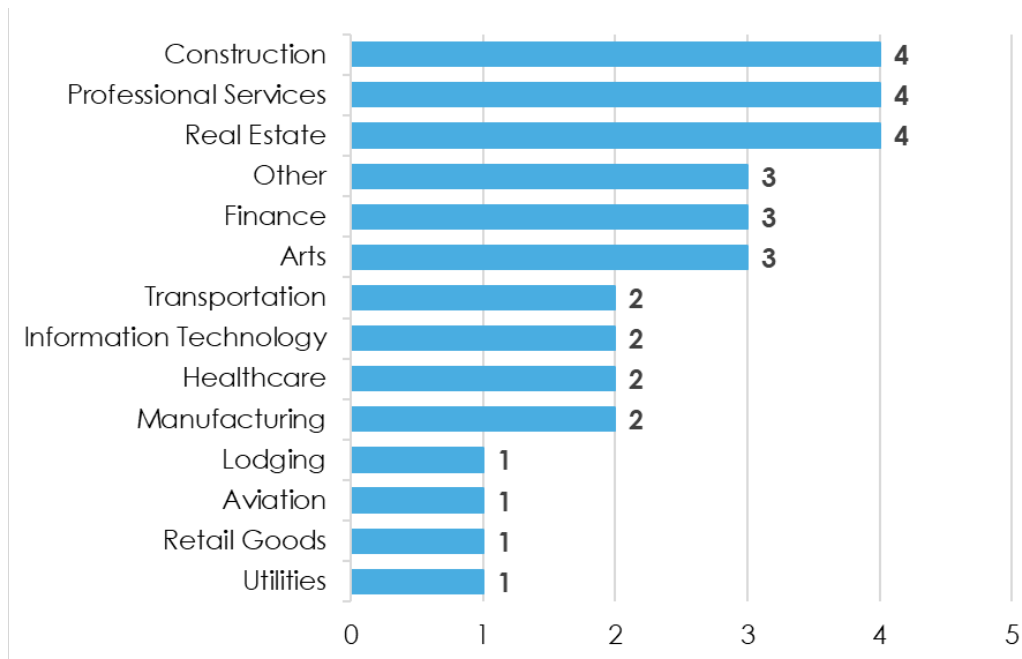
**18. Approximately what percentage of your employees in Commerce City are working a hybrid schedule or remotely?**



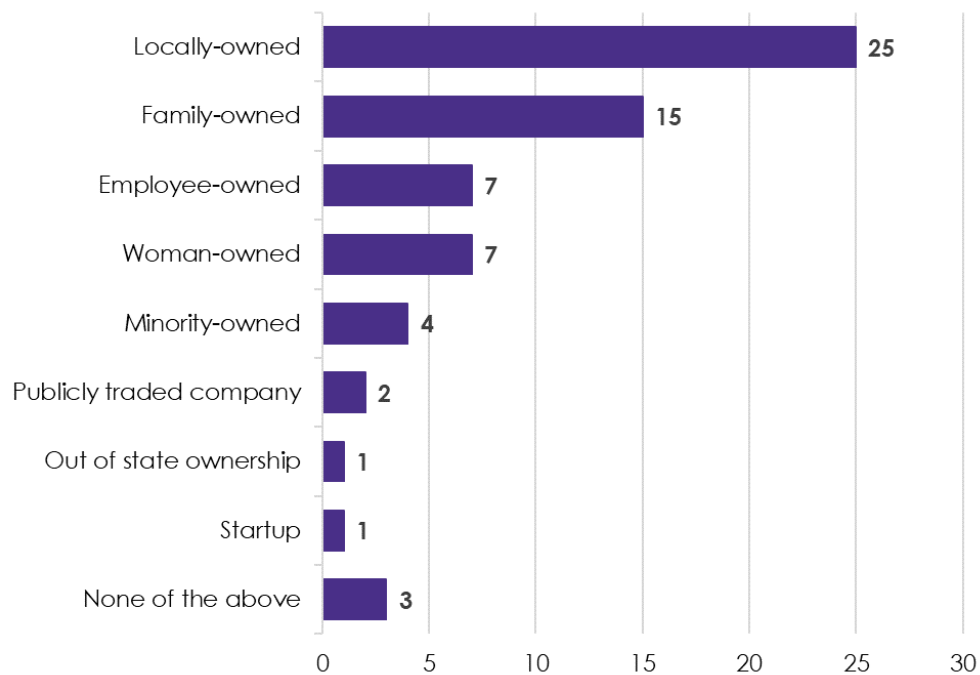
**19. Does your business have plans to expand and grow in Commerce City in the next five years?**



**22. What is your business's primary industry?**



**23. Select all that apply to your business:**



## APPENDIX B: PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION MATERIALS

Six total Public Listening Sessions were held in Commerce City to obtain feedback from the public on economic development vision, goals, and strategies during the strategic process. Public Listening sessions were held in two rounds in which each round of Public Listening Sessions held three meetings, one in Bison Ridge recreation center in the northern range, one in Eagle Point recreation center in the core city, and one meeting virtually.

### Public Listening Session Round 1

Bison Ridge – 2/7/24

**How would you describe Commerce City in a word?**

- Dynamic
- Small\_town

**What do you love most about living in Commerce City?**

- Small town feel. Open spaces and views. City Council trying very hard to implement change with an environmental emphasis. Very caring City Council officials who are approachable

**What is your vision for Commerce City's economy of the future?**

- Vibrant
- Encourage diverse and small businesses . Would prefer not to see large corporations such as Walmart. Be forward thinking and encourage environmentally friendly practices.
- Choices for everyone for all facets of life from services, entertainment and shopping. I don't want to go to Brighton or Thornton or another community to get what I want

**In a word, what is Commerce City's best asset?**

- Friendly

**What Potential goals did we miss?**

- Encourage small and diverse businesses
- There are so many children in the area who are involved in sports but must go to other communities to find a place to play. Ex. Soccer -- my nephew travels over a half hour for practice with Rapids
- Parents, children and grandparents are commuting to other towns for their afterschool sports etc. They are spending money in those communities that could be spent here. Weekend tournaments, meets are an economic boom for the hosting area. Motels, restaurants, shops, etc.

**What specific industry sectors should Commerce City target?**

- Auto Repair / Dealer (not auto parts)
- Light rail stations

- Competitive Pool, amateur sports
- Sports fields (how does this fit along with reunion rec center?)
- Gym
- Technology based businesses
- Small and diverse businesses
- Attract primary employers
- Green energy manufacturing
- Lightrail (from smith rd, down quebec, to 104th and down tower to pena)
- Assisted living
- Senior care
- Retail incubators for restaurants and other needed services and goods
- Make Commerce City a destination city - unique and a place that people would never expect
- Gym and sit down restaurants
- local businesses

**What business would you like to see in Commerce City? (be specific!)**

- Thrift store
- More grocery stores! Any store!
- Whole foods
- Sprouts
- Costco
- Sams
- More grocery options: sprouts (i.e. healthy)
- family restaurants
- grocery stores, restaurants
- The things that others have so we stop the leakage of revenue and give our people what everyone else has
- Senior center and pickle ball and mini golf at SE corner of 112th and chambers
- More grocery, craft, books, dry cleaner, gas stations
- gym
- What do you wish most for Commerce City?
- Sit down family restaurants
- Places to gather bandshell
- retail, sports for kids, no place to play
- Make the Commerce City the green energy electric epicenter to be leaders in solving the climate crisis
- Green energy opportunities
- Senior and assisted living
- high tech, clean, environmental

**What I wish most for Commerce City is...**

- That we can stay within the Commerce City community for all dining, shopping and entertainment needs -- leaving our tax in Commerce City.
- As people and houses are built keep pace with services, grocery choices, traffic growth (lights, roads)
- Another grocery store, road improvements to deal with increased traffic flow
- Continue emphasis on environmentally - friendly practices
- More restaurant choices -- not fast food
- NE corner of 112th/ Chambers -- 9 hole golf course or park

**Virtual Meeting – 2/15/24**

**How would you describe Commerce City in a word?**

- Complex
- Bedroom
- Disjointed
- Segregated
- Potential

**What do you love most about living in Commerce City?**

- Proximity to the airport
- Our People!!
- Diversity and history we have in our community.
- Proximity to DIA and Dicks Sporting goods stadium
- Opportunity to build something unique with broad community participation
- economic diversity/variety in commercial development

**What is your vision for Commerce City's economy of the future?**

- A community with more and better third spaces. A place where you don't have to leave to get what you need.
- Thriving community that values diversity, recreation, health equity, and work. Building leaders from within and leaning on community voice.
- The ability to have a place where residents can go after work within our city (i.e. Friday night, Saturday night, etc...) A place where residents can gain employment within our city as well.
- economic diversity in commercial development
- To make us the first Electric Energy Epicenter -and change our present image
- We have the chance to do something unique, with broad community participation, where small businesses and neighborhoods rule!

- All encompassing city for residents and visitors. Keep residential money here and attract others to enjoy our area. Strong workforce, recreation, variety of services.

**In a word, what is Commerce City's best asset?**

- Diversity
- Location
- Derby
- Location
- proximity
- DIA
- Available\_Space
- Land\_space
- Mins\_to\_downtown
- Land\_space
- People\_who\_love\_this\_comm
- Available\_space
- Smart\_growth

**What potential goal did we miss?**

- Health goal given the commerce of the city and better roads
- Facilities that attract youth

**What specific Industry sectors should Commerce City target?**

- Entertainment, Transportation
- Renewable energy and water conservation.
- Clean energy; hospitality/tourism; entertainment
- Healthcare, entertainment, energy, financial, and technology
- Making Commerce City a destination city - where people can come to expect the unexpected

**What businesses would you like to see in Commerce City? (Be Specific!)**

- Sprouts Supermarket
- Target, TJ Maxx, AMC, Home Depot, Sprouts, Old Navy, and Nordstrom Rack.
- Any Korean Restaurants, Trader Joes, Lowes, Home Depot
- Sprouts/Natural grocers; healthy fast food options; a kids center like boondocks; a library!
- A Restaurant complex like the Promenade in Northglen - everything that everyone else is mentioning + primary employers – tech

**What I wish most for Commerce City is...**

- More restaurants, More shopping, More parks
- Well established retail spaces that residents can go and obtain their needs at versus going outside of the city.
- Well planned development

- More diverse restaurants. More third spaces for kids and teens
- More traffic calming
- One stop shop for all of our needs with a diversity of all.

**Additional Discussion Notes:**

- Well-planned development that supports both current and growing population, especially existing diverse population of CC.
- Need more services and amenities in North CC. Potential consumer spending and tax revenues lost to neighboring communities.
- Too many liquor stores scaring away prospective residents?
- Discussion on bedroom community; Should Commerce City aspire to be bedroom community or not?
- Derby is capable of accommodating new development to complement Commerce City's ongoing development aspirations.
- Commerce City needs to maximize on leveraging its location to draw business, people, development, etc. Lots of untapped potential
- Want shopping center similar to Denver Outlet Mall or Southlands in Aurora?
- Want to revitalize vision for Tower Road to leverage proximity to DIA to entice development.
- Should strive to shed current reputation/image, try to bring in clean energy manufacturing and electrification of everything, including battery storage, etc. CC has chance to be leader in helping to mitigate/end climate crisis. Need to be cognizant of where these resources and materials are sourced from to ensure it is equitable; Consider solar and energy devices.
- Safety is huge issue/concern in regards to renewable energy and battery storage
- Want more parks and outdoor spaces; Also more recreational and social opportunities for entertainment within city limits
- Need to be proactive about community engagement, informing community members
- Need to encourage and support small and diverse businesses

**Eagle Point – 2/22/24**

**How would you describe Commerce City in a word?**

- Adjacent
- Incredible\_potential
- Difficult
- Hillybilly
- Bad\_air

**What do you love most about living in Commerce City?**

- It is near to the services and cities that I spend time and money on
- Superior location between downtown Denver and the airport
- Colorado is a wonderful place to live.

- Community alliances, city government, location,
- Location

**What is your vision for Commerce City's economy of the future?**

- I hope CC provides services in town so I do not have to seek them in adjacent cities
- Vibrant family friendly all industries thriving and great jobs available for residents
- We need more housing in order to lure commercial and retail.
- Quality retail, quality business, job opportunities, education, senior living, libraries, affordability, good government, aesthetics, safety, transportation, electric grid, sustainability,
- Would like to see more soccer fields. Baseball and playing fields.

**In a word, what is Commerce City's best asset?**

- Proximity
- Diversity
- Well located
- Craftman\_homes\_and\_people
- Diversity

**What Potential goals did we miss?**

- Derby development
- Retail
- Key issues: (1) Uncertainty around property rights and unpredictable council, (2) moratorium on metro districts, a funding mechanism is needed to fund "public" city owned / maintained infrastructure, (3) Longest entitlement/permitting periods in USA, (4) Increased fees with no outreach to building community, (5) Increased building codes

**What specific industry sectors should Commerce City target?**

- We have enough heavy industry
- Focus on tech and office leases
- Retail, industrial, government

**What business would you like to see in Commerce City? (be specific!)**

- Would like to see a good steak house in Commerce City, Texas roadhouse maybe, or an all salad restaurant.
- Entertainment options! Movie theaters, Dave and Buster type place.
- Quality grocery, health services, mom/pop, box stores like home depot

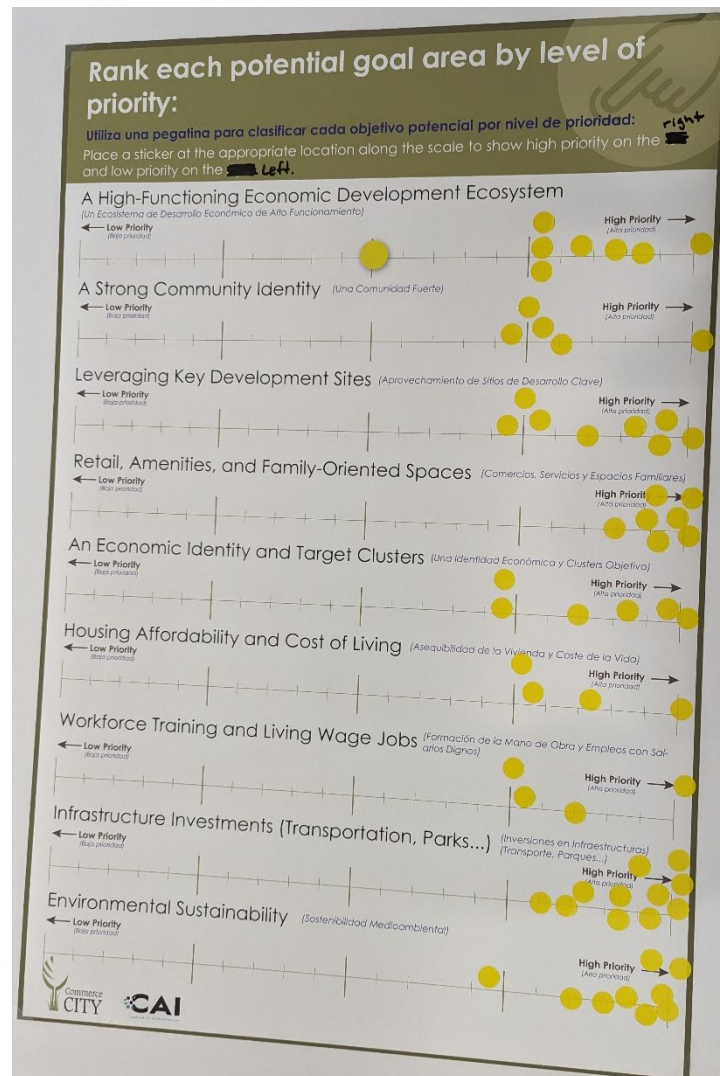
**What I wish most for Commerce City is...**

- Would like to see roads repair or new -- lots of pot holes. Maybe speed bumps on 72nd and 71st birch street.
- Derby development
- Clean yards and city properties maintained
- Box stores

- Love to see a park where patrons could use it for dog, softball, soccer for patrons
- Mom and Pop shops
- Transportation
- Better RTD access in East and North community

## Posters, Photos and Exhibits of Responses

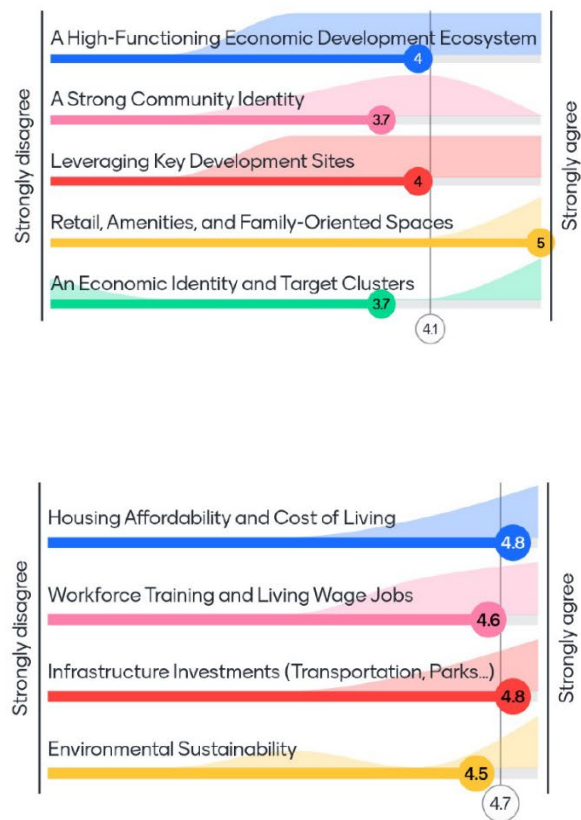
### Exhibit 1. Goal Ranking Poster, Results from both In-Person studios



Source: CAI, 2024.

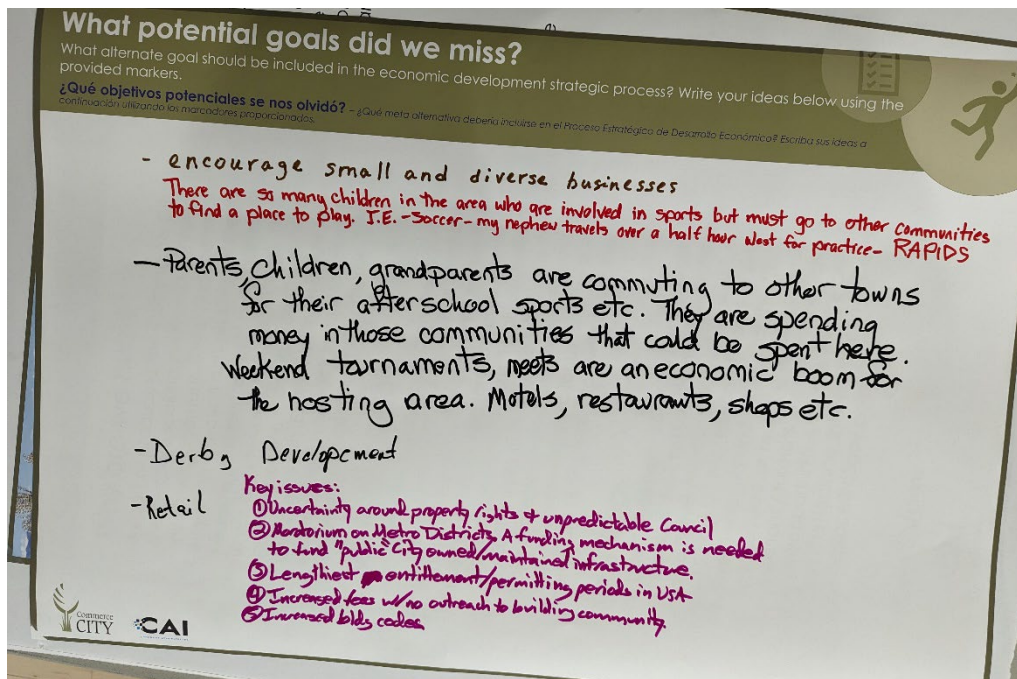
Exhibit 2. Goal Ranking Exercise, Results from Virtual Studio

This potential goal area should be considered top priority for Economic Development in Commerce City:



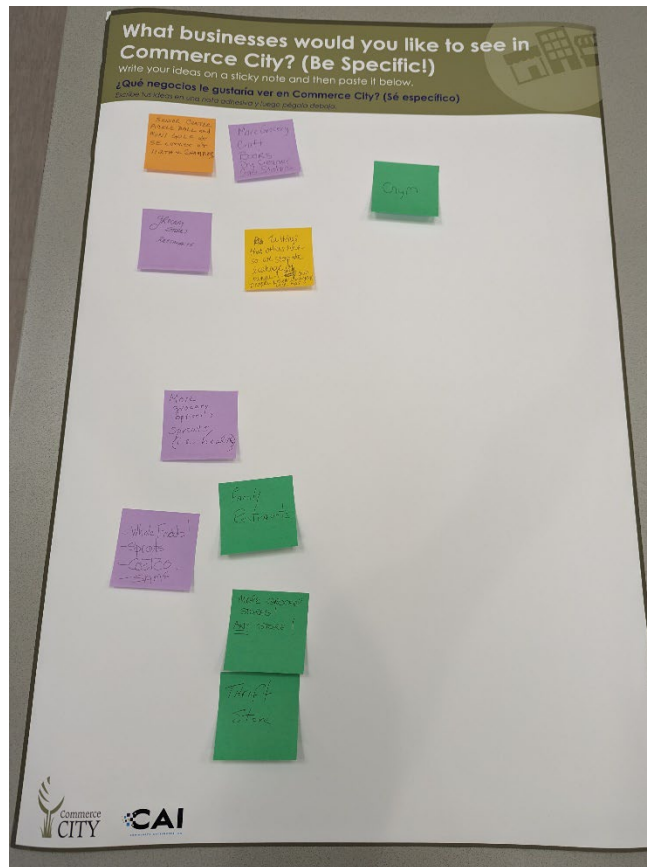
Source: CAI, 2024.

### Exhibit 3. Additional Goal Area Poster, Results from both In-Person Studios



Source: CAI, 2024.

#### Exhibit 4. Business Specific Visioning Poster, Responses at Bison Ridge



Source: CAI, 2024.

#### Exhibit 5. Commerce City Assets Word Cloud, Virtual Studio Responses

In a word, what is Commerce City's best asset?  
13 responses



Source: CAI, 2024.

## Exhibit 6. Commerce City Strengths Exercise, Responses at Eagle Point

What do you love most about living in Commerce City? ¿Qué es lo que más le gusta de vivir en Commerce City?  
5 responses

Superior location between  
downtown Denver and the airport

Colorado is a wonderful place to  
live.

Community alliances, city  
government, location,

Location

It is near to the services and cities  
that I spend time and money on

Source: CAI, 2024.

## Public Listening Session Round 2

Bison Ridge – 3/7/24

### Vision Statement Exercise

**Commerce City Economic Development Public Listening Session**  
Vision and Goals Group Worksheet  
March 7, 2024

Section 1: Vision  
Use the red pen to edit the draft vision statement below, as in the example given.

**Example:**  
Commerce City is a <sup>place</sup> ~~complete community~~ where <sup>hard-working</sup> ~~enterprising~~ residents...

**Your turn!**  
3 Commerce City is a ~~complete~~ community where ~~innovative and enterprising~~  
residents find access to boundless opportunity. Situated between bustling city  
and open prairie, our businesses are closely connected to the region and our  
residents have access to places to shop, dine, and <sup>be active.</sup> ~~play at their fingertips.~~ From  
~~local tiendas~~ <sup>owned businesses</sup> to global industry, we bring a collaborative and can-do attitude to our  
approachable – but energetic – corner of the region. W

Commerce CITY  
CAI  
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE





## Commerce City Economic Development Public Listening Session

Vision and Goals Group Worksheet

March 7, 2024

### Section 1: Vision

Use the red pen to edit the draft vision statement below, as in the example given.

#### Example:

Commerce City is a <sup>place</sup> ~~complete community~~ where <sup>hard-working</sup> ~~enterprising~~ residents...

#### Your turn!

Commerce City is a complete community where innovative and enterprising

residents find access to boundless opportunity. Situated between bustling city

and open prairie, our businesses are closely connected to the region and our

residents have access to places to shop, dine, and play at their fingertips. From

local tiendas to global industry, we bring a collaborative and can-do attitude to our

approachable – but energetic – corner of the region.



### Comments:

- Not sure that there is access to boundless opportunity...
- maybe more specific, "find access to boundless opportunity for the betterment of the community."
- Based on the survey, individuals do not have access to good paying jobs, wages are low.
- This phrase doesn't sound very applicable based on the data/survey. Ex. Regional transportation and connectivity to other parts of the state.
- Commerce City residents don't all have access to this
- There are some global industries that community members don't want part of Commerce City.
- Approachable sounds out of place. Could remove.
- Perhaps, "we bring a collaborative and can-do attitude to our energetic corner of the region."

## Goal Prioritization Exercise

### Commerce City Economic Development Public Listening Session

Vision and Goals Group Worksheet

March 13, 2024

#### Section 2: Goals

Below, there are five working draft goals and a sixth space for one additional write-in goal. This activity has two parts: first, use the checklist to identify specific actions that the city and its partners could take to advance the goal; second, your group has 30 total coins to allocate amongst the goals, based on your group's assessment of each goal's priority. Allocate the 30 coins to goals by shading coins with a pen or pencil, as shown in the example on the right.

**Example:**



Shade the number of coins your group wishes to allocate to each goal. You get 30 in total!

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Complete Community</b><br/>desire for more retail goods and services -<br/>entertainment - uses for families, teens, kids -<br/>importance of spending locally</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>                     | <p><b>Enterprise and Opportunity</b><br/>fair and predictable regulatory environment -<br/>support for small business and entrepreneurship<br/>- opportunities for upward mobility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>                                                                     | <p><b>Approachable</b><br/>clean and safe - positive community identity and<br/>regional reputation - attractive and enjoyable -<br/>inviting and open</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> |
| <p><b>Innovative and Industrious</b><br/>innovate within legacy industries - opportunity<br/>in new sectors - proactive approach to securing<br/>investment - leveraging assets and land</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> | <p><b>Collaborative and Can-Do</b><br/>productive community conversations - strong<br/>relationships with partners - <b>high ROI on econ. dev.</b><br/><b>investments</b> - engaged community<br/><b>Can these be broken out into the other goals?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> | <p>what we missed - one additional goal your group<br/>would like to suggest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>                                                                           |

### Commerce City Economic Development Public Listening Session

Vision and Goals Group Worksheet

March 7, 2024

#### Section 2: Goals

Below, there are five working draft goals and a sixth space for one additional write-in goal. This activity has two parts: first, use the checklist to identify specific actions that the city and its partners could take to advance the goal; second, your group has 30 total coins to allocate amongst the goals, based on your group's assessment of each goal's priority. Allocate the 30 coins to goals by shading coins with a pen or pencil, as shown in the example on the right.

**Example:**



Shade the number of coins your group wishes to allocate to each goal. You get 30 in total!

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Complete Community</b><br/>desire for more retail goods and services -<br/>entertainment - uses for families, teens, kids -<br/>importance of spending locally</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>                     | <p><b>Enterprise and Opportunity</b><br/>fair and predictable regulatory environment -<br/>support for small business and entrepreneurship<br/>- opportunities for upward mobility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> | <p><b>Approachable</b><br/>clean and safe - positive community identity and<br/>regional reputation - attractive and enjoyable -<br/>inviting and open</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> |
| <p><b>Innovative and Industrious</b><br/>innovate within legacy industries - opportunity<br/>in new sectors - proactive approach to securing<br/>investment - leveraging assets and land</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> | <p><b>Collaborative and Can-Do</b><br/>productive community conversations - strong<br/>relationships with partners - high ROI on econ. dev.<br/>investments - engaged community</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>    | <p>what we missed - one additional goal your group<br/>would like to suggest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/><br/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>                                                                           |

#### Comments:

- Coins should be distributed Equally

- Or, more coins on approachable section. Priority here.
- Coins prioritized on complete community
- coins on complete community, approach
- 1) Focus on bring incentives for businesses that the community wants to see.
- 2) Developing
  1. More grocerers, retail, restaurants in places that currently don't have access to them through mayor, city manager, city council negotiating with stores to bring these services to neighborhoods that currently can't access.
  2. Make sure stores are healthy when they're brought in.
  3. Create collaborative associations to work together to bring key services - affordable housing, commercial opportunities. Ex. Reach out to Target or larger entities who are trying to reach out and help.
  4. City leaders to other built up cities (ex. Thorton), how did they build up to complete their community.
  5. Services or stores that come in, don't want global/larger services to impose large scale agendas on local community.

Eagle Point – 3/28/24

### Vision Statement Exercise

**Commerce City Economic Development Public Listening Session**  
Vision and Goals Group Worksheet March 7, 2024

Section 1: Vision  
Use the red pen to edit the draft vision statement below, as in the example given.

**Example:** Commerce City is a <sup>place</sup> ~~complete~~ community where <sup>hard-working</sup> ~~enterprising~~ residents...

**Your turn!** <sup>Small businesses local tiendas to global industry have access to economic resources & opportunities</sup>

1 Commerce City is a <sup>connected welcoming, energetic</sup> ~~complete~~ community where innovative and enterprising residents find access to boundless opportunity. <sup>locally.</sup> Situated between bustling city and open prairie, our businesses are closely connected to the region and our residents have access to places to shop, dine, and play at their fingertips. From <sup>locally.</sup> local tiendas to global industry, we bring a collaborative and can-do attitude to our approachable – but energetic – corner of the region.

Commerce CITY CAI COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES 140

# Goal Prioritization Exercise

Vision and Goals Group Worksheet March 7, 2024

**Section 2: Goals**

Below, there are five working draft goals and a sixth space for one additional write-in goal. This activity has two parts: first, use the checklist to identify specific actions that the city and its partners could take to advance the goal; second, your group has 30 total coins to allocate amongst the goals, based on your group's assessment of each goal's priority. Allocate the 30 coins to goals by shading coins with a pen or pencil, as shown in the example on the right.

**Example:**



Shade the number of coins your group wishes to allocate to each goal. You get 30 in total!

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Complete Community</b><br/>desire for more retail goods and services - <i>seniors</i><br/>entertainment - uses for families, teens, kids<br/>importance of spending locally</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on education &amp; work-force development</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ *</p>   | <p><b>Enterprise and Opportunity</b><br/><del>formal &amp; accessible neighborhood</del><br/>support for small business and entrepreneurship<br/>opportunities for upward mobility - <i>vocational training opps</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Equitable &amp; predictable, business-friendly regulatory environment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ *</p> | <p><b>Approachable</b><br/>clean and safe - positive community identity and regional reputation - attractive and enjoyable - inviting and open</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> lower poverty rates &amp; reduce unhoused populations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p> |
| <p><b>Innovative and Industrious</b><br/>innovate within legacy industries - opportunity in new sectors - proactive approach to securing investment - leveraging assets and land</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> primary employment - <i>manufacturing, green tech</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ *</p> | <p><b>Collaborative and Can-Do</b><br/>productive community conversations - strong relationships with partners - high ROI on econ. dev. investments - engaged community</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> market &amp; promote existing ED programs &amp; resources.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> connect N &amp; S neighborhoods</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</p>                                                           | <p>what we missed - one additional goal your group would like to suggest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Connectivity through Transportation Network</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><del>\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$</del></p>                                                                      |

## APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Four (4) focus group discussions were conducted, with each focused on a different aspect of Commerce City's economy. Stakeholders for focus group discussions were identified in partnership with city staff. The following shows the questions uniquely developed and utilized to guide each focus group discussion.

### **Planning Commission Focus Group**

*March 5, 2024*

The Planning Commission focus group was conducted in February 2024 during a public planning commission meeting. Five commissioners were in attendance during the focus group. Questions utilized have been included below.

1. What should commerce city's economy look like in a decade or in two decades?
2. Which of the following goals are most important and which are least important?
3. What specific industry sectors should commerce city target?

### **Small Business and Entrepreneurship Focus Group**

*April 29, 2024*

These questions listed below, were used to guide the discussion and explore the unique needs and challenges of small businesses and entrepreneurs in Commerce City. They covered a range of topics, including economic issues, city support, desired changes, and how the city could better support local businesses.

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your role in the region's economy.
2. From your perspective, what are the biggest economic issues facing you, your business, or your sector now?
3. What is the City doing well to support small businesses or entrepreneurs?
4. What services, support, or other actions do you wish the City would undertake to support your sector or other small businesses/entrepreneurs?
5. If you could change anything about the small business environment in Commerce City, what would it be?
6. What is one thing that you would ask the city to do if you could, in the spirit of a magic wand, to optimize your relationship?
7. What have we not talked about yet?

## Major Employers Focus Group

*April 30, 2024*

These questions, listed below, helped guide the discussion and elicit insights from the focus group participants about their roles in the local economy, the current business climate, challenges, and suggestions for the future.

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your role in the region's economy.
2. What distinguishes Commerce City's economy from the region?
3. From your perspective, what are the biggest economic issues facing you, your business, or your sector now?
4. What is the City doing well to support your industry or business?
5. How does coordination with the City currently happen?
6. How do you view corporate citizenship, and what could the city do to amplify any efforts you're making in that space?
7. If you could change anything about the business environment in Commerce City, what would it be?
8. What is one thing that you would ask the city to do if you could, in the spirit of a magic wand, to optimize your relationship?
9. What have we not talked about yet?

## Developers and Property Owners Focus Group

*May 1, 2024*

Questions the guided the conversation are listed below.

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your role in the region's economy.
2. How would you describe the current business or development climate in this city? What types of developments are in demand and driving growth? How does it differ from other nearby communities?
3. What are the biggest challenges and issues facing you, your business, or the development sector now?
4. What has been your experience with City Council's attitude toward developers?
5. What suggestions or recommendations do you have to improve the development process in Commerce City?
6. How is your experience with city staff different from that with the City Council?
7. What are your thoughts on the current fee structure in Commerce City, and how does it impact development?

8. How do you view the city's approach to collaboration with developers, and what changes would improve the relationship?
9. What is one thing that you would ask the city to do, with a "magic wand," to optimize the development process and improve business relations?