



Urban Land Institute (ULI) Colorado

Building Healthy Places Workshop Report

The East Colfax Gateway into Aurora



November 2, 2018

Funded by a grant through The Colorado Health Foundation



The Colorado
Health Foundation™



ASIAN PACIFIC
DEVELOPMENT CENTER



Urban Land
Institute

Colorado

Table of Contents

I.	Overview.....	2
II.	Findings.....	7
III.	Workshop recommendations.....	9
IV.	Methods of implementation.....	15
V.	Answers to panel questions.....	18
VI.	Conclusion.....	20
VII.	About the host organizations and sponsor.....	20
VIII.	Stakeholders.....	21
IX.	ULI Volunteer Panelists.....	22



ULI volunteers speak with local stakeholders during the workshop.

Supported by:

The Fax Partnership & The
Colorado Health Foundation

ULI Program Staff & Author:

Marianne Eppig, Director, ULI
Colorado

I. Overview

With funding from the Colorado Health Foundation and support from the Fax Partnership and the Asian Pacific Development Center, the Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado) hosted a Building Healthy Places (BHP) workshop in Aurora's East Colfax neighborhood on Friday, November 2, 2018, focusing on the potential future redevelopment of the northeast block of Colfax Avenue and Yosemite Street, located at Aurora's border with Denver. This block has the potential for catalytic revitalization to improve community health and prevent future displacement.

This workshop brought together ULI volunteer experts with community leaders and stakeholders to envision new designs, developments, and infrastructure to benefit the community. The one-day workshop provided observations, findings, recommendations, and practical first and next steps in retrofitting or designing the built environment to enhance community wellbeing.

While addressing the workshop problem statement and questions below, the panelists focused on issues such as adding quality affordable housing, enhancing open space and community gathering spaces, promoting the arts, strengthening community bonds, and improving public safety and community health.



ULI volunteers and local stakeholders assess Westerly Creek during the workshop.

Problem Statement

The northeast block of Colfax Avenue and Yosemite Street, located at Aurora's border with Denver, has the potential for catalytic redevelopment and greenway beautification in one of Aurora's densest and most diverse neighborhoods. This block includes a daylight portion of Westerly Creek and commercial properties fronting the metropolitan area's busiest transit corridor. Despite this significant location, this section of East Colfax is an inactive or under-developed retail block owned by multiple property owners. Westerly Creek remains an unattractive drainage channel running north/south between Colfax and 16th Avenue.

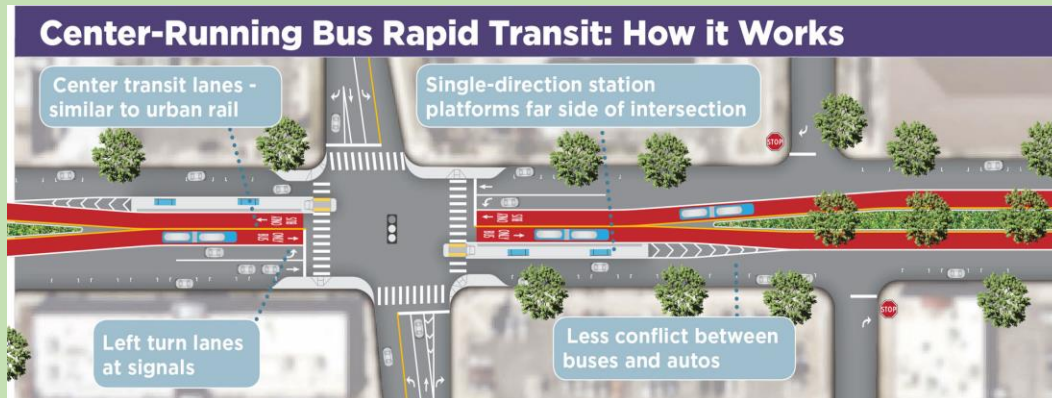
This section of Aurora, though, is poised for transformation. The City of Denver is planning a center-running, dedicated bus lane on East Colfax, helping to transform this iconic street into a linear TOD. While Aurora is not at this time planning to implement the project, the study site will be across the street from this \$200 million transit investment and could redevelop utilizing TOD principles of multi-family, high-density housing with activated ground floor retail and service space.

The planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) investment makes this block a candidate for redevelopment, but the social needs of this community also add to this location's importance. The need for new housing and environmental beautification is significant in this western section of the city. Within the past five years, property values in northwest Aurora have increased 125 percent and rental rates have increased between 27-50 percent in Aurora. These figures paint a picture of acute housing need, yet little new housing has been constructed in western Aurora. Given the planned transit investment and the intense demand for housing, this northeast block of Colfax and Yosemite could be a prime candidate for multi-family housing development. In order to mitigate further displacement, the Fax and APDC seek ULI's guidance on increasing the stock of affordable housing.

Westerly Creek also presents an opportunity for the community. Greenways throughout the metropolitan region have been restored and redesigned to encourage healthy lifestyles, support biodiversity, and improve public access to the natural environment. This short block of Westerly Creek with comparable restoration could become a destination and provide a space for recreation in a dense, urban area of Aurora.

This ULI Colorado Building Healthy Places workshop provides an opportunity for the Fax Partnership, the Asian Pacific Development Center, the City of Aurora, and the northwest Aurora community to develop a catalytic vision for this important urban block that capitalizes on the planned transit investment, addresses the intense housing needs, and provides a greenway oasis for the northwest Aurora community.

PLANNED BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALONG COLFAX AVENUE



Denver's dedicated center lane BRT project along Colfax Avenue is targeted for completion by 2023. Currently, Colfax Avenue is the Denver metro area's most utilized transit line, with 22,000 daily riders, and ridership is expected to increase to 30,000 per day by 2023. While the dedicated bus lane is not currently planned to extend into Aurora (it will continue into the mixed-traffic right-of-way), there is a planned stop on the west side of Yosemite Street, adjacent to the study site.

The BRT will enhance mobility and access to jobs in this area, but it is also likely to bring increased development pressure to the area. To mitigate displacement, the Fax and the APDC have sought ULI's guidance on increasing the stock of affordable housing, creating a community hub, and improving health outcomes for the area.

About the Study Site



Drone photo of the study site, which is around 8.7 acres. Photo courtesy John Fernandez.

The property parcels within the study site, which is around 8.7 acres, have a variety of current uses and owners. The site was recently rezoned as Original Aurora – Main Street (OA-MS), which is intended to support active, pedestrian-friendly and economically vibrant main street corridors through a mix of low- to medium-density buildings.

As pictured below, a significant portion of the site is within a Regulatory Floodway (striped area), which prohibits redevelopment and puts existing residents within the floodway at risk of flooding.



Map of the Regulatory Floodway along Westerly Creek. Development or redevelopment is prohibited within the Regulatory Floodway. Image courtesy Aurora Water.

ABOUT EAST COLFAX AVENUE



Once the main thoroughfare through the city, East Colfax had its heyday in the early to mid-20th century. But since the opening of Interstate 70 in 1964, the area has largely been in decline. For the last several decades, gritty, run-down buildings, including numerous old motels that are serving as affordable housing of last resort in addition to housing a criminal element that make prostitution, crime, and drug and alcohol abuse problems in this area. While blocks closer to Denver's core have seen significant redevelopment and infrastructure funding over recent year, the area around Yosemite and Colfax has not.



Parcel 1: Vacant Corner Parcel

This vacant lot, which is 15,000 square feet, is privately owned by the adjacent property owner to the south of the parcel. Due to its position in the floodway, this parcel is prohibited from redevelopment.

Parcel 2: Seven Single Family Homes (1524 - 1570 Yosemite Street)

This parcel consists of seven single family home lots. Four of these lots are 6,534 square feet; the other three are 4,792 square feet. These homes are also prohibited from redevelopment since they lie within the floodway.

Parcel 3: Former Dalke's Laundry and Dry Cleaning (8935 E. Colfax Avenue)

This currently vacant lot is the site of the former Dalke's Laundry and Dry Cleaning. The property was purchased in 2017 and has undergone environmental remediation. It is now under contamination monitoring. The owner participated in the workshop and is open to working with the community on their goals for the site.

Parcel 4: Self Car Wash (8969 E. Colfax Avenue)

This site was purchased in 2002. The owner did not respond to requests to participate in the workshop.

Parcel 5: Dead End Road (Akron Street)

This dead end is owned by the City. In conversations with Aurora Public Works, the City has been open to allowing Akron Street to be incorporated into a future development, provided that the City can access utility lines.

Parcel 6: Vacant Parcel (9005 E. Colfax Avenue)

Former gas station. Site was foreclosed in February 2018 and may be contaminated.

Parcel 7: Vacant Building and Rico Pollo Restaurant (9075 E. Colfax Avenue)

Vacant building has no activity. Rico Pollo is a Mexican fast food restaurant.

Parcel 8: Atlacan Auto Services (1511 Alton Street)

This auto repair shop is one of many car-related businesses in this area of East Colfax.

Parcel 9: Asian Pacific Development Center (1537 Alton Street)

Office building of APDC, a co-host of the workshop (more details about this nonprofit on page 20). APDC also manages the community gardens on the eastern side of Westerly Creek. APDC has expressed interest in expanding beyond its 13,000 square foot building.

Parcel 10: Three Garden Apartment Buildings (1551 Alton Street and 9080 16th Avenue)

These three single story apartment buildings, owned by 9080 LLC, were built in 1953.

Parcel 11: Green space around Westerly Creek (9001 E. 16th Street)

The City of Aurora owns the central parcel surrounding Westerly Creek. Approximately 2.5 acres of this parcel are outside of the Regulatory Floodway on the eastern side. Aurora Water services the site, although some of the homes in Parcel 2 may currently be on Denver water, so a new water line may need to be installed for them to be switched to Aurora water.

II. Findings

During the workshop, the panelists toured the site, spoke with local stakeholders, and reviewed materials from the host organizations about the site and its surrounding community. Before diving into recommendations for the site, the panelists came up with the following findings.



Panelists discuss opportunities for the site.

Community Assets:

- **Parks, trails and open space:** Westerly Creek, its surrounding green space, and Montview Park to the north are major assets for the community, which is otherwise short on green space.
- **The Aurora Cultural Arts District:** Three blocks away, this art district spans from Chester Street to Geneva Street along East Colfax Avenue. The site could leverage the talented artists and visitors of the art district to incorporate more art and art-related programming on this gateway site.
- **Diversity:** Aurora, and the community surrounding East Colfax specifically, is a haven for refugees and people from diverse backgrounds. Students in Aurora Public Schools speak over 160 languages. This offers a great opportunity for cultural exchange. It also brings strong prospects for entrepreneurship and innovation. According to the Harvard Business Review, immigrants constitute 15 percent of the U.S. workforce, but account for one quarter of U.S. entrepreneurs and patent filings.
- **The Asian Pacific Development Center:** APDC and its community garden are important community assets. APDC provides crucial services to the immigrant and refugee community throughout the metro area, including behavioral health services, primary care, adult education, job training, and youth mentorship. More information about APDC is available on page 20. Its community garden allows Aurora residents to grow their own healthy food and is used for outdoor group therapy sessions for refugees who have experienced trauma.
- **The City of Aurora's new Comprehensive Plan, *Aurora Places*:** The City of Aurora adopted their new comprehensive plan in 2018 and it supports many of the recommendations that came out of this workshop, such as active, pedestrian-friendly and economically vibrant main street corridors, housing for all, parks, trails, and open space, arts and culture, diversity and more.

Opportunities:

- **City Ownership:** The fact that the City owns the parcel surrounding Westerly Creek presents a major opportunity to improve the site in a way that directly serves the community and the watershed. The City can also take a leading role in catalyzing implementation on the site.
- **Trail System & Green Infrastructure:** Green space surrounding Westerly Creek could be used as a community amenity and could increasingly help with flood and stormwater management. Expanding walking and biking connectivity along the entire Westerly Creek is a major opportunity for enhancing community health.
- **Available Properties:** Vacant parcels along Colfax Avenue are available for redevelopment.
- **Nearby Catalytic Opportunities:** The study site is near two designated Urban Renewal Areas (Westerly Creek Village URA to the north and Fletcher Plaza URA to the east) and Opportunity Zones border the study site to the south and to the west. The Urban Renewal Areas and Opportunity Zones will encourage catalytic investments in the community, which could increase interest in transformation on the study site.
- **Transit Access & Connectivity:** The planned BRT stop on the western side of Yosemite Street provides enhanced mobility and access to jobs from this site. The plans for this stop are still conceptual and may change over time. Transit connectivity along Colfax Avenue will allow for less dependence on cars and healthier, more active lifestyles.
- **Cultural Gateway between Denver and Aurora:** Yosemite Street marks the border between Denver and Aurora, presenting the opportunity to create a cultural gateway that highlights Aurora pride and welcomes visitors.
- **High-Quality Affordable Housing:** Replacing low-density, marginal housing with higher-density mixed-income multi-family housing with a focus on affordability and health-focused design (clean air, better lighting, improved landscaping, for example) could provide the community with more and better housing options.

Challenges:

- **Regulatory Floodway:** a significant portion of the site is within a Regulatory Floodway, prohibiting redevelopment and putting some residents at risk of flooding.
- **Blight:** Vacant and deteriorating properties on the site are an eyesore and symbol of disinvestment.
- **Contamination:** The dry cleaner and car wash have contaminated the site, posing health risks and creating barriers to redevelopment. While the dry cleaner site has been cleaned up, the car wash is still active.
- **Insufficient Housing:** Despite growing demand for housing throughout the region and rapidly rising property prices and rents that lead to concerns about displacement, little new housing has been constructed in this vicinity.
- **Concerns about Gentrification & Displacement:** As redevelopment along Colfax follows the BRT line, this area will likely see market rate development pressure. To meet the growing housing need and prevent displacement, additional affordable housing will be needed in the area.
- **Varied ownership:** Many different property owners within study site may make it difficult to create and implement a cohesive plan.

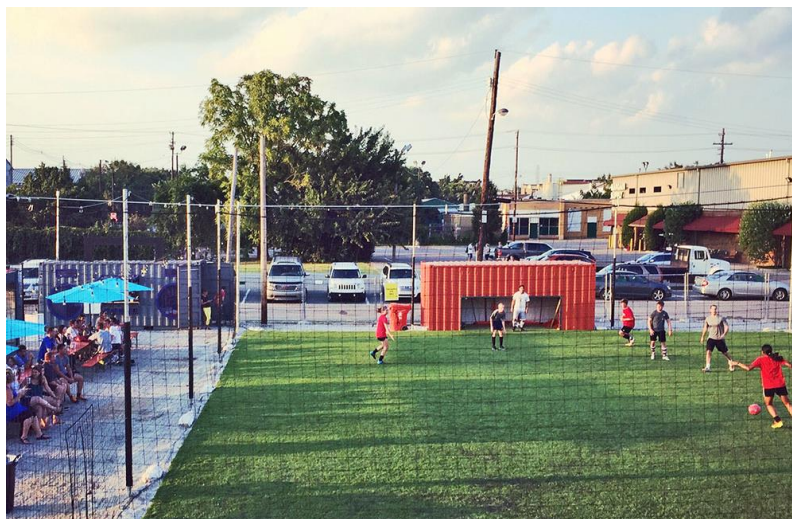
III. Workshop Recommendations

Community Engagement

To ensure that the community has a voice in the site's redevelopment, the panel recommended that the City of Aurora convene community stakeholders for a visioning workshop to formalize goals and objectives for the site. Especially since many of the parcels are privately owned, engagement with and buy-in from the property owners will be essential for successful implementation of a site-wide plan.

Quick Wins

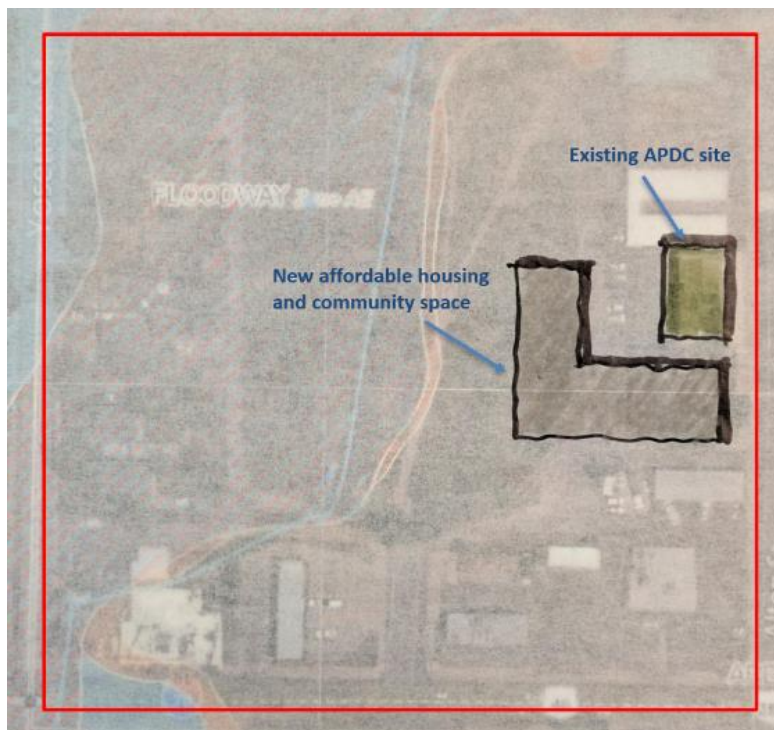
The panel suggested several shorter-term steps, or "quick wins," that could be taken before redevelopment occurs. These will help pilot strategies with the community and garner momentum and excitement for longer-term transformation.



A pop-up soccer field, like the one built on a vacant lot above, is one of many low-cost, short-term tactics that could be added to the green space on this site. This could help generate buy-in and momentum for the redevelopment of the site. Photo courtesy CityCollaborative.org.

- Engage volunteers from the neighborhood to help clean up trash and debris in the open space.
- Partner with APDC to host community events around food, arts, culture, and music so that people start to see the site as a community hub. Community events like this will also help as the City, the Fax, APDC, and others begin applying for grants to improve the site.
- The panel recommended that the northwest corner of the site be used as a playfield or community garden. While this parcel is privately-owned, it's conceivable that the site owner would support interim community uses, as the site lies in the floodway and is prohibited from development.
- Install light fixtures throughout the site. This will make the site feel safer, thereby encouraging more pedestrian activity. String lights could be added along APDC's garden, for example.

Phase I

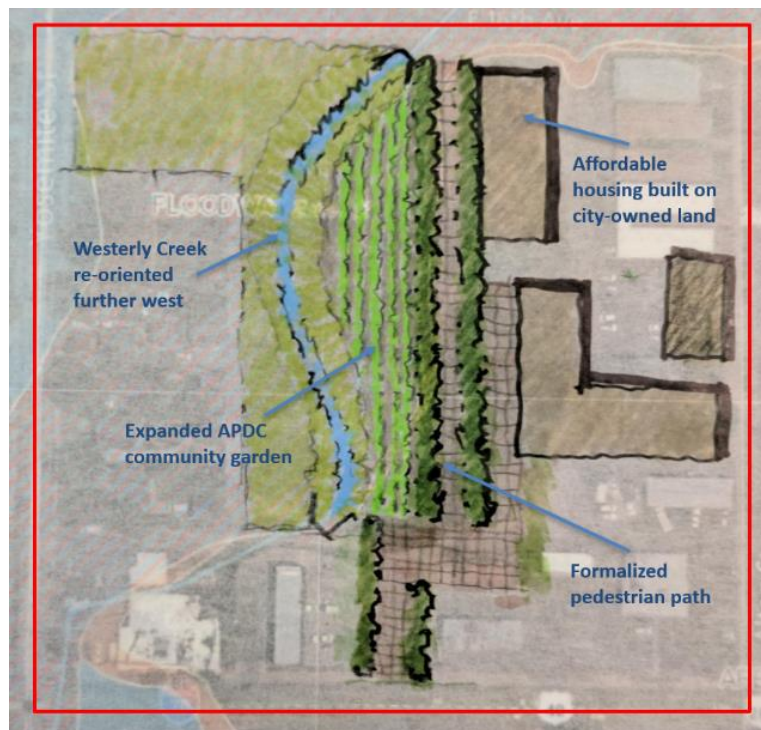


- In Phase I, the panelists recommended that the City donate land adjacent to the APDC building for the development of a mixed-use building with community serving amenities on the ground floor and affordable housing on the upper floors. According to the panelists' calculations, this new building could house as much as 40,000 square feet of community space and 80 affordable single-bedroom housing units with four stories. The completed building would be on both City and APDC land.
- The addition of community amenity space on the site would alleviate APDC's lack of room in its existing building, allowing them to expand their services and for the creation of community gathering space. Some proposed uses for the community space include a community or incubator kitchen, an employment readiness center, childcare center, small grocery co-op, and/or a general meeting space.



Denver's Comal Heritage Food Incubator in Globeville offers a strong example for the potential of an incubator kitchen geared toward immigrants. Image courtesy of Brittany Werges of 303magazine.com.

Phase II

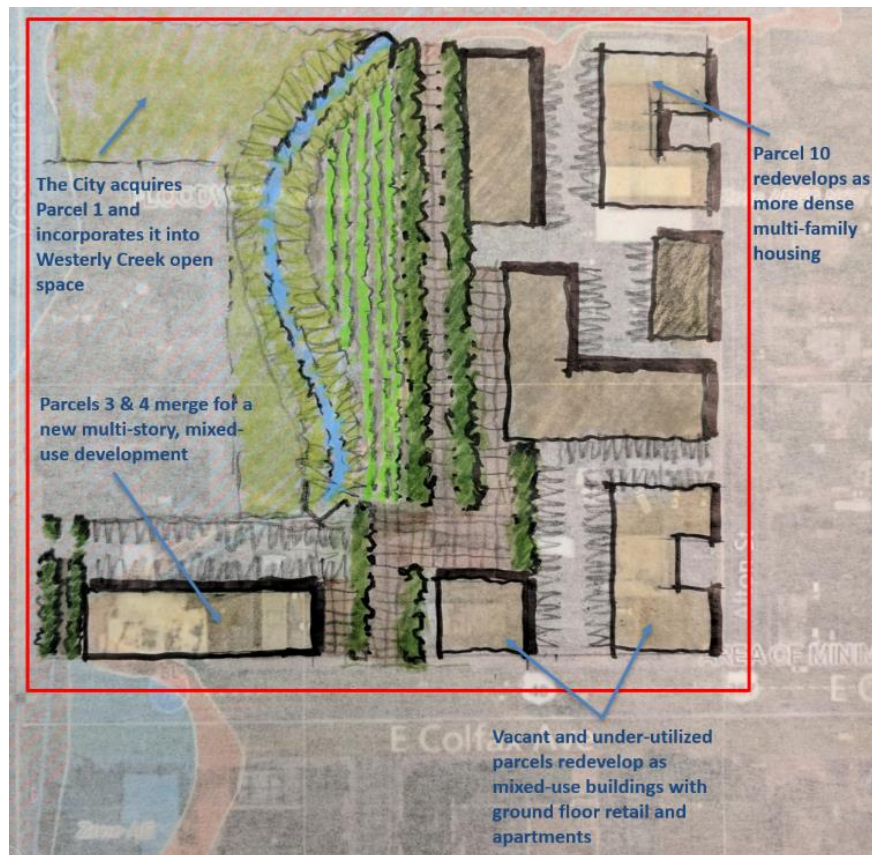


- In Phase II, the city-owned land to the east of the creek, abutting 16th Street, would also be developed for affordable housing. This project could include around 90 three- and four-bedroom apartments for families.
- The panelists recommended formalizing the pedestrian path to the east of Westerly Creek. The new path would run south from 16th Street to Colfax Avenue, as opposed to cutting diagonally across the site as it currently does, to avoid the floodway and connect the buildings. Formalizing the path should increase pedestrian activity and physically draw the community closer to the community gathering spaces.
- Over the long-term, Westerly Creek is envisioned as a regional trail connection by both Denver and Aurora. Given its regional importance, the suggested pathway could be designed to accommodate both regional users connecting to the north and south, as well as to promote pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods. To that end, safe at-grade or subgrade connections across Colfax, and pedestrian friendly

connections to adjacent neighborhoods, especially to the north, are critical to the convenient and safe use by residents living nearby. The Colfax at-grade crossing could also reinforce the gateway into the site.

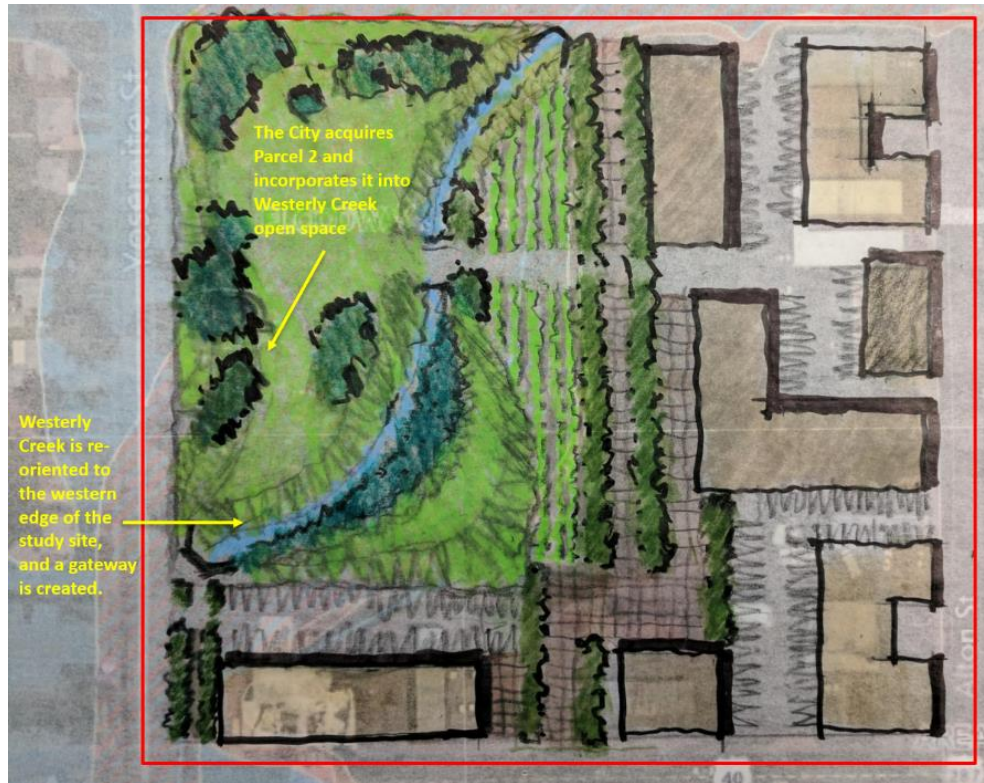
- Re-orienting Westerly Creek further west—back toward its natural path—would allow APDC and others to expand the community gardens across the pedestrian path.

Phase III



- Anticipating public investment during Phases I and II, the panel envisioned market forces guiding the redevelopment of several privately-owned parcels in the study site.
- As shown above, the car wash and dry cleaner sites could be assembled into a larger, mixed-use development. The other parcels along Colfax could also redevelop as more dense, mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail, as recommended in the area's OA-MS zoning. In total, the site's Colfax-fronting parcels include 56,036 square feet.
- The current garden apartments in Parcel 10 (see map on page 6) will likely become obsolete. There will be market demand for denser redevelopment as mixed-income multi-family apartments, which could also help to mitigate displacement of local residents.
- While Phase III would mostly be guided by private development and market forces, the panelists suggested that the City acquire Parcel 1 (map on page 6) and incorporate it into the Westerly Creek open space since it is in the floodway and cannot be redeveloped.

Phase IV



- Given that Parcel 2 (see map on page 6) is in the floodway and unable to redevelop, the panel envisioned the City of Aurora eventually acquiring it, helping to relocate existing residents, and adding this parcel to the Westerly Creek open space. This would give them the opportunity to re-orient the creek along its natural path and to surround it with green space.
- The eventual convergence of green space with Yosemite Street (the Aurora/Denver border) is an excellent opportunity to create a signature gateway between the cities. The owner of Parcel 3 (map on page 6) expressed willingness during the workshop to use the northern 25 percent of his property that lies in the floodway as a gateway or as another community-serving use.

Gateway



A cultural gateway between Denver and Aurora could include public art that highlights the community. “So Close” installation of Syrian refugees by artist JR for The Armory Show. Photo courtesy The Armory Show.

One suggestion that was particularly popular among the panel and stakeholders was creating a gateway that would signify the transition between Denver and Aurora. This would be an opportunity for Aurora’s robust arts community to create a symbol of the community and to welcome visitors and passersby to the neighborhood. This gateway could be designed by Aurora artists and residents. As such, the panelists recommended having a contest to field ideas from the community. This would ensure that the design is authentic to Aurora, and it would help generate buy-in from the local community.

Panelists and stakeholders also expressed interest in using a gateway to call attention to the open space and pedestrian path. Some stakeholders pointed out that the creek and pedestrian path are hardly visible from Colfax Avenue, so a gateway could help call attention to the open space and encourage more pedestrian activity. An open space-oriented gateway would also help solidify the connection between the pedestrian path and the planned BRT stop. If effective, this would help enhance mobility and reduce auto dependency in the community.



Images from left: Miyazu Gardens Gateway in Nelson, New Zealand by artist Juanjo Novella; photo courtesy Anna Pearson. Street art mixing art and nature; photo courtesy Pinterest. Shipping container art in Denver’s RiNo neighborhood; photo courtesy Chris Geddes for DenverUrbanism.com.

Massing of Proposed Development



The diagram above represents a 3D version of the panelists' recommendations. Tan represents multi-family housing, purple represents office and community-serving uses, and red represents retail. SketchUp rendering courtesy John Fernandez.

- As illustrated in the 3D diagram above, the panelists envision the study area adding a significant amount of density, and most of the buildings would be built up to four stories, as encouraged by the OA – MS zoning.
- More density would create the opportunity to build needed housing and community-serving amenities. Based on the panelists' projections, more than half of the new units created could be affordable. Further, some of the new market-rate buildings could be built with small units, which would be more affordable than larger units.

IV. Methods of implementation

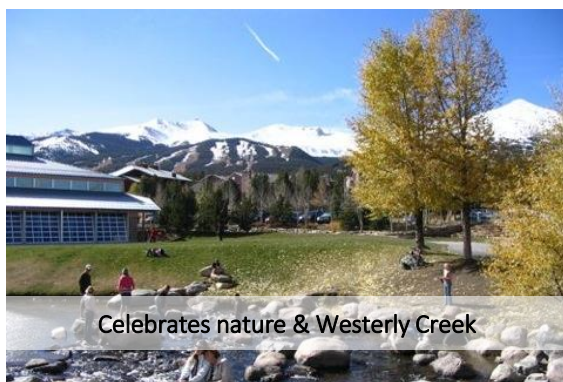
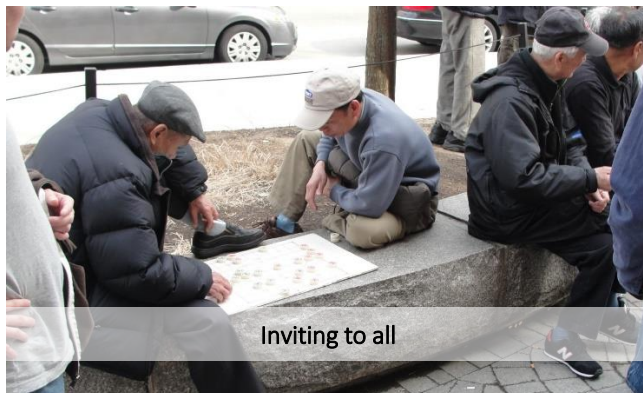
Guiding Principles for Development

For the stakeholders' and panelists' vision of the transformation of the study site to come to fruition, the panel recommends using the following guiding principles.

- **Catalytic and transformative:** Each step in the development process catalyzes more long-term beneficial outcomes for the community.
- **Exemplar of healthy places:** Transformation of the open space and buildings should utilize best practices in building healthy places. For example, new apartment buildings could adhere to WELL Building Standards (for more information, visit www.wellcertified.com), which would improve lease rates for property owners as well as health outcomes for residents, and new restaurants and groceries could provide healthy foods.

- **Reflects and serves the existing neighborhood population:** New developments should clearly welcome existing residents. Panelists recommend using the neighborhood's diversity as an asset for new development, rather than creating generic developments that appeal to newcomers from elsewhere.
- **Mixed-income/affordable:** Creating affordable housing is essential to supporting the East Colfax community. Mixing income levels will help attract private investment to pay for improvements.
- **Reliance on both public sector and market forces:** The public sector is essential to jumpstarting the transformation of the study site. From there, market forces can sustain that momentum to keep the area thriving. This will be discussed further in the Financial Tools section below.

Design Principles



Images from top left to bottom right: City Farm, Chicago, by Patricia Evans. Street closure courtesy Brooklyn Dreams Charter School. Park chess courtesy Dan Cohen. Sidwell Friends School courtesy Kieran Timberlake architects. Park in Colorado courtesy Dan Cohen. Shanghai Houtan Park courtesy Pinterest.



Infusion of public art born from community culture



Establishes new model for East Colfax corridor

From left: Fire dancer courtesy Aurora Cultural Arts District. Rendering of 28 Austin Street courtesy ShopNewtonville.com.

Public Sector Leadership

While redevelopment of this study site will take leadership from both the private and public sectors, panelists recommended that the City and local nonprofits catalyze the process with the primary goals of promoting community health and mitigating displacement.

The City can take the concrete steps of:

- Cleaning Westerly Creek.
- Improving the surrounding green space.
- Lighting the pedestrian path.
- Donating the land adjacent to APDC for the development of community space and affordable housing.
- Leading the community outreach and planning process for the site and its surrounding area to establish formal goals for the transformation.
- Acquiring the parcels within the floodway and eventually converting them to open space to reduce flood risks.
- Programming the open space, such as through partnerships with local nonprofits and/or with playfields for children and sports.

Once the public sector has cleaned up and activated the area, the private sector will guide the redevelopment of the private properties outside of the Floodway.

Financial Tools

Since the panelists recommended that the public sector take a lead in this redevelopment, they've suggested the following financial resources.

Public Financial Resources

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Urban Renewal Area designation for Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Special Districts, such as a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or Business Improvement District (BID)

- City of Aurora water and waste water enterprise funding, capital improvement plan, retail redevelopment tax rebates, and general fund
- Opportunity Zone (south of Colfax, across the street from the site)
- The Housing Authority of the City of Aurora
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA)
- The Colorado Department of Local Affairs' (DOLA) Conservation Trust Fund

Grant Funding Opportunities for Nonprofits

- The Colorado Health Foundation
- LiveWell Colorado's resource center of funding opportunities
- Great Outdoors Colorado

V. Answers to Questions Posed to the Panel

Redevelopment

Is a mixed-use, multi-family, workforce/affordable housing project a viable redevelopment at Colfax and Yosemite?

Yes. However, these types of developments require public subsidies such as LIHTC and NMTC. These resources are both limited and competitive.

What can be done to encourage community-serving redevelopment?

- Agree on a master plan so that developers can see the potential for the area and buy into the vision.
- City investment in active, usable open space on city property. This can include using the creek as an amenity, youth sports fields, community gardens, etc.
- Contribute city land as a "carrot" to developers willing to create community-serving projects.

What community-serving uses on the ground floor could help activate the block and address the needs of the local community?

- Indoor/outdoor community meeting/gathering spaces
- Small grocer/food co-op
- Community or incubator kitchen
- Employment readiness center
- Childcare center
- Market-rate neighborhood-serving retail along Colfax Avenue

Is contamination at the former Dalke's Dry Cleaner located at 8935 East Colfax a deterrent to housing redevelopment? If so, what type of mitigation should occur? Is the currently designed BRT stop at Yosemite suitable given this is a gateway site?

The site has been remediated and is in a "monitoring phase." The site represents an opportunity for a catalytic

gateway project linking Colfax transit to community-focused open space.

Westerly Creek

What design elements could be implemented to make Westerly Creek a community amenity that fosters improved physical health?

- Naturalize and re-route Westerly Creek along its natural path. Make it clean, safe, and family-friendly with an improved pedestrian path, lighting, and playfield.
- Expand and enhance the green space around Westerly Creek with native plants to reduce flood risk.
- Relocate and expand APDC community gardens. Consider making gardens active year-round by incorporating greenhouses.

What measures can be taken to restore the creek's natural appearance and allow adjacent development to take advantage of the greenway amenity?

Re-route the creek further west along its natural path and enhance the pedestrian path. Redevelopment is prohibited on the west side of the study area due to the floodway, but the creek could be a major amenity for mixed-use developments along the south and east sides of the site.

Public Policy

What public policy tools can be used to facilitate redevelopment of this and nearby blocks of Colfax?

- The biggest opportunity is redevelopment around Westerly Creek as programmed open space. This becomes an even bigger opportunity if the entire floodway is converted.
- City-owned land can be used as a “carrot” to incentivize community-oriented development.
- Corridor-specific master plan, paired with an Urban Renewal Area, to incentivize desired outcomes such as affordable housing, to address and mitigate potential displacement of existing residents, and community-serving amenities.

What engagement process should be pursued to ensure community representation and agency during the redevelopment process and to mitigate resident displacement?

- Convene a City-led early concept/visioning community engagement effort to set/formalize goals and objectives for the entire site.
- From there, initiate a Phase I site planning effort focused on open space programming and development of affordable housing and community gathering space, potentially in partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Aurora.

What resources exist to enable implementation of a redevelopment and creek restoration vision?

See Financial Tools section above.

VI. Conclusion

The panelists concluded that the study site has great potential to become a cultural gateway into Aurora that highlights the community's greenway connections, art, and diversity. By adding affordable housing, open space and outdoor recreation, and community gathering space to the site, Aurora can mitigate displacement, take advantage of the planned BRT line along Colfax, and enhance community health.

Westerly Creek is a centerpiece for this transformation and, as such, the City has a unique opportunity to leverage this asset to catalyze broader transformation, modeling a better future along East Colfax. Now is the time to take action to make the community's vision a reality, while the area is still in transition.

VII. About the Host Organizations & Sponsor

The Fax Partnership

Formed in 2004, the Fax Partnership collaborates with community leaders and groups to revitalize East Colfax Avenue in a way that supports existing businesses and residents. The Fax Partnership's mission is to connect people, place and new investment to revitalize Colfax Avenue from Colorado Boulevard to Yosemite Street. Its current focus is to promote the development of affordable housing in anticipation of the City of Denver's Bus Rapid Transit project while mitigating displacement from gentrification. This workshop is in line with its current organizational focus to extend work east into Aurora. The Fax Partnership has a longstanding history of business and community engagement. Past projects include forming the Fax-Mayfair Business Improvement District (BID) in 2014.

The Asian Pacific Development Center

Formed in 1980, APDC addresses the needs of Colorado's immigrant, refugee and low-income populations by providing culturally appropriate and integrated services to help its clientele move toward improved wellbeing and self-sufficiency. From its central location in Aurora along East Colfax Avenue, it offers the following services through a family-centered, wraparound approach: bilingual and bicultural behavioral health and integrated primary care services; job readiness/ESL/citizenship classes; youth programs; elder wellness classes and community outreach; victim's assistance; a legal clinic; and an Interpreter's Bank, which provides translation in more than 80 languages. APDC's approach addresses health, economic, social and economic disparities experienced by refugees and immigrants, including cultural and economic barriers such as limited English proficiency (LEP), a lack of education, extreme poverty and a lack of employment; and it assists clients with applications, transportation, interpretation and locating community resources. APDC also provides health promotion education within its target communities to increase health literacy and advance health equity. APDC is committed to reducing the health inequities faced by its clientele, a large number of whom reside in the nearby East Colfax and northwest Aurora neighborhoods, but are subject to displacement as more investments are made in the area.

The Colorado Health Foundation

The Colorado Health Foundation is a nonprofit organization that engages through grantmaking, public policy and advocacy, private sector engagement, strategic communications, evaluation for learning and assessment and by operating primary care residency training programs. Partners include nonprofits, health care leaders, policy makers, educators and the private sector. The vision of The Colorado Health Foundation is to make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation.

In 2013, recognizing the connection between physical health and the built environment, TCHF launched the Building Healthy Places Initiative with the Urban Land Institute. This has resulted in influential national ULI advisory panels throughout Colorado; a series of new publications on principles and best practices; and local workshops in Adams County, Colorado Springs, Denver, Edwards, Loveland, Pueblo, and Westminster. Already these advisory services have resulted in measurable physical changes leading to the creation of healthier places.

VIII. Stakeholders

Stakeholders Who Participated in the Workshop

1. Mayor Bob Legare, City of Aurora
2. Crystal Murillo, Ward One, Aurora City Councilmember
3. Mindy Parnes, City of Aurora Planning & Development Services
4. Curt Bish, City of Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space
5. John Hersey, Regional Transportation District
6. Carly Macias, Regional Transportation District
7. Ryan Billings, Transit & Corridors Planning Supervisor, City and County of Denver
8. Morgan Lynch, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District
9. Jon Vallines, City of Aurora Water Department
10. Yoel Ghebremeskel, Street Fraternity
11. Jill Locantore, Walk Denver
12. Sharon Knight, Hope Communities
13. Brittany Zuber, East Colfax Registered Neighborhood Organization
14. Carolyn Pace, North Aurora Neighborhood Association and Nourish Co-op
15. Ryan Vendixen, 8935 E. Colfax property owner
16. Louis Lee, Real Estate Broker for Dalke's site
17. Jeff Martinez, Brothers Redevelopment
18. John Fernandez, The Fax Partnership
19. Monica Martinez, The Fax Partnership
20. Harry Budisidharta, Asian Pacific Development Center

Quotes from the Workshop

"We want to increase affordable housing options along corridor before the BRT project comes to the corridor." – Monica Martinez, The Fax Partnership

"People want a space for community gathering and events that's vibrant and reflective of the community. APDC is too small for us, but if there was a community gathering space, we could manage it." – Harry Budisidharta, APDC

"We need affordable housings and rents in this area. Options that can lead to homeownership." – Harry Budisidharta, APDC

"The community identified this as a gateway between Denver and Aurora, but many people don't even realize there's a creek here." - Mindy Parnes, City of Aurora Planning & Development Services

"We could maximize the urban green space and create a true gateway feature here." - Curt Bish, City of Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space

“The Aurora Cultural Arts District is interested in partnering to create a gateway that integrates public art.” – Carolyn Pace, North Aurora Neighborhood Association and Nourish Co-op

“We want people to have safer, easier crossings of Colfax.” - John Hersey, RTD

“There’s not enough lighting on the site.” – Sharon Knight, Hope Communities

“What if we made Colfax into a community gathering place as opposed to an urban river of cars?” – Brittany Zuber, East Colfax RNO

IX. ULI Volunteer Panelists



Panel Chair Chuck Perry is a Managing Partner of Perry Rose. Dr. Perry directed the development of the award-winning Highlands’ Garden Village (HGV). The HGV PUD, written by Dr. Perry, served as a model for Denver’s mixed-use zoning code. In 2012, Dr. Perry began the redevelopment of Aria Denver, a 17-acre mixed-use, mixed-income development focusing on affordable housing with NSP funds and urban agriculture. Dr. Perry is also a partner in Rose Companies Management (RCM), under which he participates in the acquisition, financing, management, and disposition of market-rate and affordable apartments and commercial properties. Prior to joining Perry Rose, Dr. Perry served as the assistant director of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA). Dr. Perry also served as a senior housing planner for the Denver Planning Office (DPO). He also served as a private planning consultant, developing comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances for localities in Colorado. Dr. Perry holds a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning from MIT with specialization in citizen participation, housing and environmental planning.



Bill Wenk is the founder and president of Wenk Associates. For over 36 years, he has been influential in the restoration and redevelopment of urban river and stream corridors, the transformation of derelict urban land, and the design of public parks and open spaces. He is recognized nationally for utilizing stormwater as a resource. Bill is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. He holds a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Oregon and a Bachelor of Science, Landscape Architecture from Michigan State University.



Anna Jones is currently a Manager of CliftonLarsonAllen, where she focuses on special district management, oversight, strategy and advocacy throughout the front range. CLA provides outsourced accounting/finance, management, and administrative services to commercial, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Previously, she served as Executive Director of the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative at the City and County of Denver, where she implemented projects focused on improving the connectivity, quality of life, and stability of the Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods in North Denver. She was also a Senior VP at PUMA, where she facilitated strategic and economic development planning for downtowns and urban

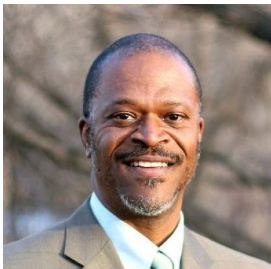
corridors; public engagement; special district financing; economic development and policy development. She was also an Adjunct Professor at UC Denver in the Urban and Regional Planning program.



Dan Cohen is a Senior Vice President of Mixed-Use Development for McWhinney. Leading the company's mixed-use acquisitions and development efforts, Dan is responsible for identifying, structuring, designing and entitling new large-scale mixed-use land development projects. His focus is on outstanding urban infill real estate that represents unique opportunities for the creation of exceptional places and long-term value. He brings to McWhinney's leadership team 25 years of planning and development expertise, including work on the \$3 billion Mission Bay project in San Francisco. Dan holds two undergraduate degrees from UC Berkeley and a Master's in City Planning from MIT.



Cameron Bertron is the Senior Vice President of Development Services for EnviroFinance Group. He manages the real estate and financing components of brownfield and infill projects. With more than a decade of public and private sector real estate experience, he brings a hands-on understanding of how successful public-private partnerships are structured and financed. Previously, he served as a Redevelopment Manager for the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, where he helped facilitate and finance infill projects ranging from adaptive reuse of historic structures to repurposing major facilities into entirely new neighborhoods. He focuses on development strategies that are cost effective, market feasible and consistent with the goals and objectives of the surrounding community.



Eugene Howard is an Associate City Planner with the City and County of Denver, where he focuses on citywide and neighborhood scale planning initiatives. He is also an Adjunct Professor at UC Denver in the Urban and Regional Planning program. Previously, he was a Transit Mobility Program Manager for Douglas County. He has a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from UC Denver.



Josh Radoff is a Senior VP of WSP and a Principal and Co-Founder of YR&G. As part of the WSP acquisition of YR&G, he supports the leadership of WSP's Built Ecology team, specializing in built environment sustainability consulting, and helping to deliver sustainability projects across WSP sectors (buildings, transportation and infrastructure, power and energy, advisory services, and water and environment). He is also an Adjunct Professor at UC Denver in engineering. He was previously an energy and climate consultant for various organizations. He has graduate degrees from Columbia in engineering and from KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sustainable Energy Engineering.

In 2013, recognizing the connection between physical health and the built environment, the Colorado Health Foundation launched the Building Healthy Places Initiative with the Urban Land Institute. This has resulted in influential national ULI advisory panels in Arvada, Colorado Springs, Commerce City, Denver, Greeley and Lamar; a series of new publications on principles and best practices; and local panels in Greeley, Adams County, Colorado Springs, Denver, Edwards, Loveland, Pueblo, and Westminster. Already these advisory services have resulted in measurable physical changes leading to the creation of healthier places.

The Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado) is the 1,300-member field office of the global ULI, a 501-c-3 nonprofit dedicated to best practices in land use. ULI Colorado mobilizes the volunteer skills of members from 26 different professions for the betterment of careers and communities. ULI's key issues included affordable housing, building healthy places, diversity, economic revitalization, transit-oriented development, and compact, walkable development. ULI Colorado is led by volunteer chair Tracy Huggins, Executive Director of Denver Urban Renewal Authority. The staff includes executive director Michael Leccese, director Sarah Franklin, manager Marianne Eppig, and senior associate Jack Tiebout. ULI Colorado conducts 40+ programs a year including panel discussions, project tours, advisory services, mentoring and leadership, community service and publications.



Example of a pedestrian/bike gateway. Largely funded by foundations, this new gateway and plaza in Overton Park, Memphis, links to downtown and neighborhoods through bike lanes and trails. It has been called a love letter to Memphis cyclists.



Houston's Buffalo Bayou trails provide alternatives for active transportation in this freeway-laced city. Good for neighborhood services and business, too: A 2013 study of these urban trails showed a fourfold increase in the number of businesses in the area and boosted retail sales from \$10 million to \$57 million.

Colorado District Council of the
Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado)
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 211, Denver, Colorado 80202
303.893.1760 Colorado@uli.org Colorado.uli.org

ULI – The Urban Land Institute
2001 L Street NW, Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20036 ULI.org