



Urban Land Institute – ULI Colorado South Sheridan Commercial Corridor Technical Advisory Panel



A Report from a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)
of ULI Colorado
December 7-8, 2017



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South Sheridan Commercial Corridor Technical Advisory Panel

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Supported by:

Councilman Kevin Flynn, City Council,
District 2, City and County of Denver
Denver Regional Council of Governments

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Overview of ULI Advisory Services

Since 1947, the national ULI Advisory Services program has assembled 400+ ULI-member teams to help sponsors find solutions for issues including downtown redevelopment, community revitalization, and affordable housing, among other matters. In Colorado, ULI Advisory Services have provided solutions for such key sites as the Colorado Convention Center, Coors Field, Fitzsimons, and the Denver Justice Center.

ULI Colorado's Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) offer the same expertise at the local level. Each panel is composed of qualified and unbiased professionals who volunteer their time. Panel chairs are respected ULI members with previous panel experience. Since 2003, ULI Colorado has completed more than 60 TAPs leading to positive policy changes and built projects.

Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs)

Technical Advisory Panels bring Urban Land Institute (ULI) Colorado expertise directly into communities to help solve tough real estate problems. TAPs provide advisory panels composed of ULI Colorado members who volunteer their time to offer unbiased, disinterested professional advice. Each are leading experts in their fields. Since 2004, ULI Colorado has been invited to conduct more than 60 TAPs throughout Colorado.



Introduction

Thirty years ago, Southwest Denver’s South Sheridan Commercial Corridor was a bustling commercial node with retail, entertainment, restaurants, groceries, recreation, and services. Over time, it hosted a movie theater, a skating rink, a grocery store, and a Target, all of which were popular with locals, but have since disappeared. When the 110,500-square-foot Target store closed, the company included a standard 20-year “no compete” clause in the deed and sold its 13-acre parcel to a California investor, who opened a 99-cent store. The 64-acre site houses 37 irregularly shaped lots ranging from less than 6,000 square feet to 13 acres, with ownerships both local and out of state, and uses that range from a couple of small restaurants to under-performing retail, and swaths of vacant parking lots.

While the City of Denver will not be able to start a neighborhood planning process in Southwest Denver for at least two years, the community vision is for a walkable mixed-use revitalization that provides local entrepreneurs with the opportunity to open neighborhood-serving businesses and services, as well as home-ownership opportunities. Councilman Kevin Flynn sponsored this Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to provide recommendations on how to move forward on the site, which may be the perfect place to demonstrate how to retrofit an auto-oriented suburban corridor into a more sustainable, neighborhood-oriented community gathering place.

Panelists walk by the Arc Donation Station on the site.



Overview & Questions for the Panel

On December 7-8, 2017, ULI Colorado convened a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to provide guidance on how to revitalize the South Sheridan commercial corridor. At the invitation of Councilman Kevin Flynn, and with the support of the City and County of Denver and the Denver Regional Council of Governments, ULI Colorado assembled five land use experts (see panelist bios on page 22) who volunteered to offer objective advice. For the two-day TAP, the panel reviewed a detailed advance packet of planning and demographic data, toured the site, and interviewed local stakeholders, including city staff, state elected officials, and longtime property and business owners (for a list of stakeholders interviewed, see page 23). The sponsors gave the panelists the following problem statement and questions to address during the TAP.

TAP Chair Todd Wenskoski (left) and fellow panelist Maureen Phair sketch ideas for the site.

The Problem Statement:

Southwest Denver's South Sheridan Commercial Corridor is an effectively landlocked rectangle of 64 acres on the west side of Sheridan Boulevard between Jewell and Warren avenues. An odd artifact of Denver's aggressive but eventually banned annexations, it was a bustling commercial node 30 years ago. It provided Harvey Park and other surrounding neighborhoods with retail, entertainment, restaurants, groceries, recreation and services. But suburban sprawl and inner-ring decline saw many businesses disappear. The big blow came six years ago, when it lost its center of gravity: the 110,500-square-foot Target store closed when the retailer opened its new location in Lakewood's Belmar. Worse, the company included the standard 20-year "no compete" clause in the deed and sold its 13-acre parcel to a California investor who opened a cavernous 99-cent store.

There are extreme challenges to improved commercial and residential land uses that could better serve this economically and demographically diverse neighborhood, which

Panelist answers to the TAP questions

In answer to the questions posed by the TAP sponsors, the panelists provided the following advice.

With the loss of businesses that already has occurred, and the expansion of commercial opportunities beyond the city limits taking Denver sales tax dollars to the suburbs, is retail revitalization a realistic vision for the South Sheridan Commercial Corridor? Or is the market trend telling us that there is a different future for this land? Can the market around South Sheridan support revitalized retail here?

The area will probably not be able to support the same kind of retail that it has previously due to a shift in market trends. As consumers continue to shop online and in-store retail visits slow respectively, brick-and-mortar stores have been changing to include more “experiential retail,” such as dining, exercise, and entertainment options. Big box retail requires fewer, but larger stores in locations with optimal visibility and regional access, which is why they have moved away from this location. The panelists suggested that the best way to revitalize this site would be to reconfigure it with a new internal street grid and to add a horizontal mix of uses, such as housing, experiential retail with food options, and wellness facilities that are synergistic with the new VASA Fitness gym that is already moving into the site.

What tools exist to meet the challenges presented by the multiple separate ownerships, parcel sizes and configurations?

While the panelists warned that there are no silver bullets to meet these challenges, they did suggest the following:

Image of experiential retail courtesy J.C. Williams Group.

Experiential Retail:

While most products can be purchased online, people will still go to brick-and-mortar locations to have “experiences.” These experiences could include:

- Personal services, such as nail and beauty salons.
- Health and fitness facilities, such as yoga, massage and meditation studios, as well as traditional gyms.
- Restaurants.
- Cinemas and theaters that present plays, concerts, comedy shows, lectures, and more.
- Art galleries and stores.

Many retailers, recognizing the need to offer hands-on, authentic experiences that draw shoppers into their stores, are currently adapting their stores to do so.

For more information, see “[The Rise of Experiential Retail](#)” in NAIOP’s Summer 2016 Development Magazine.

Updating the site's zoning to S-MX would require development of buildings along the street, resulting in a more pedestrian-oriented configuration, as well as higher density development, which may prove more catalytic for the site. However, since South Sheridan is predominantly a suburban commercial corridor, updating the site's zoning to S-CC-3x may be more context-sensitive and palatable to local stakeholders.

In addition to zoning, the panelists recommended going through the neighborhood planning process with the City, which would start in about 2-4 years and take around 18 months to complete. This effort would be part of the City's long-term commitment to ensure that every neighborhood in Denver has a small area plan within the next 10 to 14 years. Although this is a time-consuming process, it can ultimately help to facilitate redevelopment according to community needs.

While panelists envisioned multi-family housing on the former Target parcel with a mix of retail and service-oriented uses around the site to jumpstart the visioning process, Councilman Flynn can work with the South Sheridan Steering Committee to conduct a more extensive community visioning process and establish community priorities for the site at any time. With a community supported vision and list of priorities in place, it will be easier to attract developers with relevant experience to the site and to guide the type and intensity of development the community wants to see.

“ With a community supported vision and list of priorities in place, it will be easier to attract developers with relevant experience to the site and to guide the type and intensity of development the community wants to see. ”



The TAP panelists brainstorm options for the site.



Findings

What the Community Wants

Local stakeholders are hoping for redevelopment that results in a safe, connected, mixed-use community gathering place. They miss the Target, the movie theater, the grocery store, and the skating rink that used to be on the site. They prioritize safety and connectivity within the site and to surrounding neighborhoods, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and improved lighting. They asked for mixed-use development with housing, retail, green space, and food options like cool, local restaurants, a coffee shop, a brewery, and a grocery store.

The Northern Plaza at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia is an example of how community gathering places with green space and seating can bring people together. Photo by Ben Wrigley courtesy Landezine.

Redevelopment Opportunities

The TAP panelists found that the site has strategic advantages that can be leveraged for redevelopment, such as its size and location along major transportation corridors with great bus service. Also, new investment is already occurring on the site, including the new VASA Fitness center, Kava Bar, and Rebel Farm, which grows fresh, organic leafy greens and herbs for local restaurants. In terms of new development opportunities, the Super 99+ Cents store was put on the market last year and the owners of 2121 South Sheridan (Club Revolution) and 2100 South Sheridan (vacant commercial) hope to sell the properties in 2018. Combined with existing uses that locals already appreciate, such as Mile High Thrift, Rosemary Café, Jaime's Mexican Restaurant, and the Denver Sports Center, these new investments and opportunities could make the site much more attractive for future development.



Image of VASA Fitness facilities courtesy VASA Fitness.

Varied Ownership

There are some substantial barriers to creating the community gathering place that locals desire, however. The 64-acre site comprises 33 separate parcels with 29 different owners, as well as 54 separate businesses, and a Denver Public Schools charter high school. Each parcel has a different shape, size, and configuration. The varied ownerships and diverse parcels are a significant hurdle to land assembly for a larger-scale redevelopment plan on the site.

Aging Infrastructure

Infrastructure around the site is currently a deterrent to reinvestment in the site. Deferred maintenance of the aging infrastructure and many of the properties is visible from South Sheridan Boulevard. So much of the site is dedicated to undermaintained parking lots that dumping and homeless people on the properties are not uncommon. Local stakeholders reported that the site feels unsafe.

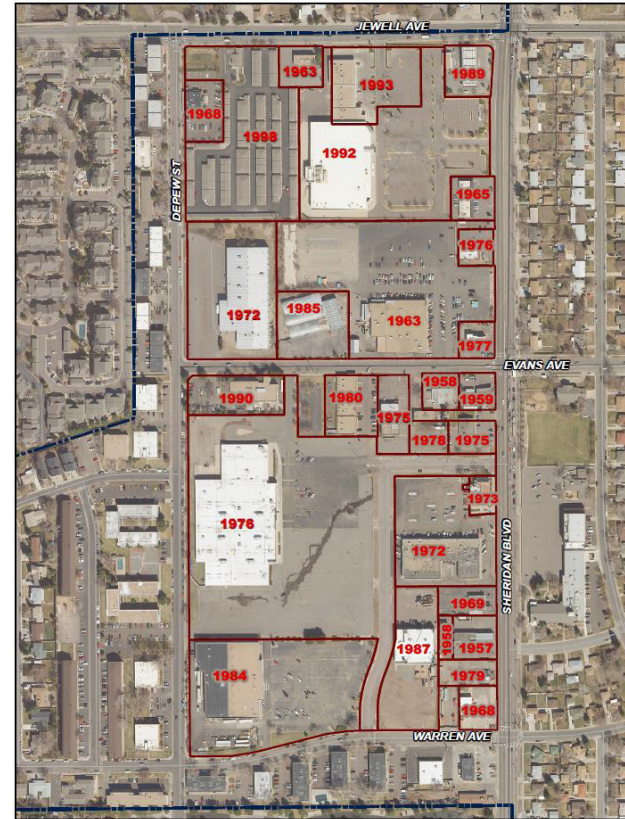
Transportation & Connectivity

Transportation and connectivity are another issue, especially since the area is decidedly auto-oriented. People don't feel safe walking or biking along South Sheridan Boulevard, where there is high traffic, deteriorating sidewalks, poor lighting, and superfluous curb cuts. Utility poles obstructing sidewalks create an ADA issue for access to transit stops. There aren't any pedestrian walkways within the site, other than sidewalks along West Evans Avenue. Even for drivers, there is very little internal circulation between the site's parcels, due to parking lot barriers and grade changes, making it difficult to navigate the site. Locals are also concerned about parking and traffic in the area, since residents of adjacent apartments reportedly park along residential streets around the site, while the expansive surface parking lots within the site remain mostly vacant.

On a positive note, though, bus transit is relatively robust in the area. Four RTD bus routes (4, 21, 50, 51) provide service along the site, where there are 14 bus stops on Sheridan, Depew and Evans. However, there is not convenient access from the site to RTD's rapid-transit rail network. Both Route 4 and Route 21 take 30 minutes to get to the Alameda and Evans light rail stations, respectively, and the W Line takes 16 minutes to get to the Sheridan station and 30 minutes to get to the Englewood station. Also, RTD is proposing to merge Route 50 and 51 service between 44th Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue into a single route.

Retail Challenges

Retail on the site is indicative of broader market realities. With its current configuration, retail within the site is not highly visible from South Sheridan Boulevard, so it does not entice drivers to pull in. Additionally, the site is not easy or safe to walk to or through from nearby neighborhoods and schools. Big box retailers do not want to move into the site since its size and configuration are inconsistent



Map of the site's parcels and their site construction years courtesy of the City of Denver.

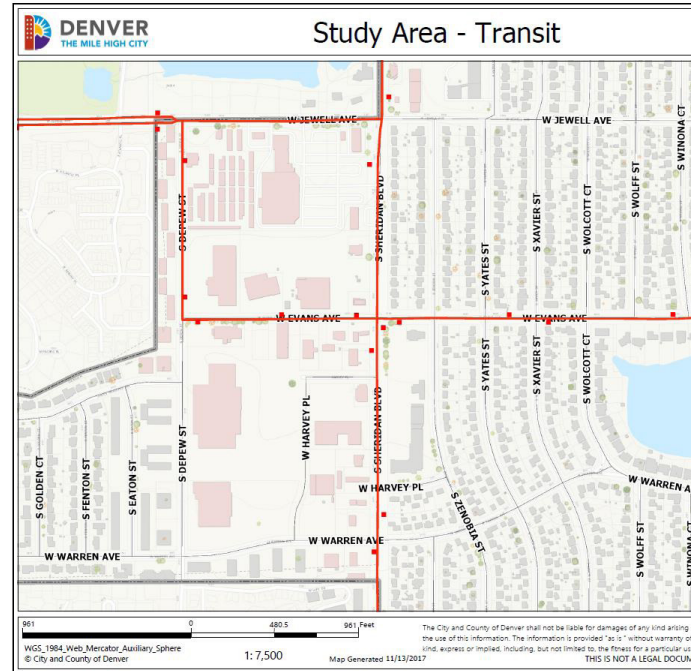


Above and below: Panelists walk through the site, noticing its infrastructural issues, such as poor sidewalks.

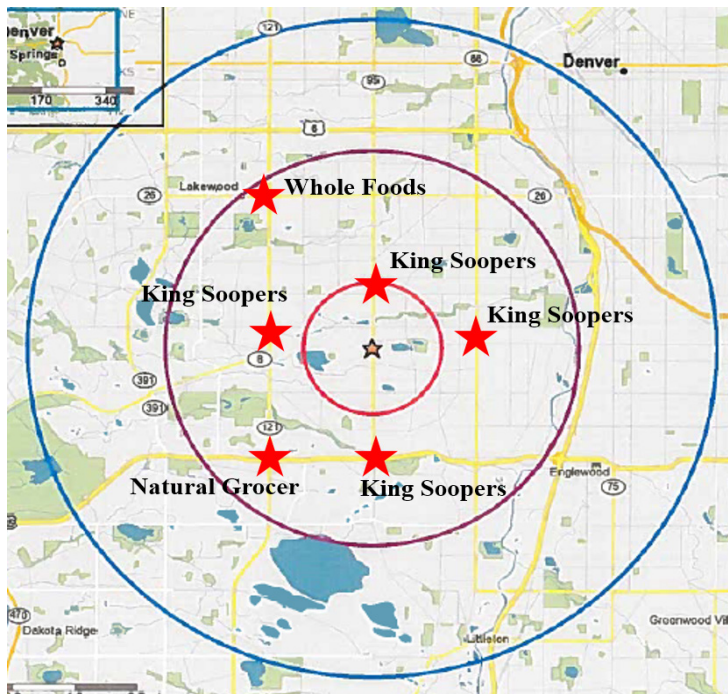


with modern standards, South Sheridan's 35,000 average daily traffic count is too low, Evans Avenue dead-ends, and West Jewell Avenue is not a main arterial. When Target left its 13-acre parcel in 2011, it included a deed restriction that prohibits a competing general merchandising retail operation greater than 50,000 square feet to locate on the property for the next 20 years. Also, the site is a "tweener" site for grocery stores, since it is within a mile of a King Soopers on South Sheridan Boulevard, and within two miles of three other King Soopers, a Natural Grocers, and a Whole Foods. Clearly, something needs to change for retail to be successful on this site.

So how does the South Sheridan community address these challenges, leverage opportunities, and create what the community wants on the site? The panelists provided the following recommendations.



This transit map shows that the study area is a hub for RTD bus routes 4, 21, 50, and 51. Red lines are bus routes and red dots are bus stops. Map courtesy of the City of Denver.



This map by panelist Rich Wilson shows six grocery stores within two miles of the site (marked with the yellow star), but none within close walking distance.



Panelists walk by boarded up Club Revolution, an opportunity site for positive redevelopment.



Recommendations

The world has changed since auto-oriented suburbs were created. In-person shopping is not the only reason for people to visit a place anymore, because the retail landscape has become much more digital. The new VASA Fitness facility is a good start to enhancing the site's experiential options, but more is needed to retrofit this auto-oriented suburban corridor into a more pedestrian-friendly community gathering place.

Although there are no silver bullets for taking down the challenges of this site, particularly the fractured ownership of the parcels, there are paths forward for catalyzing transformation on the site. The panelists suggested the following steps:

1. Create a cohesive vision for the site that the community supports.
2. Zone the site to incentivize acquisition and redevelopment.
3. Attract developers to the site for selective acquisition.
4. Use available financing tools to help realize the vision.

To jumpstart the visioning process, the panelists came up with the following ideas for the community to consider. More information on zoning, attracting the right developers, and financing tools starts on page 19.

Create a community gathering place.

Central to what local stakeholders hope to see on the site is a community gathering place where people of all ages can relax, enjoy green space and activities, grab coffee and food, and shop. Panelists suggested that the best way to create such a place would be to reconfigure the site with a new internal street grid, reduce the gross square feet of large format retail, and add a mix of uses. A well-designed public realm can tie together the parcels with connected sidewalks, plazas with green space, areas for events and

Councilman Kevin Flynn points out development opportunities on the site.

“Central to what local stakeholders hope to see on the site is a community gathering place where people of all ages can relax, enjoy green space and activities, grab coffee and food, and shop.”

activities, and great seating and dining options. They ideated a festival street that could serve as a gathering space for programming, like farmer's markets. Adding housing and office space to the mix of uses allows retail to thrive by creating more customers throughout the day, supporting longer business hours, and increasing the overall financial viability of the redevelopment. Under this scenario, residents and employees can enjoy restaurants, services, and retail at their door step during lunch, as well as before and after work.

Examples of community gathering places: parks, playgrounds, gardens, and markets



Neighborhood park at Pavilion Park. Courtesy of SB Architects.



Liberty Public Market San Diego. Courtesy of FINE Magazine.



Highlands Square Farmers Market. Courtesy of Colorado.com.



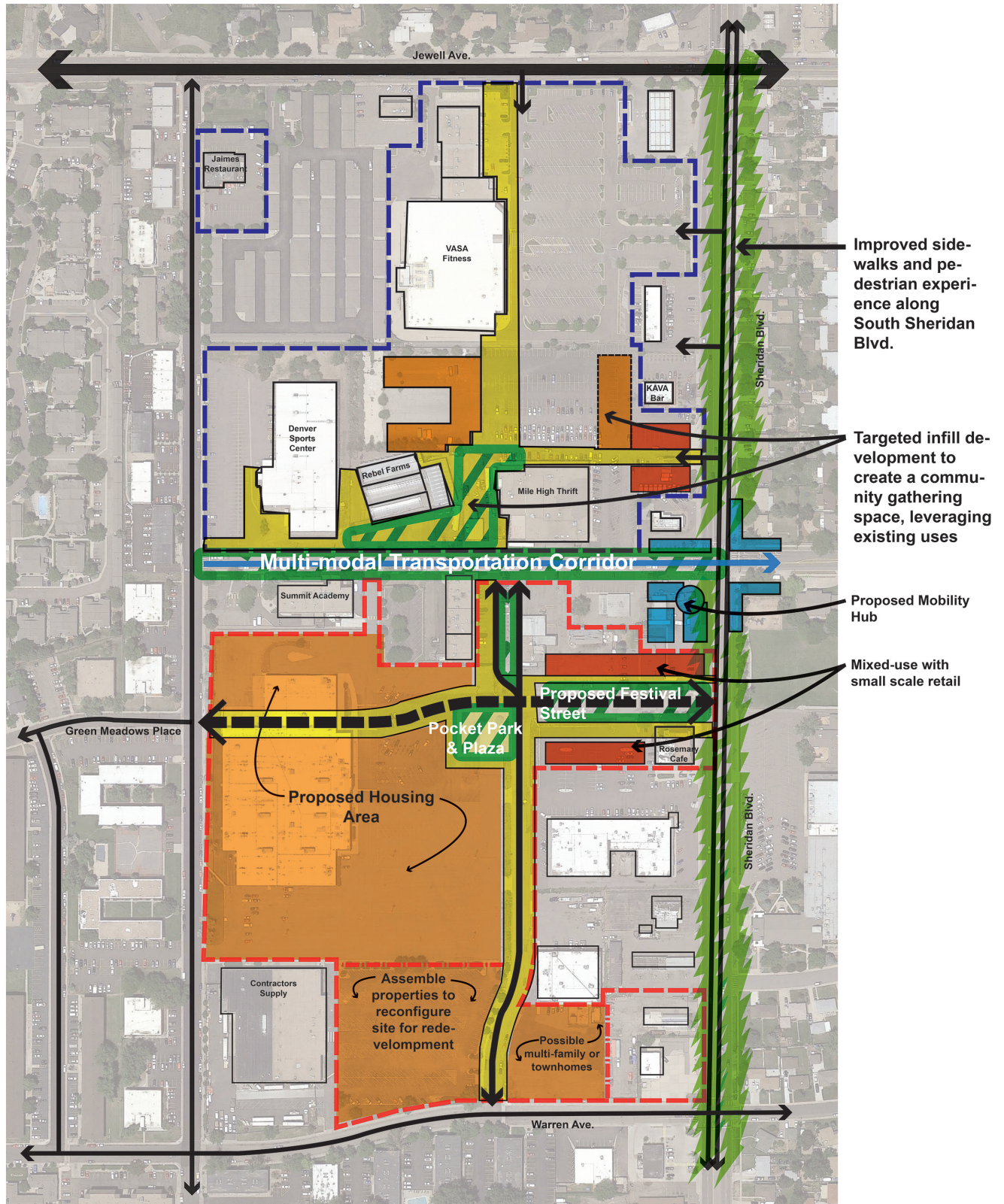
Mini Golf at The Porch in Philadelphia. Courtesy of University City District.



Community Garden View. Courtesy of Truth Box Inc.



Village of Rochester Hills, Rochester Hills, MI. Courtesy of Rich Wilson.



Map showing improved pedestrian connections, proposed housing areas, a festival street surrounded by mixed-use development with small scale retail, a mobility hub, a pocket park, and community gathering places. Map by panel chair Todd Wenskoski.

Focus on health and wellness.

Panelists came up with idea of focusing on health and wellness throughout the site, leveraging current strong uses, such as VASA Fitness, Rebel Farm, and Denver Sports Center, as well as meeting growing demand from locals who seek more wellness and fitness options in an auto-oriented landscape and from the aging population of boomers.

Opportunities to highlight health and wellness on the site:

- The owners of Rebel Farm, which grows fresh, organic leafy greens and herbs for local restaurants, hope to expand their operations. They already open their hydroponic greenhouse for tours, and as they grow, this could become even more of a draw for visitors. In addition to supplying restaurants and markets in the area with fresh produce, they could help introduce other health and food-related programming on site for surrounding communities.
- Future programming on the site could include farmer's markets, food trucks, and other food-related activities.
- Health and wellness facilities that complement VASA Fitness, such as medical, pharmaceutical, and senior care services could locate on the site.
- Recreational opportunities, such as rock climbing and a small playground, could be a draw for visitors and families.
- Mi Casa Resource Center, a non-profit that provides training for low-income entrepreneurs, mentioned that they would be interested in creating a hub where Mi Casa staff could train entrepreneurs in this area. With a health focus on site, this could potentially include a food incubator with a commercial kitchen, for example, that sources fresh produce from Rebel Farm and local farmer's markets. The Office of Economic Development as well as local foundations that focus on health, such as the Colorado Health Foundation and LiveWell Colorado, would be great partners and may be able to help fund the development of a hub of this sort.

Leverage and support new investments for redevelopment and retail.

To revitalize the site, the panelists recommended getting started by leveraging and supporting new investments recently made on the site, in addition to the existing stable, long-term operators. Since most of those new investments and stable operators (stars in the map below) are located north of Evans Avenue, panelists suggested starting there with targeted infill development to generate a critical mass of activity that will better support new development and retail. The northern half of the site is already zoned S-CC-3x (Suburban – Commercial Corridor – 3 stories maximum height; less intensive uses), which offers an easier path to redevelopment since it already allows for a mix of uses. Redevelopment in this area could focus first on targeted façade improvements and enhancements to reinforce the public realm.

South of Evans Avenue, panelists recommended targeted assembly of highly visible deteriorating properties to improve



The owners of Rebel Farm, which grows fresh, organic leafy greens and herbs for local restaurants, hope to expand their operations in the future. Expansion could include more public uses, like tours and workshops.



A food incubator with a commercial kitchen could be used to provide training to local entrepreneurs. Rendering of Union Kitchen food accelerator in Washington DC courtesy Union Kitchen.



Liberty Public Market in San Diego is an example of how to use food to activate a space. Photo courtesy Liberty Public Market.

the area's visual aesthetic and, ultimately, to transform the site. They suggested assembling contiguous parcels, centered on the Super 99+ Cents site, to create larger areas of land for an impactful redevelopment area. With larger parcels, redevelopment can reconfigure and transform the site into a mixed-use area with a central community gathering place, as opposed to creating a patchwork of new buildings amid the existing parcels, which doesn't seem compatible with the community's hopes for the site.

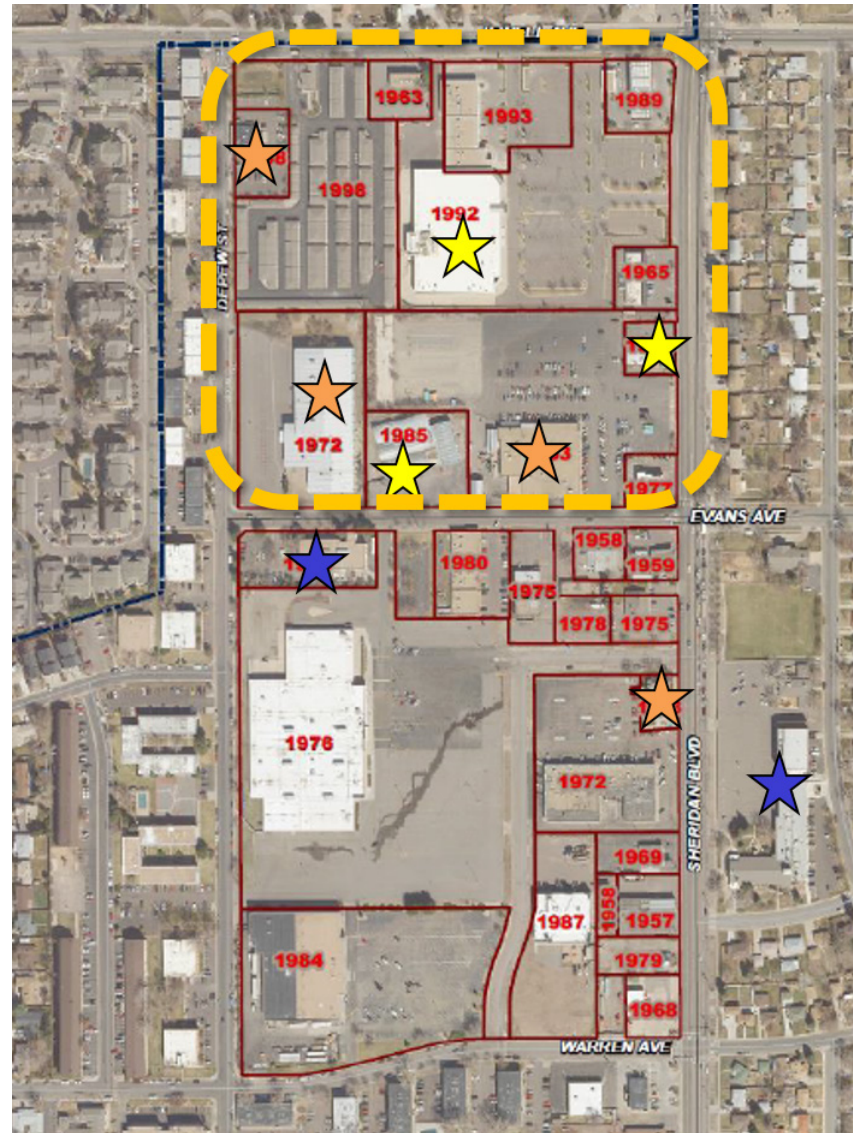
Throughout the site, smaller scale, community-serving retail will still be viable, especially if it's paired with great placemaking. If the site is reconfigured so that the retail is aligned along, or at least more visible from, South Sheridan Boulevard, then it will be all the more inviting for customers. Signs can be used to direct drivers to parking behind stores and retail along the street will make the site more pedestrian-friendly and attractive. Experiential retail and great dining experiences, both inside and outdoors, can help make the site a destination and public space programming can draw people to support businesses on the site, all helping with the creation of a community gathering place.

Integrate housing into the mix of uses on site.

Adding synergistic uses, like housing and office, on the site will help support the desired retail and public space amenities. In this area, there may not be a market for office space, but housing is in demand throughout Denver. Also, adding high-quality housing to the mix of uses on site supports retail, enables longer business hours, and creates a sense of community, since people would be living there and taking greater ownership of the space as a result.

Housing could be built in various forms, such as multi-family rental or for-sale condos, townhomes, senior housing, and/or including some component of affordable or attainable units to allow for a mixed-income community. Regardless of the type of housing selected for the site, it should be designed to build character within the site, enhancing the public realm and adding to the pedestrian experience.

Since many of the parcels in the site are too small for housing that integrates well into a cohesive master planned environment, the old Target site would work best for this kind of housing development since it has the appropriate scale. Also, housing would not be limited by Target's deed restriction and redeveloping the old Target site would help to build the sense of place needed to transform



Map Key:

Yellow Stars: New investments have been taking place mostly in the northern half of the site, with VASA Fitness, Rebel Farm, and Mad Hatter's Mile High Kava Bar.

Orange Stars: These are stable, long-term operators on the site, including the popular Mile High Thrift, Denver Sports Center, Jaime's Mexican Restaurant, and Rosemary's Café & Family Dining.

Blue Stars: There are several schools on the southern half of the site, including Summit Academy and Notre Dame Catholic School.

Map by panelist Rich Wilson.

this site into a community gathering place. Housing could also be integrated into the mix of uses north of West Evans Avenue, near Mile High Thrift and the new VASA Fitness, generating energy and placemaking opportunities around the site.

Connect the site with transportation options.

There are numerous opportunities for improving transportation options within and around this site to make it more connected and welcoming for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Create an internal street grid:

- Continue West Green Meadows Place to South Sheridan Boulevard from the west.
- Create a festival street where programming and activities can take place, which could be along the continuation of West Green Meadows Place through the site.
- Create north-south, barrier-separated bicycle path through the site.
- Develop an interconnected pedestrian sidewalk network along the new grid with safe and attractive crosswalks.



A Target store vacant since 2005 on the corner of Colfax and Oak Street in Denver was torn down to make room for WestLink at Oak Station, a \$40 million, 244-unit apartment complex spread across seven buildings. Photo courtesy WestLink at Oak Station.

Examples of neighborhood-scale housing that could be integrated into a commercial site



EvolvTownhomes in Moodyville, Vancouver. Courtesy of Vancouver New Condos.



Rendering of multi-family housing by Truth Box Inc.



Rendering of Radius Condos in Vancouver. Courtesy of Mike Stewart.



Parkgate Townhomes in North Vancouver. Courtesy Texor Homes.

Enhance safety for the bike/walk shed:

- Add wayfinding within a ¼ mile radius of a neighborhood mobility hub.
- Improve the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of West Evans Avenue and South Sheridan Boulevard
- Install a “HAWK” (High-intensity Activated crossWalk) signal for pedestrians at the West Green Meadows Place intersection with South Sheridan Boulevard
- Replace sidewalks around site.
- Reduce curb cuts along South Sheridan Boulevard
- Address bike lane connectivity and safety within a 1-mile radius of the mobility hub.

Centralize transportation services in a Neighborhood Mobility Hub:

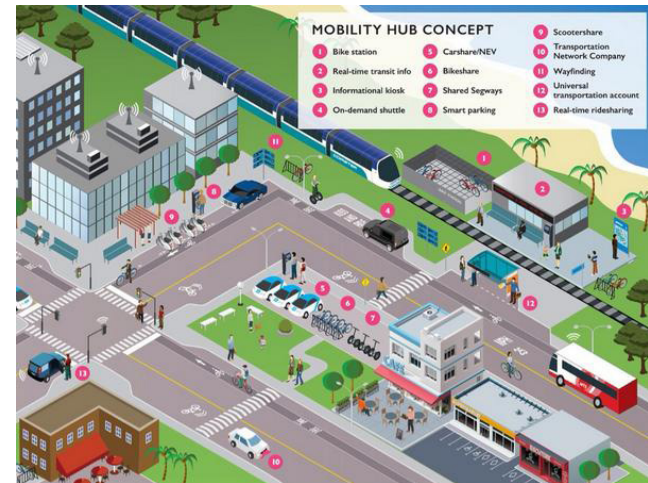
- Since the site is served by four RTD bus routes and 14 bus stops, it makes sense to consolidate at least some of them into a Neighborhood Mobility Hub on site, where transportation services like buses, car-share, bike-share, and ride-share (like Uber and Lyft) can be centralized in an attractive, safe hub. Consolidating bus stops would allow for bumping up investment in a single, multi-modal hub.
- The mobility hub could be located on the southwest corner of West Evans Avenue and South Sheridan Boulevard to have a central location in the area, close to many existing bus stops and near future retail sites.
- The mobility hub could include information boards with real-time transit timing, bus pass sales, and elderly mobility options, among other services and amenities.
- Funding for a mobility hub could come from both RTD and private service operators.
- Once transit ridership increases in the area, especially as a result of redeveloping the site and including housing, it will be easier to make the case for increased bus frequency.

Create a flexible parking arrangement on site:

- Update the site’s zoning to reduce parking requirements.
- Pool residential parking and “unbundle” the cost of dwelling units from parking by selling or renting parking spots separately. Tenants can choose 0-5 parking spaces for a monthly fee, for example.
- Introduce shared parking between uses on site to reduce driving within the site and to improve management of the parking supply.
- Consider an HOA-supported residential RTD EcoPass to reduce parking demand.



Installing a “HAWK” (High-intensity Activated crossWalk) signal for pedestrians at the West Green Meadows Place intersection with South Sheridan Boulevard could greatly improve pedestrian safety. Photo courtesy National Association of City Transportation Officials.



Rendering of a mobility hub that integrates multi-modal transportation options with retail. Image courtesy of San Diego Association of Governments.



District parking can consolidate parking throughout an area, making room for other uses. Photo of Houston’s Theater District parking sign courtesy of Houston First News.

Explore the menu of options for financing.

- **Investigate the creation of an urban renewal area** with the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) to finance site improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, and parks.
- **Explore the creation of a Metro District** to finance public infrastructure improvements. This can be done by interviewing current and prospective property owners about their willingness to participate by voluntarily assessing themselves to fund site infrastructure improvements, operations, and maintenance.
- **Request city Capital Improvement Program and General Obligation Bond funding** to improve sidewalks and address infrastructure along the site, potentially with prioritization through Denver Moves: Pedestrian and Trails. Councilman Flynn could investigate this option through the city's Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- **Attract developers to the site.** Meet with developers to talk about opportunities on the site. Encourage affordable housing developers to apply for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) through the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA). Explore potential partnerships with public and non-profit organizations, like the Denver Housing Authority and the Urban Land Conservancy, to purchase land for equitable and mixed-income housing, and potentially senior, workforce, or attainable housing.
- **Meet with Mi Casa Resource Center**, the Denver Office of Economic Development, the Colorado Health Foundation, LiveWell Colorado, and other potential partners and funders to explore opportunities for integrating uses that focus on health and wellness on the site, such as a non-profit food incubator with a commercial kitchen for low-income entrepreneurs.
- **Investigate the potential for creating a Business Improvement District (BID)** to fund property maintenance, promotion, and programming once redevelopment has taken place and more businesses are on site. Property and business owners on site will need to agree to assess themselves to form a BID.

Many of these funding options are tools to help developments that require subsidy. However, it may be that the area would benefit from market rate development. If market rate developers show interest in the site—which may be likely once it has updated zoning—it would be helpful to meet with the developers to explore their proposals. The goal for the site should be to meet community desires as well as financial requirements for redevelopment, resulting in equitable revitalization. For more information on how to support equitable revitalization, see ULI Colorado's report, "[Six Principles for Equitable Revitalization](#)."

Implement in conjunction with the city and local champions.

The panelists recommended working closely with the city, Councilman Kevin Flynn, and local champions through the



The street next to Rosemary's Cafe has the potential to become the community's central festival street.



This festival street in Lakewood's Belmar serves as an example of how a similar festival street could activate this site. Photo by Flickr user Kari.

“The goal for the site should be to meet community desires as well as financial requirements for redevelopment, resulting in equitable revitalization.”

South Sheridan Steering Committee throughout the process of implementation. The City provides fee waivers to incentivize the rezoning of properties from Former Chapter 59 to the updated Denver Zoning Code, which could expedite results in terms of attracting investment and developers to the site.

The southern half of the site (south of West Evans Avenue) could be rezoned to S-CC-3x (Suburban – Commercial Corridor – 3 stories maximum height; less intensive uses) with relative ease to match zoning in the northern half of the site. S-CC-3x can support mixed-use development, but some other zoning options specifically for mixed-use development include S-MX-3 and S-MX-5 (Suburban – Mixed Use – 3-5 stories maximum height). Updating the site’s zoning to S-MX would require development of buildings along the street, resulting in a more pedestrian-oriented configuration, as well as higher density development, which may prove more catalytic for the site. However, since South Sheridan is predominantly a suburban commercial corridor, updating the site’s zoning to S-CC-3x may be more context-sensitive and palatable to local stakeholders.

In addition to zoning, the panelists recommended going through the neighborhood planning process with the city, which would most likely be possible in around three years. In the meantime, they suggested that Councilman Flynn could work with the South Sheridan Steering Committee to begin the visioning process and to establish community priorities for the site.

With a community supported vision and list of priorities in place, it will be easier to attract developers with relevant experience to the site and to guide the type and intensity of development the community wants to see. When selecting development partners, panelists suggested starting with targeted infill development that leverages existing investments north of Evans Avenue and that generates aesthetic improvements facing the public realm. Due to the varied ownership throughout the site, partnerships between existing owners and developers could be explored to bring infill redevelopment to fruition. This may require creative strategies, such as partnering to redevelop portions of larger properties and surface parking lots. South of Evans Avenue, panelists recommended property acquisition and assembly to create larger parcels that can be used to reconfigure the site into a community gathering place with housing, a festival street, a mobility hub, and a surrounding mix of uses including small scale neighborhood-serving and experiential retail.

Since city planning processes and property acquisition, assembly, and development can take time, panelists recommended working with local champions and leaders to organize pop-up programming and events, like farmer’s markets, to generate buzz prior to redevelopment. Public space programming could be organized along the existing interior street next to Rosemary Café, which could eventually become the community’s central festival street. Event and activity programming attracts people to the site, inviting them to support existing businesses and generating “buzz” and support for the creation of future community spaces and redevelopment.



Panelists recommended working closely with the city, Councilman Kevin Flynn, and local champions throughout the process of implementation. In this photo, panelists have breakfast with Councilman Kevin Flynn (third from the right), his staffer Dana Montano (far right), and Brandon Shaver, Associate Planner with the City and County of Denver (left front).

Next Steps

The panelists suggested the following next steps:

1. Create a cohesive vision for the site that the community supports. Work with the city on neighborhood planning over time.
2. Work with the city to update zoning on the site to incentivize investment and redevelopment.
3. Attract developers to the site for targeted acquisition and redevelopment of parcels with the highest opportunity to catalyze positive change.
4. Use available financing tools to help realize the vision.



The South Sheridan Commercial Corridor has not always looked the way it does today. It was once a bustling commercial node with retail, entertainment, restaurants, recreation, and services, and it can be that way again. But to recreate that, we cannot simply turn back time, unfortunately; we must look to the future. Retrofitting auto-oriented suburban commercial corridors that were a product of their time requires a different set of tools, especially now, in the swiftly changing landscape of retail.

The panelists of this TAP believe that this site can transform into the community gathering place that locals want. Working together across sectors to accomplish this goal could be a boon to the community and the surrounding areas of Southwest Denver.

TAP panelists tour the site with Councilman Kevin Flynn (second from right) and Brandon Shaver of the City and County of Denver (third from right).



With support from the community, this TAP can serve as a catalyst for a fresh approach to revitalizing this once-thriving commercial site

ULI Volunteer Panelists



Panel Chair Todd Wenskoski is an Urban Designer and Principal at Livable Cities Studio and has over 20 years of planning and redevelopment experience in both the public and private sectors. Throughout his career, he has been responsible for leading numerous multi-disciplinary teams, establishing long-range visions and guiding them through strategic implementation with an emphasis on the role of public open-space as a way to stimulate growth and create socially active spaces. He specializes in complicated urban design and planning projects focused on redevelopment, mobility, public space design, community outreach and city building. Most recently, in his role as Deputy Director of Denver Mayor Hancock's North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC), Todd directed and oversaw a portfolio of planning initiatives and capital projects totaling over \$125 million in public investment of new parks, waterfronts, and

multi-modal infrastructure. In addition, Todd has been a regular studio instructor and critic at the University of Colorado Denver, a studio critic at the University of Texas, Auburn University and a Career Discovery instructor at Harvard's Graduate School of Design



Stuart Anderson, Executive Director of Transportation Solutions, is experienced in developing successful urban and transportation planning solutions and is an internationally recognized speaker on Transportation Demand Management (TDM). He has led many regional corridor planning studies and managed traffic mitigation efforts for highway and light rail construction projects including developing a TDM program for a \$1.7 billion corridor project in the Denver region. Most recently, he advised on the design of Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) and developed creative parking management strategies for mixed use sites around Light Rail Train stations. He was an integral member of the creative team that developed the concept plan for the Boulder Transit Village. Stuart founded the transportation planning firm UrbanTrans Consultants and grew the company to eight offices internationally before selling

the company in 2012. He was also previously Executive Director for the Association for Commuter Transportation (Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colorado) and Executive Director for the West Hollywood/Hollywood Transportation Management Association.



Chris Parr is the Senior Advisor for Sun Valley EcoDistrict, a 501c3 affiliate of the Denver Housing Authority, newly formed to create and administer the vision for the revitalization of Sun Valley and its district-based solution structure. Previously Chris was the Director of Development for DHA for 10 years. Under his guidance the department financed and managed the construction or rehabilitation of over 2,600 units of housing and several community-serving commercial spaces. Prior to that Chris worked for Integral Development Group, a private developer working in various national markets. He holds Bachelor degrees in Economics and Communications from Wheaton College.



Maureen Phair is the Executive Director of the Arvada Urban Renewal Authority and has been with the organization for 14 years. Her real estate development experience covers a wide range of industry types – including high-density multi-family housing, regional power centers, historic renovations and mixed-use projects. Ms. Phair excels at partnering with a diverse group of stakeholders including other governmental entities, developers, elected officials and the community in order to get complex projects built.



Rich Wilson, Vice President of Development at Forum Real Estate, is responsible for the execution of new development projects from concept to completion. He takes ownership of each new asset, managing the process through underwriting, acquisition, design, entitlement, construction, and asset management. Rich's career is driven by a passion to create unforgettable places and has experience in land acquisition, underwriting, entitlements, development and asset disposition for a broad range of real estate products. Prior to joining Forum, Rich was Vice President of Arcadia Land Company in Philadelphia, where he managed real estate development projects from initiation to completion while also managing advisory services to clients across the nation on a spectrum of real estate products including residential for-sale, multi-family, retail, office, and mixed-use master planned communities. Prior to Arcadia, Rich was a landscape architect and urban designer with HNTB in Dallas, Texas. Rich studied real estate development at the University of Pennsylvania, earning a Master of City Planning degree with a concentration in Urban Development and a Certificate in Real Estate Design and Development from the Wharton School and PennDesign. His undergraduate degree is from Kansas State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. Rich grew up in Kansas City and is thrilled to now be enjoying the active Colorado lifestyle with his wife and 3 kids.

Interviewed Stakeholders

City of Denver

- Jeff Romine, Office of Economic Development, City and County of Denver
- Brandon Shaver, Associate City Planner, City and County of Denver

Business and Property Owners

- Scott Felsted, VASA Fitness
- Kendal and Jacob Hawkins, Hawkins Development
- Joanne Melisaratos, owner of 1910 South Depew
- Sam Ramirez, owner of Club Revolution
- Jaime Navarro, owner of Jaime's Mexican Restaurant

Elected Officials

- Susan Lontine, State Representative
- Irene Aguilar, State Senator
- Pete Roybal, Lakewood City Council
- Mike Bieda, Lakewood City Council
- Kevin Flynn, Denver City Council

Faith Community and Nonprofits

- Monique Lovato, Mi Casa Resource Center
- Joyce Neufeld, Community Ministry
- Rev. Msgr. Edward Buelt, Notre Dame Roman Catholic Parish

Real Estate Developers

- Brian Shorter, Sullivan Hayes
- Matt Traesen, Gart Properties
- Jeff Galligan, Realtor
- Mike Kuykendall, Catellus Development Corporation
- Carl Koelbel, Koelbel & Company

Registered Neighborhood Organizations

- Shelley Fitzmaurice, South Sheridan Steering Committee
- Richard Saiz, President of Bear Valley Improvement Association
- Don Craft, Green Meadows Improvement Association
- Brian Giovanetti, Green Meadows Improvement Association
- Rob Collins, Pinecrest Village Improvement Association
- Donna Repp, South Mar Lee-Brentwood-Sharon Park Neighbors
- Aaron Manhart, Harvey Park Improvement Association
- Xochitl Gaytan, President of Harvey Park Improvement Association

Transportation

- Dave Menter, RTD
- Stephanie Holden, CDOT
- Karen Good, Denver Public Works



ULI Colorado Leadership in Responsible Land Use

ULI Colorado is the 1,300-member District Council of the global Urban Land Institute. ULI Colorado consists of a four-person staff, 25-member executive committee, and 15 committees with more than 250 volunteers. More than 40 programs a year include advisory panels, leadership and mentoring programs, panels, project tours, publications, and community service. ULI is a non-lobbying educational and research institute supported by its members, sponsors, and foundations. Key issues include affordable housing, healthy communities, transit-oriented development, and sustainable design and planning.

Chair: Tracy Huggins, Executive Director, Denver Urban Renewal Authority

Vice Chair: Mike Zoellner, Managing Partner, ZF Capital

Treasurer: Mark Tompkins, Principal, Strae Advisory Services

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Senior Manager: Sarah Franklin

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