EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
MITIGATING DISPLACEMENT
Infrastructure Investment Impacts and Community Capacity

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How can transportation planners plan for infrastructure improvements in communities without driving involuntary displacement of the residents?

The conversation around the growth of and change within a city often focuses on market impacts and actions of demographic groups that are actors in impacting change in neighborhoods. More and more, city departments are engaging with the question of the role they (and the investments of public dollars) play in impacting displacement outcomes in neighborhoods.

Denver’s Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) hosts to Office of Community and Business Engagement (OCBE). OCBE’s mission is to provide strategic support and assistance to all of DOTI’s divisions through the implementation of community and business engagement plans. They manage a variety of grant-funded projects within neighborhoods that score high on the equity index, including projects with an emphasis on active living, traffic safety, and improving the built environment.

OCBE requested a tool that would help them better understand how engagement processes can mitigate the risk for displacement in vulnerable communities. The deliverable of this capstone project builds upon work already done by the city and hired consultants to tailor a tool to the specific needs of DOTI and OCBE by using a transportation-centered investment impact lens.

To address these questions, this report proposes the use of a new dashboard designed to anticipate areas of need through an overlay of planned projects on maps examining geographies of vulnerability across the city. This GIS dashboard deliverable presents a high-level view of each neighborhood’s unique characteristics that could contribute to risk of displacement as well as the existing assets that could be leveraged in a capacity-building engagement process. It incorporates datasets that center existing community centers and their locations in built environment improvements. The dashboard assigns a research-based property value premium multiplier and anticipated impact radius to transportation and mobility projects (Elevate Bond, specifically), then applies a variable buffer to the bond project layer based on the impact radius attribute. This understanding of potential impacts of projects will assist OCBE in designing and deploying targeted and efficacious community and business engagement strategies early in the planning process to help build neighborhood resilience in the face of change.