



Colorado

SHERIDAN BOULEVARD

Edgewater, Colorado

Technical Advisory Panel | May 29–30, 2024

About

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Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

Cover photo: A view to the south of the Sheridan Boulevard commercial corridor. (ULI)

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As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policymakers dedicated to creating better places. The ULI Colorado district council brings together real estate professionals, civic leaders, and the community for educational programs, initiatives impacting the state, and networking events, all in the pursuit of advancing responsible and equitable land use throughout the State of Colorado. With 1,300 members, ULI Colorado provides a unique venue to convene and share best practices in the state. ULI Colorado believes everyone needs to be at the table when the state's future is at stake, so ULI serves the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines—from architects to developers, CEOs to analysts, builders, property owners, investors, public officials, and everyone in between. Using this interdisciplinary approach, ULI examines land use issues, impartially reports findings, and convenes forums to find solutions.

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Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Program

Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in Colorado. Drawing from its professional membership base, ULI Colorado offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project and present it to the panel. TAP panelists spend two days interviewing stakeholders, evaluating the challenges, and ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations that the sponsoring organization can use to guide development going forward.

About

Technical Assistance Panel

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Acknowledgments

ULI Colorado would like to thank the City of Edgewater for inviting ULI Colorado to study the development opportunities along Sheridan Boulevard. Additionally, ULI Colorado would like to thank the city staff, particularly Jocelyn Mills, Community Development Director & Deputy City Manager, for her insights and technical support leading up to and during the panel process. ULI would also like to thank the stakeholders who generously shared their time and experience with the panel.



The panel touring the West 25th Avenue streetscape improvements with city staff.



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Executive Summary

Edgewater City Hall once sat along Sheridan Boulevard, the City of Edgewater’s busiest commercial corridor. Quickly outgrowing the building and recognizing the benefits of moving to a larger site deeper within the city’s limits, city leaders built a new civic center to house city operations and community amenities, leaving the former 2401 Sheridan Boulevard city hall site vacant and poised for new use.

To fully explore the opportunities for new development at the former city hall site, the

City of Edgewater (the city) turned to the Urban Land Institute Colorado District Council (ULI Colorado) for assistance. ULI Colorado, using its trusted technical assistance panel (TAP) program, convened a panel of real estate professionals with the expertise needed to evaluate the site, answer the city’s specific questions, and provide recommendations as to the potential catalytic nature of development at the site and the potential for future development along this busy commercial corridor.

This study comes at a time when the city is also in the midst of several other initiatives of

note, specifically updating its comprehensive plan and making significant streetscape improvements to West 25th Avenue, another important commercial corridor. Sheridan Boulevard is also on the cusp of significant roadway improvements, which will be led and managed by the Colorado Department of Transportation, as it is a state highway.

Following a briefing from the city, a tour of the study area, and interviews with a variety of community stakeholders, the panel delivered the following recommendations to the city to support redevelopment of the study site and broader commercial corridor.

Leverage Financial Resources

In addition to its existing financial tools, the city has access to additional financial resources that can be tapped to support development and improvements along Sheridan Boulevard.

- **Use the existing Urban Renewal Area (URA).** The URA can be used to create a tax increment financing (TIF) area along the corridor to further leverage revenue from existing retail establishments to fund infrastructure improvements. The URA also allows the city to assemble and acquire key parcels and provides a structure to prioritize investment areas.
- **Create programs that foster connection and placemaking.** The city can and should fund programs that assist property owners with building preservation, facade improvements, and even alley activations in commercial areas.



GOOGLE EARTH / ULI TAP

The focal point of the study, 2401 Sheridan Boulevard, sits along the city’s primary commercial corridor.

- **Consider Special Districts.** Special district designations like a downtown development authority or business improvement district can also help fund corridor improvements.
- **Explore other investment vehicles.** Public improvement fees and the city's general fund can also help fill funding gaps when needed.

Expand Marketing Efforts

- **Broaden the marketing campaign.** Expand the city's marketing campaign to highlight the quirky character that stakeholders noted they cherish. Focus on West 25th Avenue as a destination.
- **Focus on wayfinding.** More formal wayfinding and clearer connections between the city's islands of retail and amenities are needed. A retail guide would support the city's small businesses and help visitors find its retail gems.
- **Leverage proximate assets.** The city should maximize its exposure and visibility during events at Sloan's Lake and in the surrounding areas as a way to draw those event attendees into the city's commercial areas.

Enhance the Physical Environment

- **Coordinate with CDOT on Sheridan Boulevard improvements.** City leaders and staff are encouraged to become and remain engaged in the design and

execution of the improvements—trees, lighting, and street furniture—pushing for designs and improvements that are supportive of the community's needs.

- **Leverage the city-owned parking lot.** The parking lot at the southwest corner of West 25th Avenue and Sheridan could be put to greater use with some activation and placemaking. The panel also began exploring the idea of a two-story parking deck at this corner in anticipation of future parking pressures and encourages the city to explore this idea further.
- **Embrace the rooftops.** Businesses lining the city's commercial corridors should be encouraged to add rooftop patios, which can better leverage the views to the east and west and provide additional restaurant space that is less impacted by the noise from the traffic below.
- **Enhance connectivity using the alleyways.** The city's commercial corridors, public parks, and other amenities would benefit from more intentional connections, and wayfinding and physical improvements through the city's key alleyways can assist. The alleys close to Sheridan Boulevard could become a welcome pedestrian alternative to Sheridan and provide a direct connection between Sheridan businesses and those along West 25th. Similarly, the alley between Benton and Ames streets could better connect the West 25th Avenue corridor with the Edgewater Public Market and adjacent park.



The panel toured the study area and is seen here walking along an alley that serves both residential and commercial properties.

Update the City's Policies

- **Prioritize commercial uses and eliminate the building height limit.** As the city moves to a mixed-use district zoning for its commercial areas, commercial uses should remain a priority. Additionally, eliminating the 25-foot building height limit will allow needed density in these commercial areas and facilitate additional rooftop patios. The city's building code should also be reviewed and updated with an eye toward supporting the needs of the city's small businesses specifically.
- **Explore use of additional rights-of-way.** The reconstruction of Sheridan Boulevard will create new space that can be repurposed along the corridor. While street trees may be a default solution, the city should explore its options more fully to see if and how the land could be activated to support greater parcel redevelopment.
- **Enable alley activation.** The use of alleyways to connect pedestrians and other non-vehicular transportation would benefit from activation measures, which will likely require revised city policies.
- **Revisit parking and signage policies.** The recommendations from the 2022 parking study should be pursued. The city is also encouraged to explore potential shared parking arrangements to facilitate easier parking today and assist with meeting tomorrow's expanded parking needs. The city is also encouraged

to reduce its parking ratio minimums or even consider shifting to parking maximums to encourage other modes of transportation and allow businesses to expand their building footprint into underutilized parking areas. Signage across the city is worth re-evaluating as the city's branding should be more prominent, neon signs speak to the city's quirky charm, and event signage can help promote events in the city and draw event patrons from Sloan's Lake into the city's commercial areas.

As the city approaches redevelopment of the former city hall site and looks to spur development along the broader Sheridan Boulevard corridor, it should use a holistic approach based on a toolbox of financial resources, marketing measures, policy updates, and improvements to the physical realm. While the former city hall site may not be large enough, nor assembled Sheridan Boulevard parcels deep enough to be the catalytic development the city seeks, it can instead serve as an important representative sample of corridor redevelopment and a demonstration of new innovative uses the city would like to see along Sheridan. Using temporary activations, pop-up retail, and light public sector infrastructure investments, the site could become a gathering place for the community, a test run for new business ventures, and a spark that ignites further development and redevelopment along the Sheridan Boulevard corridor.



Sheridan Boulevard, looking south along the 2401 Sheridan study site, is overly wide and caters heavily to vehicles, creating an imposing pedestrian experience. CDOT has plans pending to redevelop the corridor and reduce the roadway width.

Introduction and Background

The City of Edgewater, Colorado, on the western edge of Sloan's Lake, benefits from its proximity to Denver's amenities while maintaining its small-town charm. For many residents and civic leaders, the challenge before Edgewater is preserving that small-town charm while also meeting the needs of current residents, new residents, and Edgewater business owners.

To meet some of these challenges, the city has launched two important initiatives: the city's comprehensive plan is being updated to include helpful amendments to its zoning ordinances among other changes, and the streetscape and roadway improvements to the West 25th Avenue will make that commercial corridor even more inviting and walkable. Added to these significant initiatives is the work that the Colorado Department of Transportation has underway for Sheridan Boulevard. These improvements—including improved sidewalks, a new median, and additional pedestrian crossing at West 24th Street—will also support walkability and pedestrian safety along this important Edgewater asset.

The recent relocation of the city's administrative functions from Sheridan Boulevard to a new location off the commercial corridor presents the city with an exciting opportunity. The former city hall parcel at 2401 Sheridan Boulevard is across the street from Sloan's Lake. It is also close to a variety of quick-service restaurants and national stores and is one block south of the city's charming West 25th Avenue

corridor, which is home to an array of home-grown retailers and restaurateurs. This advantageous location and the opportunities it presents led city leaders to turn to ULI

Colorado for guidance in shaping the future of the parcel and its adjacent parking lot. City leaders were also cognizant of their need to balance the mix of both national

TAP Questions

- What is the opportunity for 2401 Sheridan to serve as a catalyst site for redevelopment of the Sheridan corridor, and what mixture of uses should be incorporated into it? Additionally, what scale and type of redevelopment could be considered?
- Along the Sheridan Boulevard business corridor what tools can be used to meet the challenges presented by the multiple separate ownerships, parcel sizes, and configurations?
- If the Sheridan Boulevard business corridor requires significant redevelopment, how are current viable businesses "saved," and to a greater degree how does the city maintain its primary sources of sales tax revenue? With the changing retail landscape precipitated by the continued increase of internet purchases, can the current business district survive in its current form? If not, what form is a viable alternative?
- What level and intensity of "urban mixed-use" can the area support? And how do we engage private landowners in the future vision of the area? What mechanisms would help to attract developer interest to this area? What fiscal tools or financial structures could be used to facilitate redevelopment?
- How can we leverage and create place assets to drive growth and community context sensitive redevelopment along the corridor to take advantage of the proximity to Sloan's Lake Park on the east side of Sheridan Boulevard?
- Are there opportunities for commercial redevelopment within the corridor's current parking lots that could lead to public/private partnerships now or in the future? How should we rethink the future of parking for the Sheridan Boulevard business corridor?
- What design guides should the City consider to improve how the private property interacts with the multimodal aspects planned with the future improvements to the rights-of-way of Sheridan Boulevard?

chain establishments with local businesses in its commercial corridors, to again support its residents' needs and the city's sales tax revenue while maintaining Edgewater's small-town appeal. Added to the challenges of balancing pursuit are the pressures Denver County municipalities are facing with steeply rising housing costs and a housing market that shows little signs of weakening. City leaders also sought guidance as to whether and how housing should be folded into the land uses along its commercial thoroughfares.

To answer the questions posed by the city, ULI Colorado convened a technical assistance panel comprised of real estate professionals with the expertise needed to address the city's land use challenges. The panel's experience included real estate development, architecture and urban design, and municipal business development and redevelopment. The city provided the panel with a briefing session and tour of the study area and related points of interest. The panel also interviewed a range of Edgewater stakeholders, including elected leaders and municipal staff, business owners and residents, and other civic and nonprofit leaders from the community. Following the tour and interviews, the panel deliberated their findings and ultimately arrived at a set of recommendations the city can consider for the city hall site and the related commercial corridors.

Stakeholder Insights

Insights from the stakeholder interviews centered around the following themes:

- **Quirky.** Residents describe their city as “quirky” and enjoy that moniker.
- **Small-town feel.** People tend to know their neighbors and enjoy their local retail options.
- **Generational residents.** A significant number of residents have lived in Edgewater for multiple generations.
- **Housing was originally—and is becoming less—affordable.** Homes are selling at prices that are often out of reach for those seeking to move within the city or for children of long-time residents.
- **West 25th Avenue is the city’s “main street.”** Sheridan Blvd. is a commercial thoroughfare while West 25th Avenue has a welcoming and walkable “main street” feel.
- **Great assets.** The city’s proximity to Sloan’s Lake and downtown is appealing as is its array of existing commercial businesses. The city also has great views of downtown to the east and the mountains to the west.
- **Parking and connectivity are important issues.** Sheridan is a busy north-south thoroughfare and connections across the city, to Sheridan and other assets, are important. Parking is also important to business owners as well as the residents who are hoping to park close to their destination.
- **The City is supportive of small businesses and gets things done.** The city’s administrative staff appear to love



The former city hall site is being used temporarily to stage construction materials.



The parking lot to the west of the former city hall site is owned by the city and was included in the study.



The Lakeview Lounge, a community favorite, sits across West 24th Avenue, directly south of the study site.

the city and enjoy the expertise they bring to their roles. They understand the value Edgewater’s small businesses bring to the city’s economy and appeal and work hard to find solutions for them.

Turning to Sheridan Boulevard in particular, the panel noted the following key themes.

- **Busy commercial corridor.** People use Sheridan to access its retail offerings, and there are a significant number of people using it to commute to work.
- **Barrier to Sloan’s Lake.** The four lanes and additional turning lanes, with few opportunities to cross east to west, create a barrier for people on the west who wish to cross Sheridan to enjoy the lake and the surrounding park. Similarly, the traffic lanes limit movement of park patrons west into the city.
- **Convenience-style retail and broad draw versus West 25th Avenue destination retail.** Sheridan is marked by a number

of national retail chains that provide residents and surrounding neighborhoods with affordable, convenience retail. The West 25th Avenue corridor is full of retail that is more destination in nature, drawing customers for their specific offerings and unique appeal.

- **Sales tax revenue generator.** The businesses along Sheridan generate significant revenue for the city. Given the city is dependent on sales tax and does not receive property tax revenue, protection of this income stream is imperative.
- **Pending CDOT improvements.** CDOT will be making improvements to the corridor, which will narrow the roadway and provide pedestrian amenities. The roadway reconstruction will be a challenge as businesses, residents, and visitors navigate the construction zone.
- **Alleys support some business circulation.** The city’s alleyways are



The view of Sloan’s Lake from Sheridan Boulevard.



used by residents and visitors for utility activities (parking, refuse collection, etc.) and circulation as some residents use the alleys to avoid busy roadways. In some instances, Sonic patrons move through the alleys as a function of the restaurant's drive-through lane.

Development Toolbox

Following the stakeholder interviews, the panel considered possible redevelopment options for the parcel at 2401 Sheridan and also considered how redevelopment of that site and the other work across the city could be further leveraged to provide additional amenities and services to residents and visitors while also supporting the city's goals for its commercial corridors. To support the city as it moves forward, the panel identified a number of tools and strategies to support redevelopment of the site and the corridor, which split into the following four broad categories:

- **Financial tools** at the city's disposal;
- **Marketing efforts** that could support additional development and activation along the corridor;
- **Physical improvements** to the built environment that would support mobility, specifically walkability; and
- **Policy updates** that will further support and facilitate the types of developments the city would like to see along Sheridan Boulevard.



The alley behind the study site, looking north.



A view of the Sonic drive-thru lane to the alley beyond.



The panel deliberating their findings and recommendations.



Financial Considerations

As the city considers the development potential along Sheridan Boulevard and in other commercial zones, it will be helpful to recognize the financial tools and resources that may be available to assist with catalyzing development, supporting commercial progress, and fostering further investment through infrastructure updates and improvements.

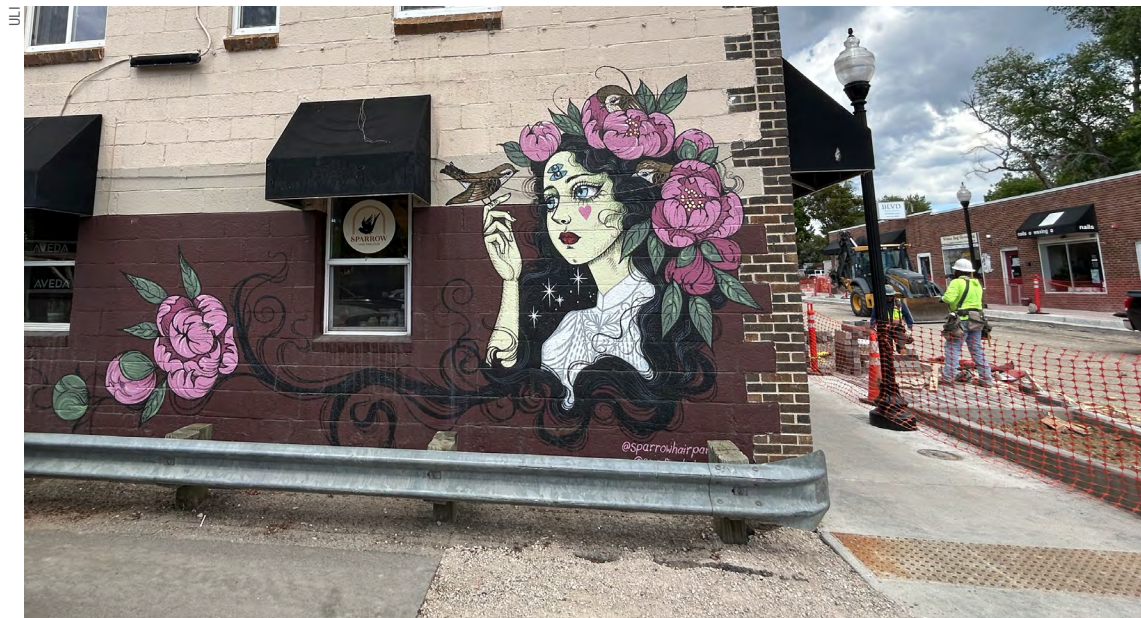
Leverage the Existing URA

The city's Urban Renewal Area, which covers nearly all of the city's geography, can be a powerful tool in unlocking additional funding for Sheridan Boulevard improvements.

- **Create a tax increment financing area.** Through the URA designation, the city can establish additional tax increment financing (TIF) areas along the corridor to capture tax revenue from existing retail establishments, for use in the area's redevelopment. This revenue, generated from an increase in sales taxes generated, can be used to make further improvements to the infrastructure along the corridor or to "buy up" improvements slated by CDOT. (Example: CDOT has a standard street light fixture planned for the improved portions of Sheridan Boulevard. The Urban Renewal Authority could use TIF funds to cover the funding gap between what CDOT has budgeted to spend on streetlights and the cost for the type of fixture the city would like to see installed instead—such as a fixture that could feature seasonal banners or banners that promote community events.)

- **Enable property acquisition.** The URA also allows the Urban Renewal Authority to assemble and acquire key parcels. With a long-term vision in hand, and future development sites identified, using its URA authority, the city can be ready to act when property owners are ready to sell. The panel believes there may be a unique opportunity to utilize these tools to acquire key parcels (specifically between 24th and 25th avenues along Sheridan). Control of these parcels would enable the city to address critical parking needs and create a unique alley experience that accentuates and expands the gateway to Edgewater. The city might also consider a public-private partnership to facilitate this assemblage.

- **Prioritize areas where public ownership exists.** The URA also provides a structure whereby the city can begin to prioritize areas where it already holds ownership of land or where investment already exists. The Urban Renewal Authority can assist with property assemblage, to allow for better redevelopment and incremental tax revenues in the area can be dedicated to assist with the financing of specific improvements.
- **Create programs that foster connection and placemaking.** The city (through the Urban Renewal Authority) can further support the actions it wants to see business and property owners take by creating programs that can assist in funding the work and improvements.



Placemaking, by individual business owners in this case, is already underway along portions of West 25th Avenue.

- » **Alleyways.** Residents and business owners are already actively using the alleyways across the city. Supporting placemaking in key commercial alleys can help create more inviting connections, slow traffic through the alleys, and allow pedestrians and other mobilities to interact more safely.
- » **Preservation.** The city can also help promote the retention of historic, quirky, and charming buildings and businesses across the community through programs that encourage legacy building preservation and renovation.
- » **Facade improvements.** Building facades are often the first impression people have of a city. Programs to assist building and business owners with improvements to building facades, even \$5,000 to \$10,000 grants, can go a long way toward creating a more inviting business district.

Explore Special Districts

The business corridor along West 25th Avenue is special and unique to Edgewater. Special district designations can help the city support the health and vitality of this corridor through funding mechanisms and administrative support.

- **Downtown Development Authority.** A downtown development authority (DDA) can use either TIF or a mill levy to generate funds that are then reinvested in the commercial district in the form of infrastructure and streetscape improvements, marketing and signage, facade improvement grants, and more. The formation of a DDA requires a vote by the property owners and does not require approval by business owners or tenants.
- **Business Improvement District.** A business improvement district (BID) is funded through a mill levy and is established through a vote by property

owners and business tenants. A BID operates similarly to a DDA but tends to be more organizationally focused and business-minded.

Other Investment Vehicles

There are other avenues the city can explore to generate additional funds to support work along its commercial corridors.

- **Public improvement fee.** A public improvement fee (PIF) is an additional fee placed on sales that is typically administered by a special district and collected directly by the district organization rather than through the state.
- **General fund.** Should it wish to, the city also has the ability to tap into its general fund to support important work along the corridor. As general fund obligations tend to be recurrent and foundational to city operations, this is not likely a long-term or systemic solution, but it is a resource to consider should the need arise.

Streetscape improvements as seen at the intersection of West 25th Avenue and Gray Street, were funded by a private developer. Improvements like these could be funded through a special district designation to benefit other areas of the West 25th Avenue corridor or along Sheridan Boulevard.





Marketing Observations

The City of Edgewater has a great story to share. It is a story about a city that is full of people who are passionate about their hometown, business owners who are deeply invested in the community, and a quirky little city that is close to downtown Denver but still far enough away that residents feel like they are living in small-town USA. The city is embracing these messages in its marketing efforts, and with some expansion and amplification, these marketing actions can also better support the city's development and redevelopment goals.

Expand Marketing Efforts

The city would benefit from expanding its marketing efforts in general and along the Sheridan Boulevard corridor in particular. A single entity, such as the special districts noted on page 11, could lead the efforts and ensure that there is a clear and ongoing

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Welcome to your small town next to the big city! Enjoy amazing Colorado views, unique businesses, and neighborly charm—all in one square mile.

—CITY OF EDGEWATER

focus on the corridor. The city should make every effort to ensure that those entering the city from the north or south understand by visual cues—signage and branding—when they have entered the City of Edgewater.

Additionally, the panel agreed that Edgewater has a strong city logo and should look for opportunities to leverage it further in branding efforts, including adding the logo to wayfinding installations and on the city's gateway sign at 25th Avenue.

We Are Edgewater. Building on the mayor's campaign slogan, the city could broaden its marketing campaign to include a focus on the community's quirky nature and small-town feel. The city does an excellent job of leveraging nearby Denver assets while still providing a walkable small town where residents know their neighbors and their city officials and staff. That authentic small-town character is marketable.

Highlight West 25th Avenue as a destination. The businesses that call West 25th Avenue home are different than the national chains found along Sheridan. The shop owners are local and the restaurateurs recognize the value of the area's history and culture. People seek out these establishments and drive to the area specifically for the experiences they offer. Highlighting the area as a destination will be key to further business district success and growth and key to further differentiation from the businesses along the Sheridan corridor.

As the West 25th Avenue district grows in popularity, the city should use it to attract visitors to other locations in the city. If someone visits the Edgewater Inn for pizza, for example, wayfinding and marketing could



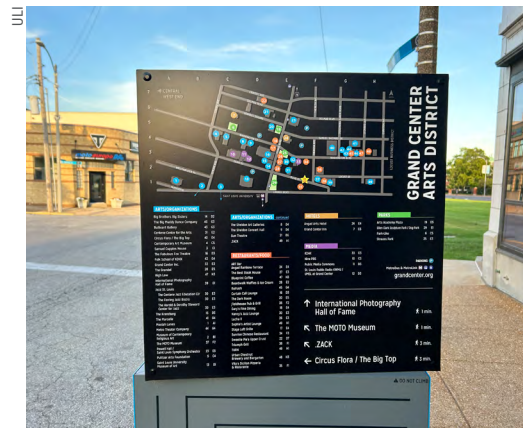
This mural, near the city's new civic center, is another good example of creative placemaking.

encourage them to also explore businesses further south such as the Lakeview Lounge, Edgewater Public Market, Edgewater Marketplace, and other city assets.

Focus on Wayfinding

Moving around the city and between destinations can be fun and engaging. Signs helping with directions and destinations should be clear and easy to follow and understand. Wayfinding can go a long way toward supporting the city’s branding efforts and encouraging movement and exploration around the city, its public spaces and parks, and its businesses.

- **Connect a retail loop.** The pockets of commercial businesses would benefit from more formal wayfinding connections and firmer physical connections between retail destinations.
- **Create a comprehensive offering.** A retail loop—made visible by signage, paint, or other visible indicator—that connects all of Edgewater’s retail assets can create a comprehensive experience for visitors, support economic activity citywide, and help retailers leverage one another’s client bases.
- **Establish a guide to Edgewater.** A business guide can also help visitors and even residents more fully explore the city and its assets. A guide could include a map of shops and eateries, and it could also include information on discounts and incentives such as those offered



by Edgewater establishments that give discounts to those who bike rather than drive to the business. These types of programs can support local business vitality while also reducing vehicular traffic around town.

- **Create an additional West 20th Avenue to West 25th Avenue connection.** The north-south connection between the business district on West 25th Avenue and the businesses along the Sheridan corridor relies primarily on the Sheridan Boulevard roadway. By creating more north-south connections, perhaps using the alleyway behind the businesses along the western side of Sheridan, people may feel more welcome and safe moving—and hopefully walking—from business to business. (The CDOT improvements will improve the pedestrian experience along Sheridan Boulevard, but it will remain a very busy commercial and commuter corridor.)

Wayfinding signage can help brand the city or should, at a minimum, support the city’s brand. The welcome sign and monument that spans across and above West 25th Avenue at Sheridan could be the city’s signage touchstone. Building on the character of that unique sign, other smaller signs could support the city’s small-town feel. Even neon signs, particularly vintage or other historic-tending configurations, can add to the city’s quirky feel while also helping residents and visitors navigate their way around town.

GOOGLE MAPS



GOOGLE MAPS



(top and middle) The Edgewater sign, seen from the east and west, has a unique and recognizable character that could be leveraged in other parts of the city.

KARL FLIKR



The Colorado Dragon Boat Festival takes place on Sloan's Lake, just steps from Sheridan Boulevard and the Edgewater businesses beyond.

Leverage Assets Further

The city is in the catbird seat. It is proximate or even adjacent to a large number of broader Denver assets. From Edgewater's location close to downtown Denver to its views of the Denver skyline across Sloan's Lake to the views of Pikes Peak, the city enjoys tremendous views and access. Added to this, the city's proximity to major events along Sheridan Boulevard or in Sloan's Lake Park puts it enviously close to surges in visitors who could quickly cross Sheridan to visit Edgewater's restaurants and retail stores. At the same time, the city bears no responsibility for insuring, maintaining, or improving any of these assets or events. It does, however, have a tremendous opportunity to (further) leverage these assets to its—and its businesses'—advantage. Using the city's location as a factor in its marketing efforts, particularly as related to these assets, is important and can create an additional draw for the city. With regard to events in particular, such as the Colfax Marathon and Dragon Boat Festival, event organizers would welcome the additional publicity from the city as the city works to promote itself as a place to visit during the event. This external focus within the broader Denver metropolitan area will be additive to the individual marketing efforts of Edgewater's businesses and further support the commercial activities in the city.



Physical Environment

Using the funding mechanisms available to the city, physical improvements can be made to the commercial corridors that support current and future businesses and leverage the other investments and initiatives underway in Edgewater. With careful planning, these physical improvements can maximize the community's existing assets and assist residents and visitors with greater connectivity and mobility across the city.

Coordinate with CDOT

Building on its good working relationship with CDOT, the city is encouraged to coordinate closely with the transportation agency to ensure that scheduled Sheridan Corridor multi-modal corridor improvements indeed happen and are positively impactful to the city's residents and visitors. City leaders and staff are encouraged to become and remain engaged in the design and execution of the improvements, pushing for designs that are pedestrian-friendly and supportive of the needs of the businesses along the corridor.

The panel had the following recommendations relating to the Sheridan Boulevard streetscape in particular.

- **More trees.** To be inviting for pedestrians, sidewalks need shading, and trees are by far the best tool in the city's toolbox.
- **Improve lighting with branding opportunity.** The lighting along the corridor is important to assist with visibility and safety for pedestrians and others moving along the corridor. The city can also use the light poles as small signposts. Branded with the city's logo,

colors, and messaging, these lighting fixtures can inform, delight, and guide people in addition to providing light along the sidewalks.

- **Consistent street fixtures.** The replacement of the furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE) along Sheridan Boulevard, paid for by CDOT, is a golden opportunity for the city. The panel encourages the city to push for upgrades to CDOT standards for FFE, and even help fund the gap if necessary, to ensure that the look and feel of the new FFE along the corridor matches the standards the city has set for itself in other places.

Leverage the Neighboring Lot

The Edgewater Redevelopment Authority (ERA) owns the lot at the southwest corner of West 25th Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. Given its location along the commercial corridor, across from Sloan's Lake (with a crosswalk already in place), and at the entrance to the West 25th Avenue business district, this lot provides important parking access for the area. While its value today is being derived from the 30+/- free parking spaces it provides area businesses, the lot could be put to further use with some further activation and placemaking. In order to realize its full potential, the city should partner with the ERA to address the easement that encumbers part of this parking lot and maximize its potential for the area.

The idea of a two-story parking deck at this corner is worth exploring further. Additional parking spaces here could help ease parking



Street trees, plentiful in this block of Sheridan, are needed along the corridor's length.



Connecting Sheridan to other retail districts, like this one at West 25th Avenue and Gray Street, should be a priority.



A city-owned parking lot at the southwest corner of Sheridan and West 25th Avenue provides critical corridor parking.

pressures in the surrounding blocks, particularly as further development occurs along the corridor, and also help create a sense of place. A two-story structure on the lot could also be a good physical complement to the brewery building on the northwest side of this same intersection. Much like the rooftop patio atop Joyride Brewing, the top level of the parking deck could also be activated for events and programming, lifting visitors up over the street level and providing great views into the park beyond.



This garage in Golden, Colorado, serves a nearby church congregation, provides public parking for a fee, and also serves as festival space for the community.

Embrace the Rooftops

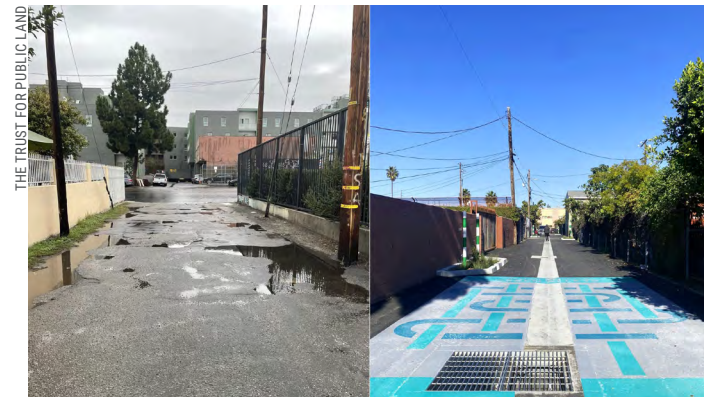
The businesses lining the commercial corridors and Sheridan, in particular, enjoy great ground-level views of the lake and Denver skyline beyond. For those businesses with the structural capacity, adding a rooftop deck or patio can expand their seating capacity while also enhancing their patrons' experience. On a rooftop deck, the noise from the traffic on the corridor is lessened and the impressive views, to the east and mountains, are impressive. Businesses should be encouraged to add rooftop patios where feasible.

Enhance Connectivity + Use the Alleyways

In a city full of wonderful assets, the challenge can often be connecting those assets in a manner that makes the follow-on discovery of other spaces easy, inviting, and intuitive. For Edgewater, the challenge is to create effective connections between Sheridan Boulevard, West 25th Avenue, Citizen's Park, the Civic Center, the Public Market, Sloan's Lake, and more. Wayfinding can go a long way toward providing directions and pointing to connections, and the physical environment can also enhance important connections with infrastructure, like the city's alleyways and sidewalks, becoming important connectors.

Use alleys. With regard to the alleys specifically, the city is encouraged to reconsider the use of these access channels. While quite functional in helping residents

park cars in garages and collecting refuse, the alleyways, particularly those near key assets, could be reframed as public and pedestrian thoroughfares. The alley that runs parallel and close to Sheridan could provide pedestrians with a wider and quieter alternative to walking along the corridor. The alley between Ames and Benton streets, particularly the portion that borders Citizens Park, could provide a wonderful alternative path to the park and Public Market beyond. With some additional lighting at the pedestrian scale and some public art, these functional easements can become attractive and even more purposeful community assets.



Potential alley activations rendered in the top image and in a before/after scenario above.



Policy Considerations

Throughout the stakeholder interviews, the panel heard a consistent theme that became a guiding principle for the TAP recommendations: Edgewater is very supportive of small businesses. This support is demonstrated by the lengths to which city staff will go to help businesses find the answers they seek, move approval processes along, and personally patronize the small businesses that form the backbone of Edgewater’s small-town charm.

Building on this theme, the panel turned to certain policies the city uses to guide its work and provided the following recommendations that can help the city further align its policies to even better support its small business ecosystem.

Update Zoning and Codes

As the city works through its updates to its comprehensive plan, the panel has the following suggestions:

Prioritize commercial uses. As the city begins to incorporate mixed-use zoning, it is encouraged to prioritize commercial uses in its new Mixed Use Zone districts. Residential uses will be a welcome addition, but the corridors are, at their core, commercial zones.

Eliminate the height limit. In the commercial zones, the existing 25-foot building height limit should be eliminated. This will allow businesses along the commercial corridors, and particularly along Sheridan, to add a certain level of market-driven vertical density

as well as the rooftop patios that provide the views people love. Future residential zones may also benefit from the elimination of this building height limit, again in the pursuit of additional gentle density that can help provide needed housing options and varied price points for future Edgewater residents.

Update the building code. Updates are also needed in the building code requirements to better accommodate small businesses. For example, businesses along the West 25th Avenue corridor are currently required to provide a separate ADA restroom for men and another for women, which are often constructed through the elimination of non-ADA restroom space. By allowing businesses to have just one gender-inclusive ADA restroom, restaurateurs operating out of historic buildings and smaller spaces can retain their multiple, non-ADA facilities (saving patrons from long bathroom lines), while still serving their ADA clientele. Denver’s municipal code has been updated in this manner and could serve as a guide for a similar update in Edgewater.

Explore Use of Additional Rights-of-Way

The city is landlocked and must make efficient use of the spaces on hand.

- **Consider new uses for rights-of-way.** The looming reconstruction of Sheridan Boulevard will soon convert former right-of-way (ROW)/turning lane/shoulder space into space that can be



The small businesses along West 25th Avenue are indicative of the city’s small-town charm.



Existing signage in the city is quirky and creative and could include creative and vintage neon options.



Joyride Brewery’s rooftop patio is a community gathering spot.

repurposed by corridor businesses. The city should consider how this new space should be treated. Beyond streetscape or tree lawn, this ROW space could be activated in some fashion or used to support or spur parcel redevelopment. This will require further study and exploration by the city.

- **Use the alleys.** The ROW found in the city’s alleyways—again used today for delivery, garage access, and refuse collection—could become so much more to everyone’s benefit. Should the city wish to pursue these ideas, new policies will be required to support residents’, business owners’, and the public’s use of these shared spaces.

Revisit Parking and Signage Policies

Parking and signage elements were common themes throughout the stakeholder interviews with residents and business owners sharing strong feelings about parking and business owners specifically holding an interest in signage requirements.

- **Leverage the 2022 parking study.** The recent (September 2022) parking study conducted for Edgewater delivers some really good recommendations that the city should pursue. In addition to those updates, the city may wish to consider guidelines to shape future shared parking opportunities.

- **Plan for shared parking facilities.** As the city densifies and space becomes more limited, providing a framework for shared parking lots or garages could help businesses meet their patrons’ parking needs. There may also be an opportunity to create a shared parking agreement with Edgewater Elementary School given its adjacency to Citizens Park. Public parking on evenings and weekends, when restaurants are hopping and school is out of session, could be a good shared use of space.
- **Revisit parking minimums.** The city’s current parking ratio minimum of ten spaces for every 1,000 square feet of commercial space is outdated and needs adjusting. As people embrace other modes of transit—bicycles, scooters, ride share, and more—businesses will find that their parking spaces are never full. City leaders across the country are beginning to use parking ratio maximums in place of minimums, to encourage other transit choices and make more efficient use of limited land.
- **Create a flexible signage plan.** Wayfinding and business signage are important elements in assisting residents and especially visitors in their navigation of the city. The city’s logo and branding should be used liberally across the city to help everyone recognize that they are in Edgewater. Merchant signage

could likewise reflect elements of the city’s branding, and requirements should be flexible to allow for quirkiness and creativity to flow in support of the city’s notable and engaging character. Neon signs, which tie back to the city’s small-town charm and quirky charm, can complement the city’s signature Edgewater sign at West 25th Avenue and Sheridan while also helping brand the individual establishment. Finally, the city is encouraged to remain flexible regarding event signage, allowing businesses and event organizers to use banners, sandwich boards, and other temporary signage to promote an event and/or draw event patrons from Sloan’s Lake across the street and into the city.



Temporary and portable signage like this one can help visitors navigate business areas.



2401 Sheridan Boulevard Study Site

Turning to the individual study site at 2401 Sheridan Boulevard, the panel recognized that this site presents a good representative sample of the redevelopment opportunities that exist generally along the Sheridan Boulevard commercial corridor.

Representative Characteristics

The study site, while perhaps not a catalytic site for the corridor, does provide interesting insights into how future development might evolve along the corridor and what changes might be needed to spur the types of uses the city and the community would like to see in the future.

- **Good visibility.** The parcels along Sheridan enjoy very good visibility from the street, which is regularly populated by both residents and commuters, most of whom are in vehicles but also include pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Shallow lot depth.** The parcels along Sheridan are limited by the depths of the lots, which, at 120 feet, is rather shallow for a typical commercial lot.
- **Alleys provide opportunities.** With the shallow lot depth, the alleys running behind the businesses become even more appealing as these spaces can provide businesses with additional breathing room, pedestrian access, and connectivity to other points of interest north and south. The ownership of the alleyway that connects West 24th and West 25th avenues includes both public

and private ownership, which will require additional considerations as the city moves forward with alley activation. Feedback suggested Sonic is a use and concept that is valued by the community but care must be taken to ensure safety relative to the Sonic drive through access if this alley is activated.

Parcel Potential

The individual parcel at 2401 Sheridan presents a unique proposition to the city.

- **Future redevelopment.** For 2401 Sheridan, the city is in a highly flexible position as redevelopment of the parcel is not under an immediate timeline and time can be taken to explore uses that



(top) The study site is outlined in red. (bottom left and right) Pop-up stores and food vendors could fill spaces at the study site, allowing business owners to test ideas before moving into more permanent space in other parts of the city.

balance financial return and community interests.

- **Create a landing point.** Redevelopment of 2401 Sheridan can serve as a touchstone for future development along the corridor. By activating temporary uses at the space that creates a "landing point" and gathering space for residents and visitors to Edgewater, the city can demonstrate the potential for new uses, particularly the new uses it would like to see populate the boulevard.
- **Create a demonstration alley.** The site can also serve as a demonstration point for alley activation. Starting with the alley that runs parallel to Sheridan between West 24th and West 25th avenues, the city can paint, partition, and populate the space in any way it sees fit, adjusting as needed to better fit the needs of the adjacent businesses, modifying usage to complement the activity along Sheridan, or even expanding further north and south as residents and visitors become more comfortable using the alleys in this manner.

The alley between West 24th and West 25th avenues could be transformed into a walkable, connected thoroughfare, facilitating pedestrian movement between commercial districts while still allowing space for vehicular access, utility maintenance, and city services. The top image is the alley's existing conditions, the middle image is a rough sketch by the panel, and the final image is a more robust representation of the types of activation, placemaking, and light infrastructure improvements that could bring the alley to life, drawing visitors deeper into the city to explore its retail offerings.



Key Takeaways

The work underway in the City of Edgewater is indicative of the city's intense commitment to its residents and business owners. While the comprehensive plan update progresses and roadway improvements to West 25th Avenue are completed, improvements to the Sheridan Boulevard commercial corridor are on the near horizon. The city chose this point in time to also evaluate its former city hall site to better understand the redevelopment potential of that particular site and its potential to serve as a catalyst for future development along the corridor.

While the study site may not be large enough to be a catalytic site in the traditional sense, it can be a great demonstration site and test pilot for the types of uses the city would like to see and businesses it might like to attract to the corridor.

Using the development toolbox outlined by the panel—including financing tools, marketing insights, policy updates, and physical realm improvements—the city can make the most of this opportunity to improve the development potential of 2401 Sheridan and along the Sheridan Boulevard corridor, as well as West 25th Avenue and beyond.

Specific next steps for the city include:

- Create momentum along Sheridan Boulevard by catalyzing activity through temporary activations at the former city hall site.



The Edgewater logo as seen in the City Council chambers.

- Launch new funding mechanisms and financing structures to support the current public realm improvements and support future redevelopment along the city's commercial corridors.
- Remove overly restrictive regulations for redevelopment and revise policies and building codes to support small business success.
- Prioritize connectivity between West 25th Avenue and (1) Sheridan Boulevard through alley activation, and (2) the Edgewater Public Market, also through alley activation.

The city is in an enviable position. Its primary commercial corridor is home to a range of convenience businesses its residents and commuters seek. Its West

25th Avenue businesses are the type of home-grown establishments that people will drive out of their way to visit and the types of businesses that support Edgewater's small-town character. Edgewater is also close to downtown Denver and its amenities and even closer to Sloan's Lake and its natural resources, yet the city does not hold responsibility for the cost or maintenance of either. The city is also home to long-time residents and new residents who equally cherish its small-town feel. With municipal staff who are committed and highly capable, the city is highly capable and well-positioned to leverage this unique point in time and use this convergence of initiatives to guide Edgewater into its next stage.

About the Panel

Andrea Amonick

**Manager of Business Development and Redevelopment
City of Aurora**

Andrea Amonick has been with the City of Aurora for 18 years. She came to Aurora from Dayton, Ohio with planning and development experience including redevelopment, urban renewal, real estate and planning. Throughout her career, she has been involved in complex development projects. Andrea's current projects include the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus, Westerly Creek Village, the Point at Nine Mile Station, the Aurora Cultural Arts District and several transit-oriented developments. Andrea received her Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Planning from the Pennsylvania State University, and her Master's in City and Regional Planning from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She recently completed training in "Strategies for Inclusive Growth" through the Kennedy School's Executive Education Program.

Mark De La Torre

**Deputy Director of Denver Operations
MIG**

Mark De La Torre has a diverse background in urban planning, landscape architecture, and graphic visualizations. With experience in architectural design, project management, and visualization, Mark has worked for various companies and educational institutions. From their role as a Deputy Director of Denver Operations at MIG to their time as an Adjunct Lecturer at The University of Arizona, Mark has a strong foundation in creating sustainable environments and embracing community collaboration. Mark holds a Master of Landscape Architecture and a Bachelor of Architecture, showcasing their dedication and expertise in the field.

Kenneth Ho

**Principal
KHO Consulting**

A first-generation Chinese American, Kenneth graduated with a degree in Urban Studies with a focus on Urban Planning from Stanford. Throughout his early career, he realized there were real issues with how neighborhood planning was approached, including a lack of equity, inclusivity, and local voice. He then returned to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to pursue a Masters of Regional Planning and an MBA to learn more about how to combine planning and economics to redefine the way development was done and create projects that supported healthy, vibrant communities.

Early in his career, Kenneth was involved in the redevelopment of the Gates Rubber factory in Denver, which included one of the first Community Benefits agreements in the city and one of the most comprehensive affordable housing agreements of the time.

Kenneth recently served on Mayor's Housing Advisory Committee and on the Board of the Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation, taking a leadership role in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs. He has served on a number of boards and commissions including Historic Denver, Inc, the Urban Land Institute, the 2016 DPS Bond Community Planning and Advisory Committee, and the Denver Language School and spent five years as member and Chair of the Denver Planning Board. Kenneth is a 2006 graduate of Leadership Denver and was part of the inaugural Colorado Civic DNA Fellows program.

Tom Kiler

Principal
Spark & Halo

Tom Kiler has nearly two decades of experience in mixed-use and retail real estate. From acquisition, design and entitlement to leasing, construction and operations, Tom has led millions of square feet of mixed-use development and asset repositioning projects across the U.S.

Most recently, in Denver, Tom led the acquisition and re-positioning of over \$100 million of properties across 150,000 square feet within the RiNo neighborhood. Tom served as managing director of the western region for EDENS – a \$6.5 billion private retail REIT – where he led a 20-person team in the transformation of a \$1 billion, 22-property portfolio spanning Denver, Houston, Dallas and Austin. Nationally, the team executed over \$60 million of redevelopment across 750,000 square feet. Tom also previously oversaw development activities at EDENS 31-acre, 2 million-square-foot Mosaic project in Fairfax, Virginia. Tom and his team transformed the community from a dilapidated movie theater, salvage yards and parking lots into walkable streets, parks, an arthouse movie theater, local restaurants and shops, a boutique hotel, tech office and housing for +1,200 residents.

Kimberly Sperry

Principal
Sperry Advisory

Kim Sperry is a principal at Sperry Advisory. Prior to forming Sperry Advisory in 2024, Kim was a Managing Director at RangeWater Real Estate, a multifamily investment and development company based in the southeast. She opened the Denver office in 2018 and was responsible for building the six person team, sourcing the development pipeline and executing on the business plan. Projects included market rate multifamily and build-to-rent residential projects and ranged in size from 200-400 units located in Boulder, Longmont and Denver, CO. From 1998 to 2018, Kim was a Managing Director at Amstar Group, a real estate private equity firm, where she managed joint venture equity investments across multiple U.S. geographies. Product types included multifamily, office, industrial, retail and hospitality. She began her career in workouts with a division of First Interstate Bancorp. Kim is an active member of ULI and is Vice Chair of ULI Colorado and Vice Chair of the Platinum Multifamily Product Council. Previously, Kim served on the Silver and Bronze Councils and is the former co-chair of the ULI Colorado Multifamily Product Council. She is an active member of the CU Real Estate International Advisory Board. Kim serves on three additional boards which include a multifamily investment firm, an HOA and a municipal design review board (“DRB”). She graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in Finance and has a Master’s Degree in Real Estate and Construction Management from the University of Denver.