

VIBRANT

COLFAX

DIVERSE

ECLECTIC

MUSIC

BLUEBIRD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
AREA PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THANK YOU TO THE MANY GROUPS,
ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO
CONTRIBUTED TO THIS PLAN.

BARBARA FROMMELL

BENJAMIN LOCHRIDGE

BLUEBIRD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BOARD

COLFAX ON THE HILL

DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

PLACEMATTERS

TRATTORIA STELLA ON COLFAX

WALKDENVER

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - DENVER

FRONT PHOTO CREDIT: ANNE KUECHENMEISTER

This plan was completed by Anne Kuechenmeister with the support of the Bluebird Business Improvement District. Key collaborations with Colfax on the Hill, WalkDenver, PlaceMatters and the Denver Police Department made this plan possible. For inquiries place contact the Bluebird Business Improvement District at staff@bluebirddistrict.org.

2015

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 6

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN 8

VISION & VALUES 10

METHODOLOGY 12

GOALS & OBJECTIVES 16

INFORMING DOCUMENTS 18

EXISTING CONDITIONS 20 - 30

20 ZONING

22 LAND USE

24 MOBILITY: BIKES

26 MOBILITY: PEDESTRIANS

28 MOBILITY: TRANSIT & VEHICLES

29 SENSE OF PLACE

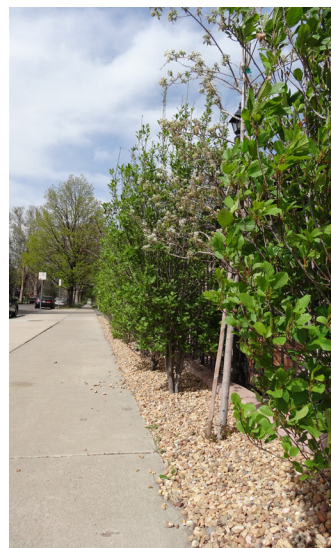
30 ECONOMIC VITALITY

RECOMMENDATIONS 32 - 44

32 MOBILITY & SAFETY

40 RECOMMENDATIONS PLACE MAKING

44 RECOMMENDATIONS ECONOMIC VITALITY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Background

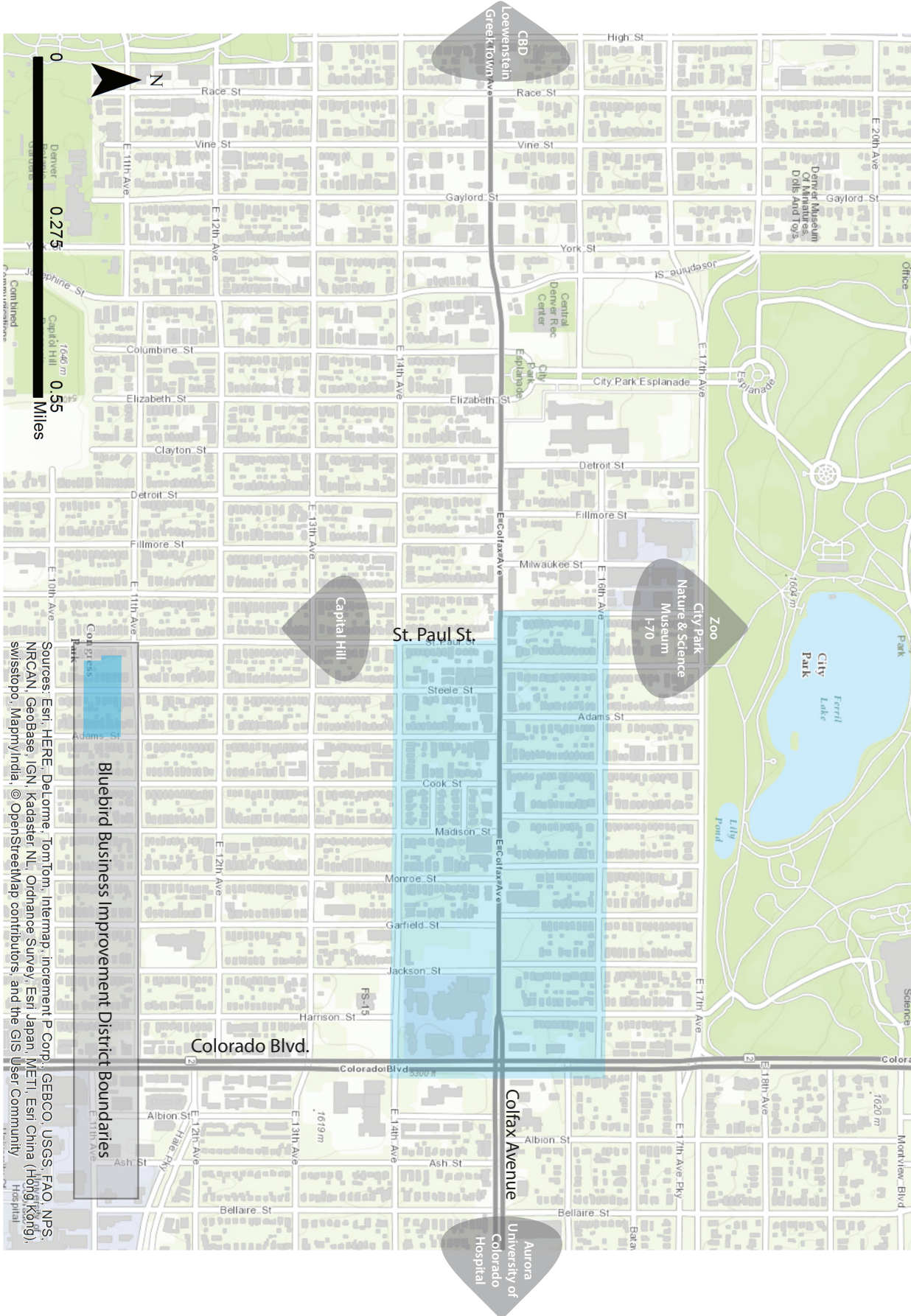
Business Improvement Districts (“BID”), or “a geographically defined majority of property owners and/or merchants agrees to provide an extra level of public service in a specific area by imposing an added tax or fee on all of the properties and/or businesses in the area,” are often small entities tasked with being experts for a broad array of topics (Mitchell, 1999, p. 6). Among their major responsibilities is how to best use funds that the business improvement district brings in to provide economic benefits for the BID’s members.

The Bluebird Business Improvement District (“BBID”) was formed in 2013. The district falls within a nine-block boundary, just east of downtown Denver, along East Colfax in Denver, CO. It has 27 property owners, and 62 businesses, within a nine-block boundary (2015 Operating Plan). The 2014 assessed valuation of the district is \$6,918,230. There is a healthy mix of smaller scale retail, services, art and entertainment, including the Bluebird Theater, which greatly contributes to the identity of the area.

Goals of the BBID

The recently formed Bluebird Business Improvement District (“BBID”) aims to enhance the appearance and attractiveness of the area, provide a safe and clean shopping environment, attract new business owners and retain existing businesses and promote the district through marketing. This plan aims to address how to strategically use BID funds to accomplish these goals through targeted short-term, medium-term and long-term improvements that build on one another to provide a comprehensive vision for area investment.

- ENHANCE APPEARANCE
- SAFE & CLEAN
- ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS OWNERS
- RETAIN EXISTING BUSINESSES
- MARKET THE DISTRICT



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN



VALUES & VISION

STAKEHOLDER VALUES • AREA CHARACTERISTICS • STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES

Based on stakeholder input, data, document review, site visits and intercept interviews the values and vision of this area guide decisions. The values and vision of the neighborhood are integral to informing recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

GOAL ORIENTED • PLACEMAKING • ECONOMIC VITALITY • SAFETY & MOBILITY

The methodology is based on the BIDs established goals and the identified goals of the stakeholders. These goals guide all of the review and decisions for this document.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

PLACEMAKING • ECONOMIC VITALITY • SAFETY & MOBILITY

Plans were reviewed with the identified goals and objectives in mind. The goals and objectives were established with stakeholder input and guide the review of existing conditions and the recommendations.

INFORMING DOCUMENTS

TWENTY-TWO PLANS REVIEWED • COMMON THREADS • BUILDING ON ESTABLISHED WORK

The informing documents are plans that address the needs of the Bluebird Business Improvement District from year 2000 to present. They inform the decision making process for identifying goals. They also provide historical data and allow this plan to build off of prior work.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

ZONING • LAND USE • PEDESTRIAN • BIKE • TRANSIT • VEHICLE

This section provides information to guide recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ZONING • LAND USE • PEDESTRIAN • BIKE • TRANSIT • VEHICLE

Based on data collection, input and research categorized recommendations have been made. These are prioritized by cost and time-frame for implementation. The recommendations follow the goal and existing conditions categories.



PRICE
ESTIMATE



GIVES INFORMATION ON
WHEN PROJECTS SHOULD
BE IMPLEMENTED

DESCRIBES WHAT ISSUE THE
PROJECT IS ADDRESSING

VISION & VALUES



Values & Characteristics

Stakeholders were asked, in an open ended question, to describe the Bluebird Business Improvement District area in one word. They came up with a plethora of responses, but a trend of common words did stand out. Of 163 respondents, **eclectic was entered 17 times, vibrant 12 and diverse 10 times**. In the “Bluebird District Development Plan” from 2008 a neighborhood forum described the district as quirky, spotty, hip, potential and funky (OED/PUMA, pg. 3). The same group noted that **looking to 2018 they want to see a district that is “vibrant, family friendly, locally owned, developed and bohemian.”** The Steering Committee for this plan noted that they hoped to see a “safe, pedestrian friendly and diverse” area (pg. 3). According to resident responses the area is living up to stakeholder wishes in that it has maintained its diverse and eclectic nature. However, pedestrian safety improvements have not been realized.

Yet, despite the lack of pedestrian safety improvements, visitors access to the district is multi-modal. Off-street parking is low in this area, and over 50% of survey respondents for the study noted that they come to the district by walking, biking or transit.

V I S I O N

The vision for the BBID area, based on stakeholder input and engagement, is a vibrant, diverse and eclectic district that aims to serve the neighborhood with a healthy mix of accessible goods and services. Pedestrian safety along iconic Colfax Avenue must be a priority, along with the economic vitality of businesses in the area.

Resident, Employee and Business Owner Priorities

When survey respondents were asked to prioritize area needs, 56% voted that the need for pedestrian safety improvements, such as crosswalks and crossing signals, were either a high or very high priority. Of the 56%, 38% noted this as a very high priority.

Tied with pedestrian safety was filling vacant businesses. 32% of respondents noted this is a very high priority and 24% noted this is a high priority.

The Bluebird District Development Plan the steering committee listed signalized crosswalks, more parking and streetscape improvements as the top three projects for the next five years (p. 3). Neighborhood forum participants prioritized landscaping, signalized crosswalks, a grocery store, parking improvements and a street car as priorities (4)

According to the area survey, respondents strongly associated dining and living with the area.

STAKEHOLDER VALUES BY THE NUMBERS

183

Total responses received for survey

56%

Say filling vacant businesses is a very high priority

48%

Usually arrive at the district walking, biking or by bus

58%

Say pedestrian Safety Improvements are a high priority

33%

Say they usually get to the district by walking

59%

Think of dining when they think of the district

66%

Think of entertainment when they think of the district

64%

Say they are satisfied with the events the district hosts

80%

Rate the cleanliness moderate or poor

METHODOLOGY

Community engagement is a key component to this plan. Events, such as the community Walk Audit use crowd sourcing to gather data on pedestrian sidewalk and intersection conditions. Over 30 participants from the area assisted in mapping conditions that provided data for analysis on where to target improvements.

LOVELY DAY FOR A

STROLL

NEIGHBORHOOD WALK,
BIKE & TRANSPORT AUDIT

WHAT & WHY?

Come out and join your community members in gathering information to improve pedestrian, bike and bus safety and comfort on East Colfax.

WHEN & WHERE?

Saturday March 7, 2015
3pm
Trattoria Stella
3201 E. Colfax Ave.

FREE BEER

Explore the Website:

walkscope.org

KEY INFORMATION

Please bring your **smartphone**, ipad with wifi, no downloads or account set-up needed for this. Routes will be short and no special skill set or knowledge necessary.

Questions? Email us: staff@bluebirddistrict.org



PLACEMAKING

SURVEY • FOCUS GROUPS • MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS • INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS • PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

SURVEY

To understand what type of “place” that the BBID is identified as currently and what stakeholders want for the future, surveys were distributed to local business owners, employees and residents. Over 2,000 surveys went out and over 180 responses were received. The responses to survey questions provided a direction and a better understanding of what encourages or discourages visitors to the area, what characteristics visitors value, where they would like to prioritize improvements and what values they have for the district.

FOCUS GROUPS

These groups were instrumental in understanding the history and trajectory of the area from the perspective of business owners. Two focus groups were held, with a total of 11 business owners participating. The focus groups presented potential visions of the public realm in the district.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

The Bluebird Business Improvement District board provided insight and feedback at four monthly meetings. These meetings provided feedback from a consistent group of stakeholders who were able to gain a deeper understanding of the project and give more technical and detailed feedback.

INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS

Casual discussions with residents and business owners at events provided great ideas and insights for the area that would not have shown up in survey responses or walk audit data.

PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

To understand past visioning efforts and studies all applicable planning documents for this area were reviewed.



SAFETY & MOBILITY

SURVEY • WALK AUDIT • MOBILITY.DIRECT TOOL • DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT • STRAVA DATA • CDOT & PUBLIC WORKS • PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW • BOARD MEETINGS

SURVEYS

Integral in understanding stakeholders safety concerns, and what is working well. Respondents were asked to rate their impression of area safety in a number of different parameters.

WALK AUDIT

A walk audit, using the WalkScope tool, which crowd sources data collection, was conducted. This brought together 31 community members to collect data on sidewalk and intersection conditions. This information helps to target areas of greatest need and understand residents pedestrian concerns along an arterial roadway.

MOBILITY.DIRECT

Bus station conditions were recorded using Mobility.Direct. Similar to the WalkScope tool, this is open source and provides instant online data visualizations of bus station conditions.

DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Denver Police Department supported this plan by providing pedestrian and vehicle crash data for the corridor and participating in the walk audit.

STRAVA DATA

Strava tracks users biking and pedestrian routes and publishes the data. Using Strava maps the most frequented biker routes are easily visualized and can be compared to current infrastructure.

CDOT & DENVER PUBLIC WORKS

Communication with CDOT and Denver Public Works provided insight into current conditions and future plans

PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

To understand past visioning efforts and studies all applicable planning documents for this area were reviewed.

STAKEHOLDERS

IDENTIFYING stakeholders who are invested in the area was critical to gathering information, understanding what vision, ideas and goals are supported and needed and understanding where the area is headed. The stakeholders were supportive during the process. Area engagement is a strength for this community.

AREA RESIDENTS	CITY AND COUNT OF DENVER
BUSINESS OWNERS	CDOT
AREA EMPLOYEES	CUSTOMERS
BBID BOARD OF TRUSTEES	PUBLIC WORKS

METHODOLOGY



ECONOMIC VITALITY

SURVEY•FOCUS GROUPS•MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS•INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS•PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

DENVER OPENSOURCE GIS DATA & OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR

Denver's Open Source GIS data was integral in identifying the total square footage of vacant space in the district. This data was also used to identify catalytic sites that will boost economic vitality in the area through additional investment to these sites. Land use and zoning information also came from this source.

FOCUS GROUPS

The two business owner focus groups were also critical to understanding the nuances of economic vitality in the area and business owner concerns regarding area investment and needs.

SURVEY

Survey responses also provided insight into the perceptions of stakeholders regarding economic vitality.

SITE VISITS AND GoPro FOOTAGE

Site visits and GoPro footage of the area also showed the on the ground economic conditions of the area. To understand the feel of the shopping experience all of the businesses in the area were visited. Conversations with business owners provided insight into what is working well and what is challenging for business owners as well as a better understanding of the economic nature of the area.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A review of the website of the OED and available programs and materials for the area provided a realistic basis for financial assistance available to business owners for improvements.

PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

To understand past visioning efforts and studies all applicable planning documents for this area were reviewed.

ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging stakeholders was important for gathering information and understanding a desired and feasible vision for the area. Engagement was done through conversations, surveys, gatherings, and interviews. There were both low-tech and high-tech forms of engagement.

DATA

Data from multiple source informed past efforts and current conditions. GIS data, including parcel, right of way, zoning and current uses was used. Past and current plans for the area were also extensively reviewed in order to build upon and not duplicate work.

The data collected also helped to prioritize project recommendations based on stakeholder input.

CATALYTIC SITE SELECTION

All parcels within the Blueprint Denver area of change and within the BBID were considered as potential catalytic sites. Sites were narrowed based on parcel size, value of improvement on the land, current use, zoning

RESEARCH

Research for innovative practices in the fields of transit, placemaking, economic development and civic engagement let to some unique ideas for common issues. Research also was done through conversations. Area property owners and residents offered a wealth of information on the history and future plans for the area.



Bus shelter design can change the experience for transit users and attract people to an area.



The largest parcel without a tenant at 46,000 sq. ft. This former hotel sits vacant

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



This small area plan will provide a framework for leveraging limited funds for the greatest impacts for the BBID's identified goals. This is an approach that can be recreated in other BIDs and will provide a toolbox of low-cost improvements that other BIDs may want to consider for pedestrian and public space improvements.

The project will focus on the public realm, including pedestrian right of way, given that BID funds must be used in public spaces or for collective benefit of the members. Focusing on marketing catalytic sites to developers will also be considered for the good of the collective members.

The BBID wishes to pursue innovative and effective improvements to reach established goals. How to create a sense of place and an attractive pedestrian environment along an arterial is a recurring challenge in the Denver Metro area and many other metropolitan business districts. The plan will provide a clear framework for implementing recommendations.

CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Alignment with existing plans for this area

Community Survey Responses (183 responses)

Alignment with the BBID Mission

Business Owner Focus Groups (2 events, 11 business owners)

Input from the Bluebird Business Improvement District Board (4 monthly meetings)

Neighborhood Walk Audit verbal and data feedback (30 participants)

Site Visits (12)

Parcel Data Review

PLACEMAKING GOAL

Create a strong sense of place that defines the district as an eclectic area that serves the needs of a diverse population. Highlight area assets and promote district recognition.

Mobility Goal

Create pedestrian, bike, bus and vehicle conditions that allow users to access the district easily and safely by the mode of transportation of their choice.

Safety Goal

Improve pedestrian and bike safety in the area for all users for all 24 hours in a day.

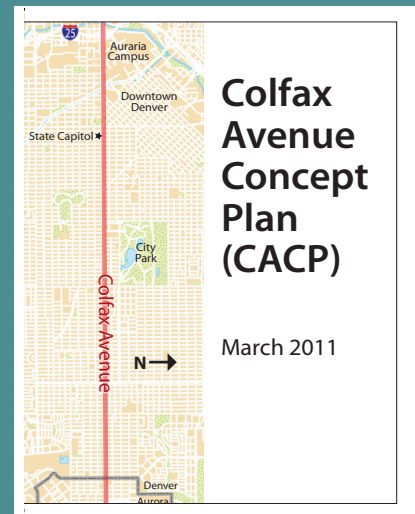
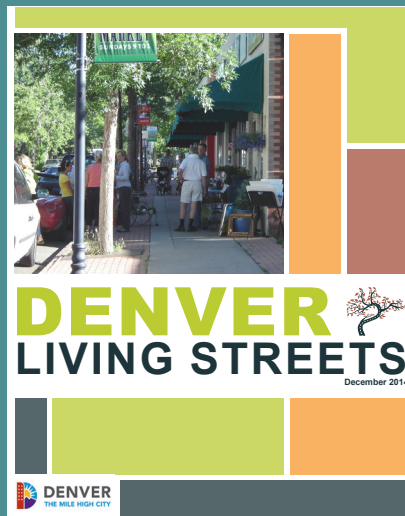
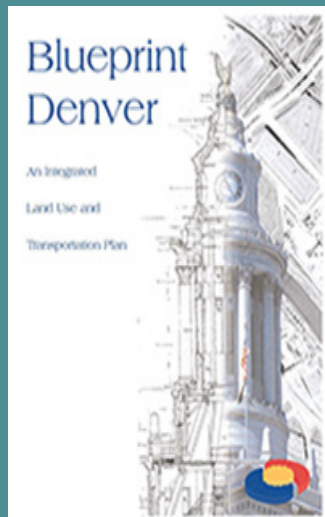
Economic Vitality Goal

Increase the business owner revenues and investments through education, technical assistance and increased visitors to the district.

MARKETING GOAL

Continue to develop and improve Bluebird District recognition and association with an eclectic, diverse and vibrant district through digital tools and notable events.

INFORMING DOCUMENTS



Twenty-two informing documents and plans were reviewed from year 2000 to present. They show that this area has been thoroughly studied and they offer common themes in the findings and recommendations. This area needs improved safety for pedestrians, particularly when crossing Colfax; improved public transit as this portion of the system is at or over capacity; and an aggressive model of public-private partnership to catch the corridor up from years of underinvestment for infrastructure. Each of these informing documents was reviewed with a focus on the goals of this plan: economic vitality, improved multimodal mobility and creating a sense of place within the district.

As noted themes of the many studies were very apparent. The recurring recommendations demonstrate that multiple entities, for over a decade, have made common observations and come to common conclusions about what is needed in this area. The recommendations include improving pedestrian safety, better bike facilities and route improvement, more crossings on Colfax Ave. and 17th Ave, enhanced Placemaking, improved transit and more public and private investment.

Given the large amount of supporting information for targeted improvements and the call for public and private investment the documentation supports public-private partnerships to enhance the multi-modal nature of the area and support the district through placemaking efforts.

Plans Reviewed (published year 2000 to present)

Denver Comprehensive Plan (2000)
East Colfax Avenue: An Opportunity and a Model for Development Action (2001)
Blueprint Denver (2002)
East Colfax Corridor Plan (2004)
GreenPrint Denver (2006)
Denver Strategic Transportation Plan (2008)
Colfax Business Improvement District Strategic Plan (2008)
Bluebird District Development Plan (2009)
Strategic Parking Plan (2010)
City Park Circulation Plan (2010)
Colfax Streetcar Feasibility Study (2010)
Colfax Avenue Concept Plan (2011)

Denver Moves (2011)
Denver Retail Conditions and Opportunities Study (2013)
Proposed Strategic Marketing Plan (2014)
Denver Living Street Initiative (2014)
Denver Storm Water Drainage Master Plan (2014)
Ladders of Opportunity, FTA Funding Application (2014)
Denver Office of Econ. Development Jumpstart Plan (2014)
Office of Economic Development Programs
Denver Moves: Enhanced Bikeways (2014/In progress)
East Colfax Mobility Study (in progress)

Recurring Recommendations

Out of 22 applicable Plans...

13

Plans with pedestrian safety concerns for the BBID

12

Plans with bike safety concerns and need for better facilities in BBID

15

Plans that call for more private investment

13

Plans that call for Placemaking in BBID

14

Plans with calls for improved transit routes and/or facilities

19

Plans that call for more public investment

Key Takeaways

Blueprint Denver identifies commercial parcels along Colfax as areas of change and a pedestrian shopping corridor.

City Park Circulation Plan (2010) encourages multi-modal connections between the District and City Park with more crossings on 17th and a multi-use trail on the south parameter of park.

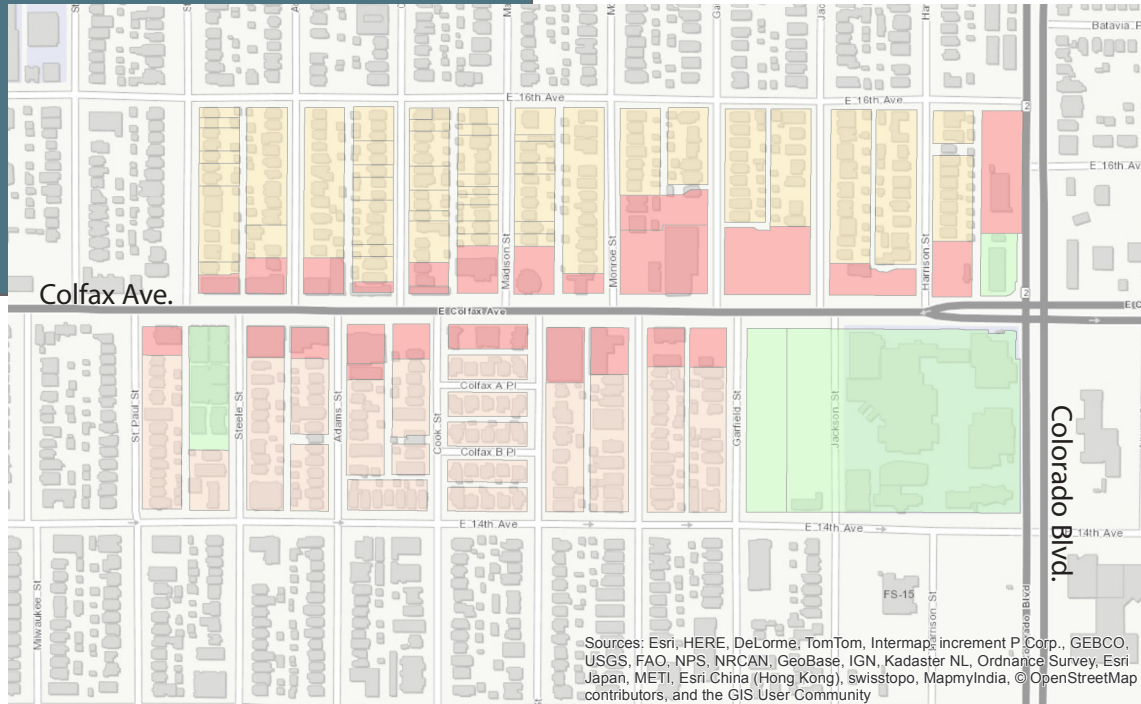
The office of Economic Development offers several programs specific to this area. These include favorable financing, grants, technical support and education. OED Jumpstart targets this area for programs and investment.

The East Colfax Mobility Study shows that enhanced bus, bus rapid transit or a street car would all be feasible for this area. The study is ongoing

Denver Moves 2014 update will focus on better design standards for bike facilities and connecting bike routes.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

ZONING



Zone Description

- Former Chapter 59 Zone
- Main Street (MS)
- Multi Unit (MU, RH, RO, TH)
- Two Unit (TU)

MAIN STREET ZONING

Parcels along Colfax, unless they were not rezoned in 2010, have the Main Street zoning designation. According to the Denver Zoning Code, the Main Street Zone Districts are intended to promote safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled commercial streets through the use of shop front and row house building forms that clearly define and activate the public street edge. They also should promote multimodal access and have an active ground floor retail space. They have high build-to guidelines and should allow for a transition between a retail and residential corridor. The building heights, by zoning, along Colfax range from three to five stories.

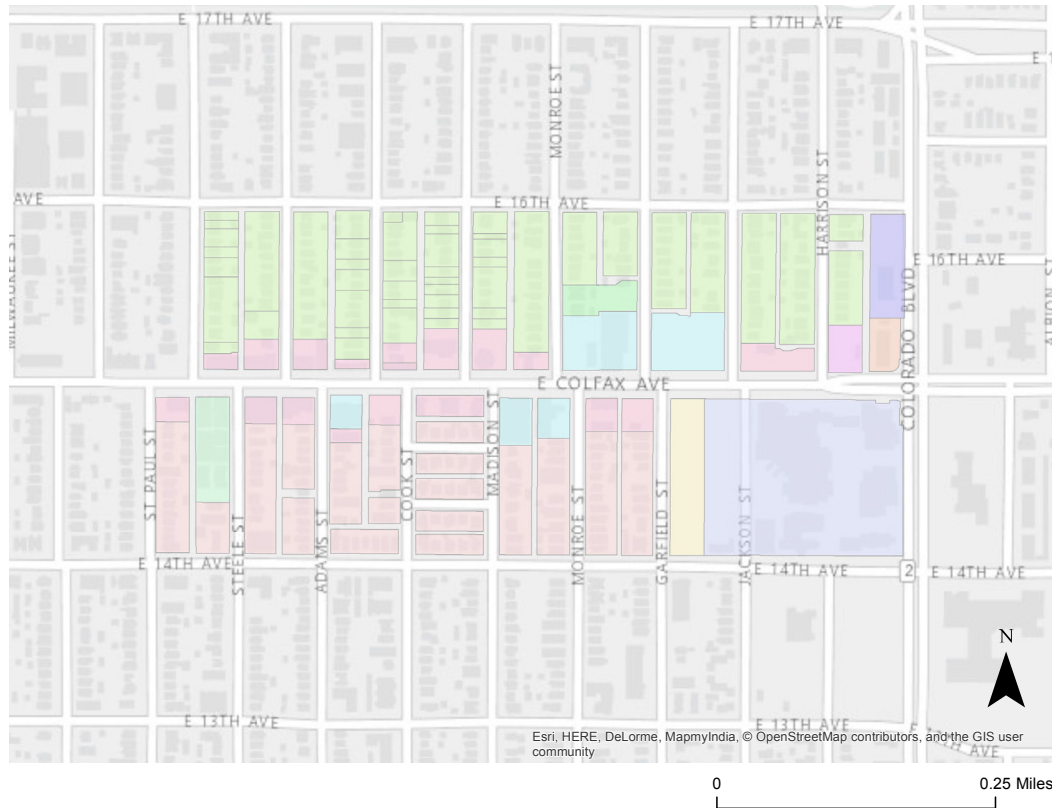
Residential zoning to the north and south of Colfax allows for single family and multi-unit development up to four stories. These areas are considered areas of stability by Blueprint Denver. They represent stable neighborhoods, with limited opportunities for infill.

ZONING MAP

Existing Conditions

Zoning

- C-MS-5
- C-MS-8
- H-1-A
- H-2
- MS-3
- R-4-X
- U-MS-2X
- U-MS-3
- U-MS-5
- U-RH-3A
- U-TU-B



MS ZONING IN PRACTICE ON COLFAX

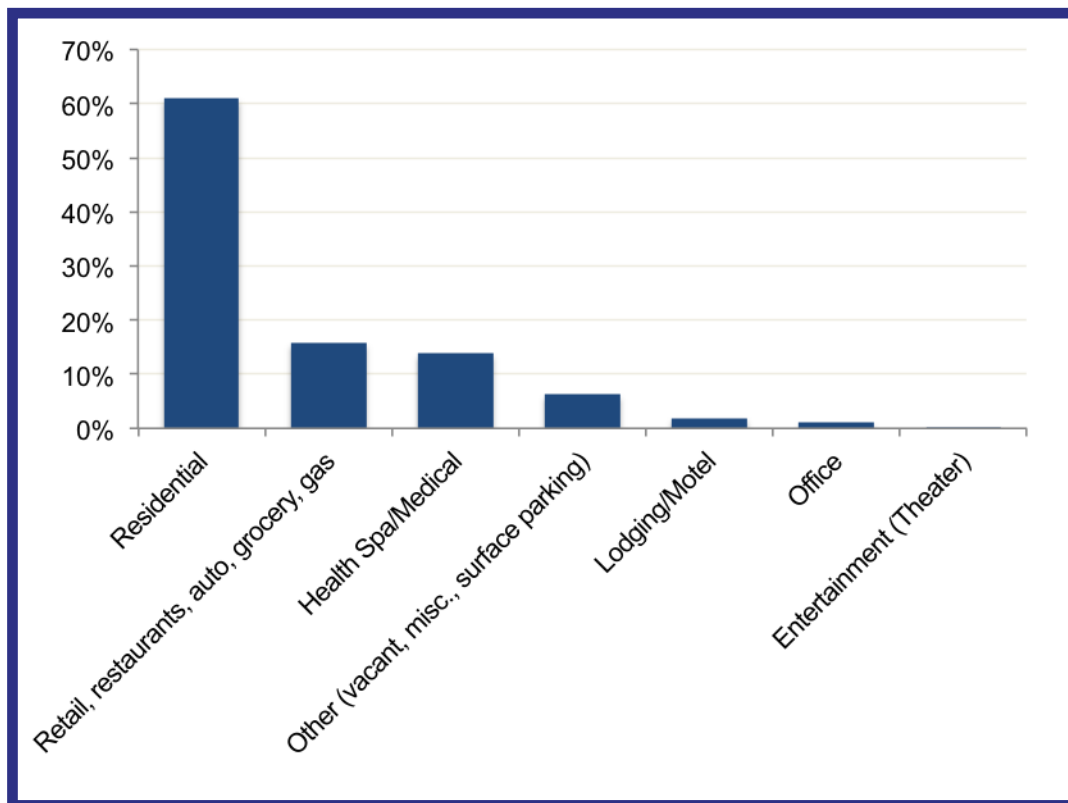


EXISTING CONDITIONS



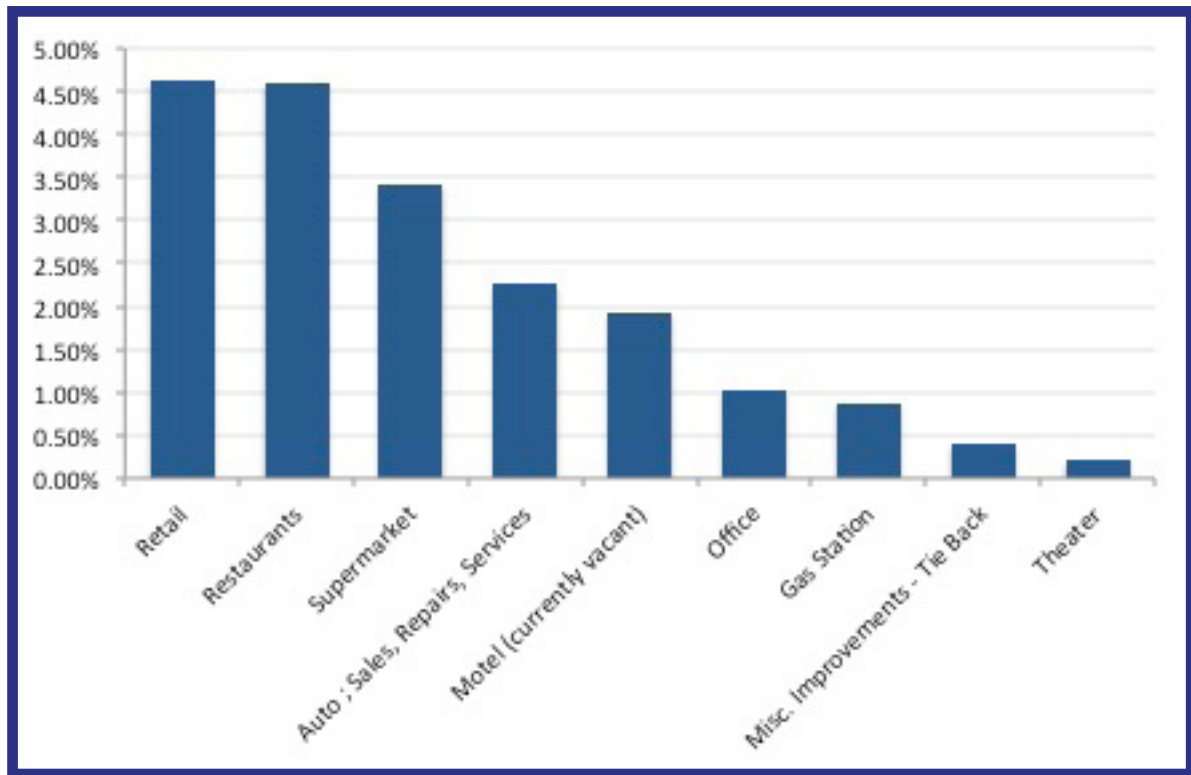
LAND USE

LAND USE BY CATEGORY (PERCENT OF TOTAL LAND IN SQ. FT.)



Data Source: City and County of Denver
Department of Finance - Assessment Division - GIS Section
Most recent update at time of analysis March 8, 2015

NON RESIDENTIAL USE BREAKDOWN (PERCENT OF TOTAL LAND USE IN SQ. FT.)



LAND USE

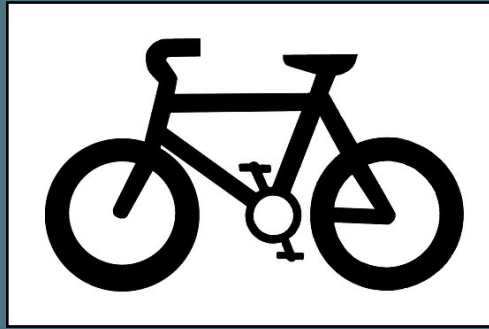
The district offers a healthy mix of land use. Residential parcels comprise 61% of total land within the district. Of all housing 73% is single family homes. Condos make up 12% of the housing stock and apartments are 11%. Row homes comprise just under 5% of housing. Residential communities provide a strong base to support area businesses. All of these parcels are within a 1/4 mile of main street zoned parcels.

The second highest category for land use is retail, restaurants, automotive services, grocery and gas. When this category is further broken down retail and restaurants each account for about 4.5% of the land use. Other uses, such as grocery, auto services, and office, support residents' daily needs.

Survey results indicate that stakeholders strongly associate entertainment, dining and with the district. Ninety-four percent of respondents stated that they come to the district for dining. 66% of respondent associate entertainment with the district. When it comes to opinions of the mix of uses in the district, the majority of respondents rated the mix as "well" or "moderate," indicating that there is room to bring in new uses.

Vacant land represents just under 3% of total land, or about 71,100 sq. ft. Of this a single parcel has over 1/2 of this land at 45,000 sq. ft. The parcel located at 1565 Colorado Blvd, is currently zoned as MS-5, allowing five stories of mixed use development.

MOBILITY: BIKES



NORTH: Bike access through City Park is not a direct route. The outcome is that cyclists are using other streets and sidewalks in the vicinity to access the district from the north.

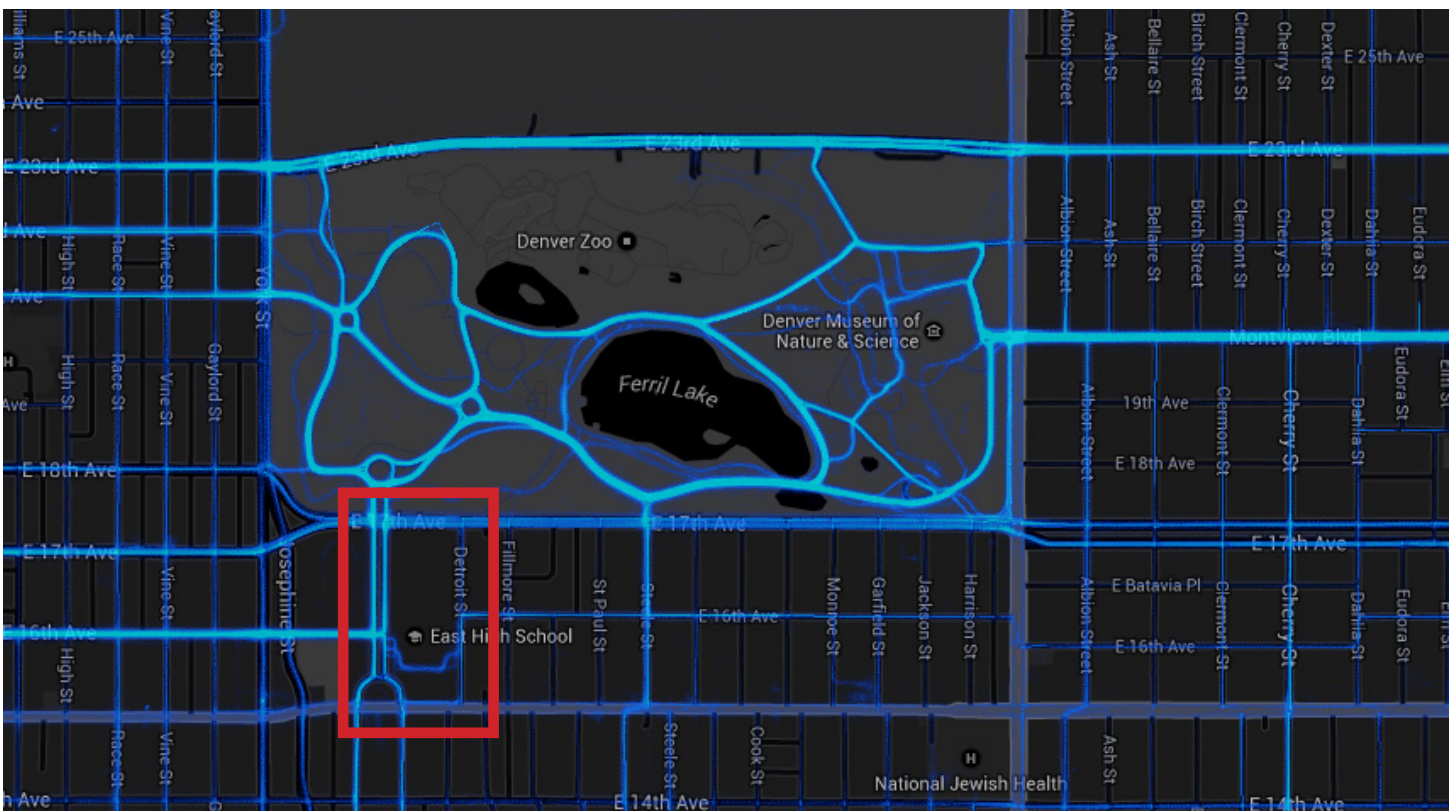
EAST: Colorado Blvd. is a major barrier for cyclists to cross. Currently there are not establish crossings, through improved facilities are proposed at 12th and 17th Avenues.

SOUTH: The 12th Street route to the south has a bike lane between Clayton St. and Madison, and there is a proposed extension up to Colorado Blvd.

WEST: 16th Avenue is a great biking route from downtown until riders reach East High School, at which point the bike lane ends and no easy route is available.

NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTION: The Steele and St. Paul street route offers a low-speed residential street with an shared lane bike route. In July of 2015 Public Works reports that a traffic light with a bike crossing signal at Colfax and Steele St will be installed. An additional connection is proposed for Garfield. This would be an asset to riders accessing public transit, B-Cycle users and riders trying to access the Sprouts grocery store.

BIKE ROUTE GAPS: The map below shows data taken from Strava, an application for cyclist to map their routes. The brighter blue indicates a more frequently used route. Cyclist route finding decisions at East High School and crossing Colorado Boulevard can be seen.



[illegible]

Bike racks in highly visible locations and with Bluebird branding



Bike routes the complete connections and offer lower stress biking facilities, such as designated bike lanes



On Street bike route at Steele St. and Colfax, looking north

MOBILITY: PEDESTRIANS



PEDESTRIAN CONDITIONS DATA

Using WalkScope crowd source tools over 30 participants collected data on pedestrian conditions. They recorded sidewalk and intersection conditions. Based on this data collection process the best and worst sidewalk and intersections conditions were mapped. Survey respondent report that over 40% get to the district by walking and 56% of all respondents note that “pedestrian safety improvements, such as crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signals: are a high or very high priority. Respondents also rated more trees along sidewalks as a high priority.

INTERSECTION CONDITIONS

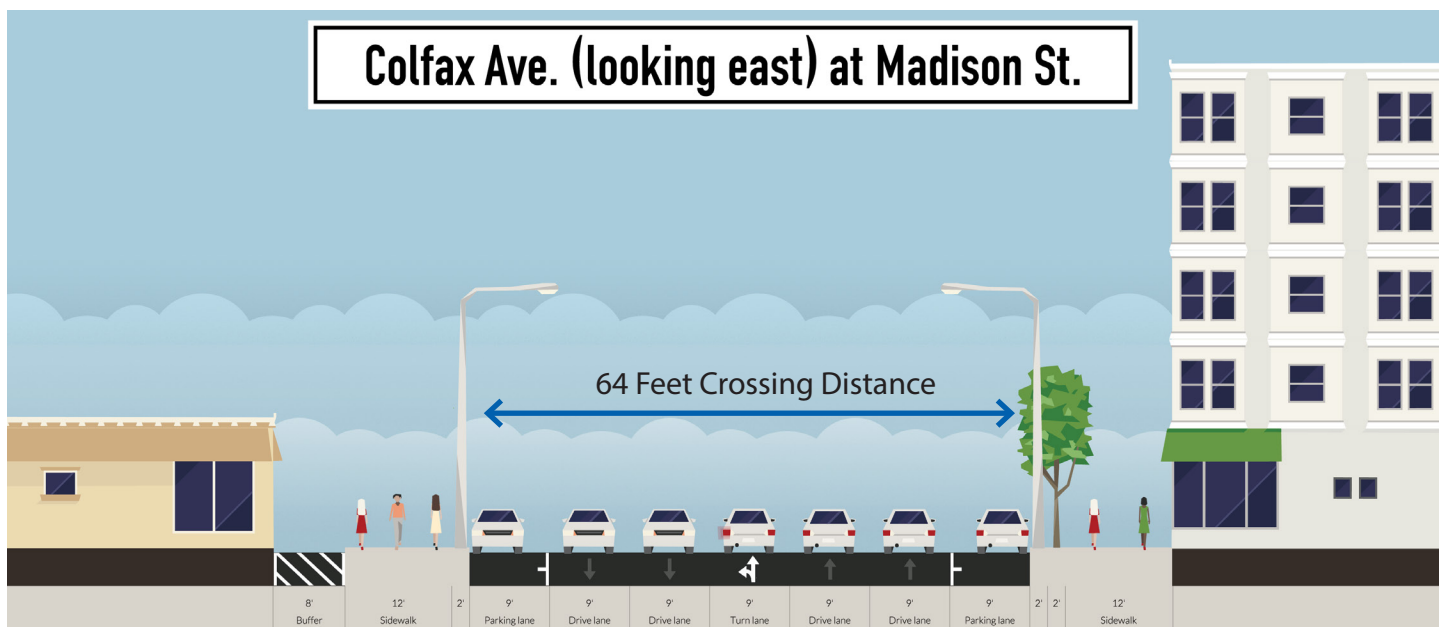
The distance from curb to curb is 64 feet. There are a total of five lanes of traffic and two on street parking lanes for pedestrians to cross. Safely crossing Colfax is a top concern for survey participants and 12 of the 23 plans reviewed for this area specifically identify pedestrian safety concerns for crossing Colfax. The current street cross section represents the conditions. There are currently three signalized intersections within the district, with a four scheduled for construction in July 2015. Pedestrian are often seen using the center turn lane for refuge while crossing Colfax. The current time for a pedestrian to walk from a north midpoint between lights to a south midpoint is about 5 minutes, not including wait time at the light.

SIDEWALK CONDITIONS



Sidewalk conditions vary widely along this section of Colfax and often reflect the condition of the building they are in front of. The only section of Colfax that received the highest rating from WalkScope participants is located in front of Sprouts between Garfield and Jackson Streets on the north side of Colfax.

Colfax Ave. (looking east) at Madison St.



MOBILITY: TRANSIT & VEHICLES



*Please see the previous page for map of transit routes and stops.

Transit

15

2013 AVG
BOARDINGS PER
HOUR: 47.5

DISTRICT STOPS:
5

15L

2013 AVG
BOARDINGS PER
HOUR: 66.7

DISTRICT STOPS:
1

32

2013 AVG
BOARDINGS PER
HOUR: 24.8

DISTRICT STOPS:
2

40

2013 AVG
BOARDINGS PER
HOUR: 38.6

DISTRICT STOPS:
2

The district has some of the highest rates of ridership in the entire RTD system. The area offers both express and local buses. Buses are often overwhelmed by demand. Buses currently use the same lanes as traffic, and prone to the same peak time delays. Plans have identified bus rapid transit or a street car as possible transit upgrades.

Vehicles



Colfax

CURB TO CURB DISTANCE: 64 FEET

DESCRIPTION: ON-STREET PARKING, FOUR DRIVE LANES, CENTER TURN LANE

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (YEAR 2013): 29,000 AND **(YEAR 2035):** 30,900



Colorado

CURB TO CURB DISTANCE: 75 Feet to 110 feet

DESCRIPTION: No on-street parking, center median, enhanced crosswalks at Colorado and Colfax, Between 6 to 9 lanes to cross

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (YEAR 2013): 51,000 AND **(YEAR 2035):** 53,200

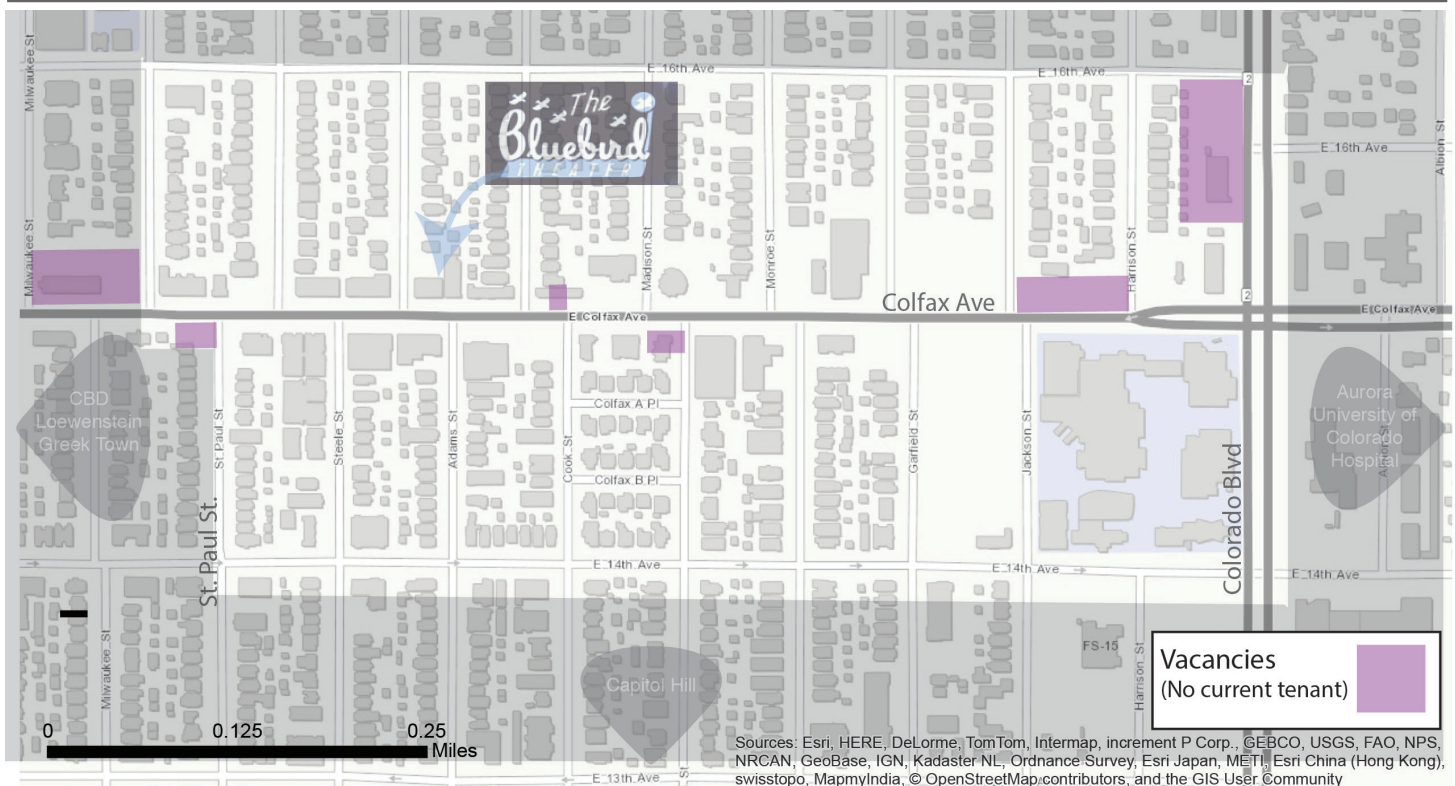
Both Colorado Blvd. and Colfax Ave. are valuable arterials for the city. However, they also both pose challenges for multi-modal transportation, including pedestrian safety. Crossing either street is dangerous and opportunities for safe crossing, with signals and crosswalks, are too far apart. In survey responses drivers feel safe driving on both streets, but note that parking locations are Colfax are overburdened.

[illegible]

PAGE 29

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Vacancy Rates



Vacancy rates have been decreasing within the BBID. As vacant storefronts fill the area becomes more of a cohesive destination.

2013 Business Openings

Sprouts

2014

Chick-fil-a

Unleashed by Petco

City Park Family Dental

Heidi's Deli

2015 Planned Openings (Not shown on map)

Galaxy Building

Two Wheel Feel

Real Estate Office



Cerebral Brewery is scheduled to open in 2015 in the Galaxy Building. Photo Credit: Denver Eater

Sales Tax Revenues

The BBID began tracking sale tax revenues in July of 2103, following its formation. From onset of monitoring there has been a 21% increase from quarters three and four of year 2013 to the comparable six months in 2014.

The revenue increase indicates that more visitors are spending more money in the district. This is also due to the decrease in vacant storefronts and upgrades to existing buildings. Sprouts, below is an example of new development that has drastically increased the tax revenue for the BBID, and increases the ability for the BBID to promote positive change.



Business Owner Investment

Businesses and property owners in the area have been making upgrades throughout the BID. However, a continuing focus of the area is updating buildings and facades to attract new businesses.

Encouraging business and property owners to invest in facade upgrades, public realm upgrades or an complete remodel of a building is a goal of the BID for outdated structures.

Several programs from the Office of Economic Development (OED) exist for helping business and property owners with investment. Many of the office of economic development's programs are limited to specific areas. The BBID is situated in an area that OED focuses on and business owners have greater options for funding, financing opportunities and technical support.



Outdated building facades limit windows and don't activate the street. Photo Credit: Anne Kuechenmeister

RECOMMENDATIONS

MOBILITY &

SAFETY



BULB OUTS



\$12,000 PER
BULB OUT



IMMEDIATE &
LONG TERM

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
SAFETY

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS: City and County of Denver, CDOT, FTA, WalkDenver, PlaceMatters, Public Works

JUSTIFICATION: 14 referenced plans identify safety issues for pedestrians in this area. Blueprint Denver identifies Colfax as a pedestrian shopping corridor. Survey respondents rate pedestrian conditions, including crossing Colfax as a high priority for improvements. Creating a safer pedestrian environment aligns with the current main-street zoning.

Project Description:

Bulb outs are curb extensions at intersections that shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. Colfax is currently 64 feet from curb to curb, a seven foot bulb out on each curb would decrease the crossing distance to 50 feet. They also make pedestrians more visible to oncoming traffic and vice versa, make oncoming traffic easier for pedestrians to see. This occurs because pedestrians are not tucked behind cars parked on the street. Bulb outs can also slow traffic, creating a more narrow driveway for vehicles.

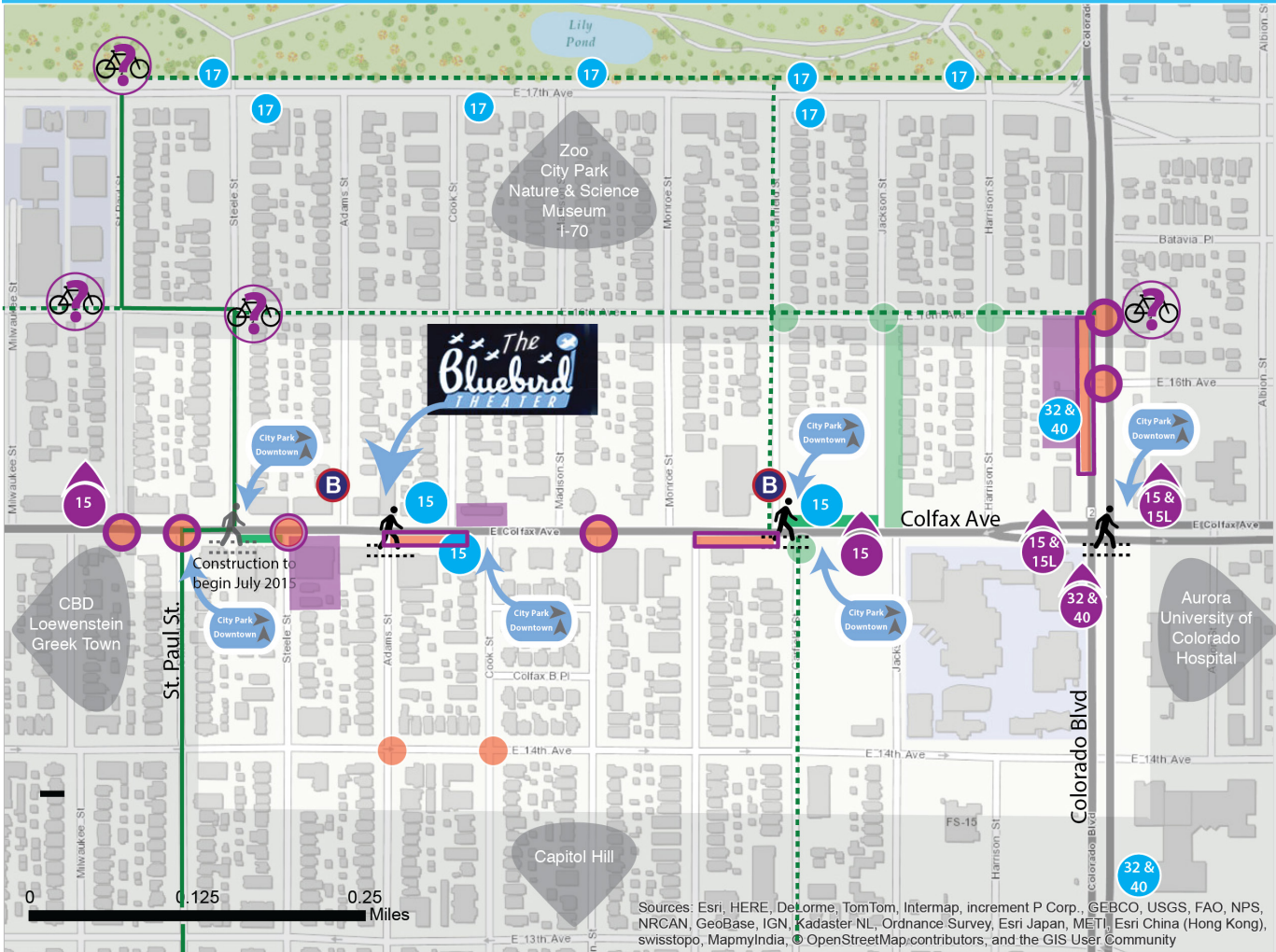
Colfax is well suited for bulb outs because it already has on-street parking, thus bulb outs would not impede a lane of traffic. Also, bulb outs can create difficult turning radius for buses turning off of Colfax onto side streets. Routes 15 and 15L do not turn off of Colfax onto side streets.

Immediate: Opportunity to install temporary structures for the purpose of demonstrating the use, application and effects of bulb outs in the area.

Long-term: With collaborative partners identify key intersections that will benefit from curb extensions for pedestrian crossing safety.

Multi-Modal Mobility Analysis

Bluebird Business Improvement District, Spring 2015



Traffic light & pedestrian signal



B-Cycle stations



Targeted Pedestrian Intersection crossing improvement locations



RTD bus shelter



Targeted Pedestrian sidewalk improvement locations



Bike route gaps



Catalytic Sites



Suggested future bike routes



Bluebird Business Improvement District Area



Potential wayfinding sign locations



Bike route, on road shared lane



RECOMMENDATIONS MOBILITY & SAFETY

RTD/CDOT/PUBLIC WORKS LIAISON MEETINGS



\$200
QUARTERLY



IMMEDIATE &
CONTINUING

STAY INFORMED ON
OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE
AND IDENTIFY WAYS TO ALIGN
VISIONS

Quarterly meetings, increased as necessary depending on projects to ensure clear understanding of collaborative opportunities. Having a clear line of communication with a common person will build trust and a better informed district. Meetings can be over phone, in person or e-mail correspondence.

MEDIAN ISLANDS



\$20,000
PER INSTALLATION



LONG TERM

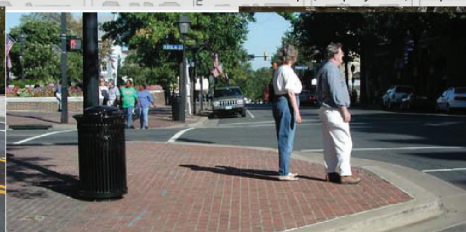
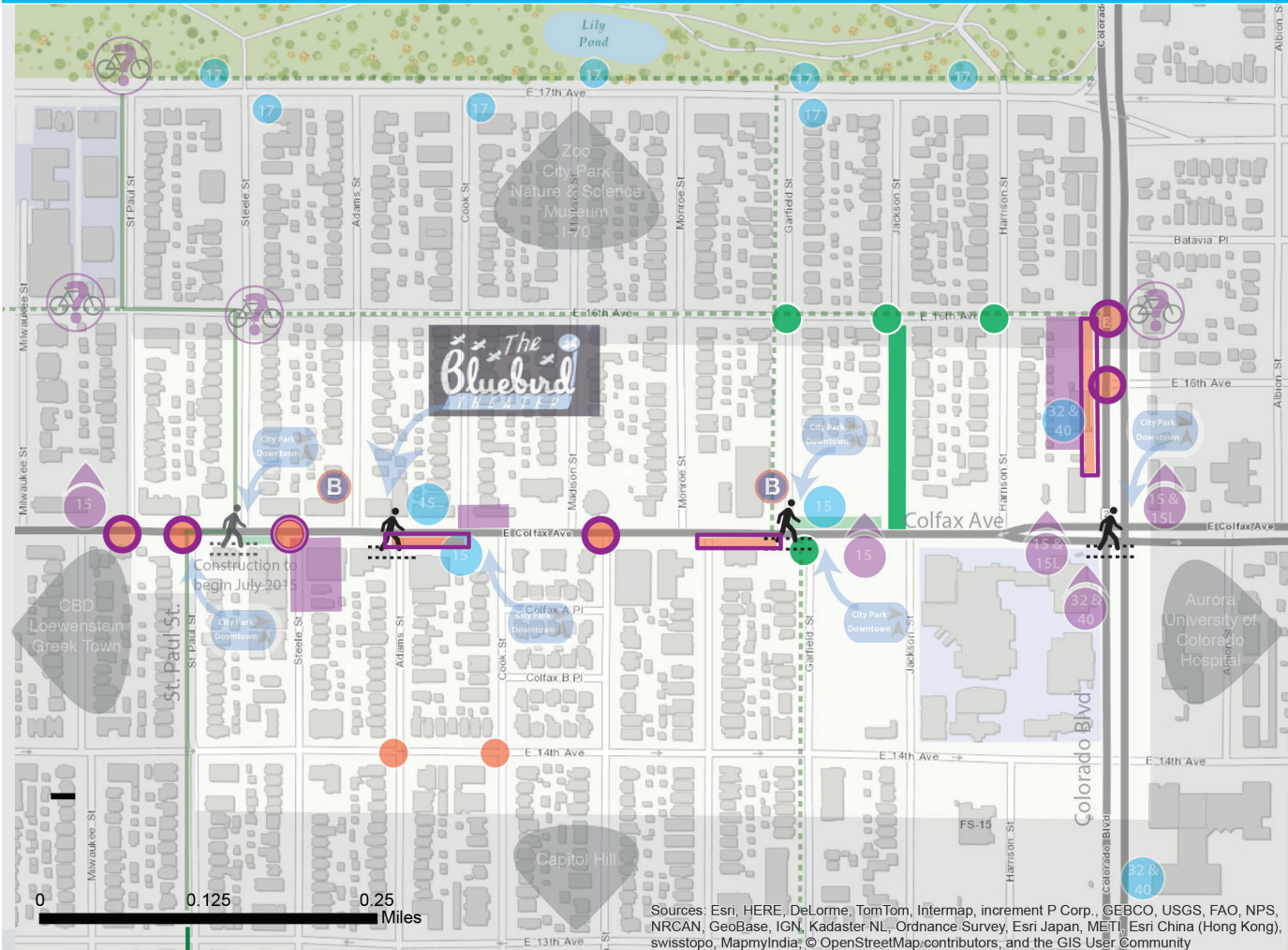
IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
SAFETY AND SLOW TRAFFIC


Median Islands give pedestrians a place of refuge while crossing multiple lanes of traffic. Currently individuals crossing Colfax are using the center turn lane for refuge. This does not provide any protection from vehicles and creates a conflict between pedestrians crossing the street and traffic. Survey respondents list pedestrian safety as a top priority. Median islands are also called pedestrian safety islands. Key partners for this project will be CDOT, RTD, Public Work and the City and County of Denver Planning Department.




Pedestrian Analysis & Context













Bluebird Business Improvement District, Spring 2015




 Install mid-block median islands for pedestrians to have a place of refuge from traffic.

 Install bulb-outs: decrease walking distance, increase visibility and decrease speeds

Drivers frequently do not yield to pedestrians or bikers. Now is the time to change the culture of Colfax.

 Traffic light & pedestrian signal	 B-Cycle stations	 Targeted Pedestrian Intersection crossing improvement locations	 Bluebird Business Improvement District Area
 RTD bus stop	 RTD bus shelter	 Targeted Pedestrian sidewalk improvement locations	 Potential wayfinding sign locations
 Bike route gaps	 Catalytic Sites	 Suggested future bike routes	 Bike route, on road shared lane

 BLUEBIRD BID.COM

RECOMMENDATIONS MOBILITY & SAFETY

BRT OR STREET CAR: BRANDING & DESIGN



UNKNOWN



PHASED:
MID TO LONG TERM

IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL ACCESS
AND SAFETY CONDITIONS FOR
ALL USERS & PROMOTE BRAND
RECOGNITION

Enhanced transit through the corridor can add to the identity of the area. Branding bus rapid transit or a street car for each of the neighborhoods it passes through will help riders identify the neighborhoods. BBID is excited to collaborate with RTD on branding future enhanced transit.

METZ, FRANCE



BANGKOK, THAILAND

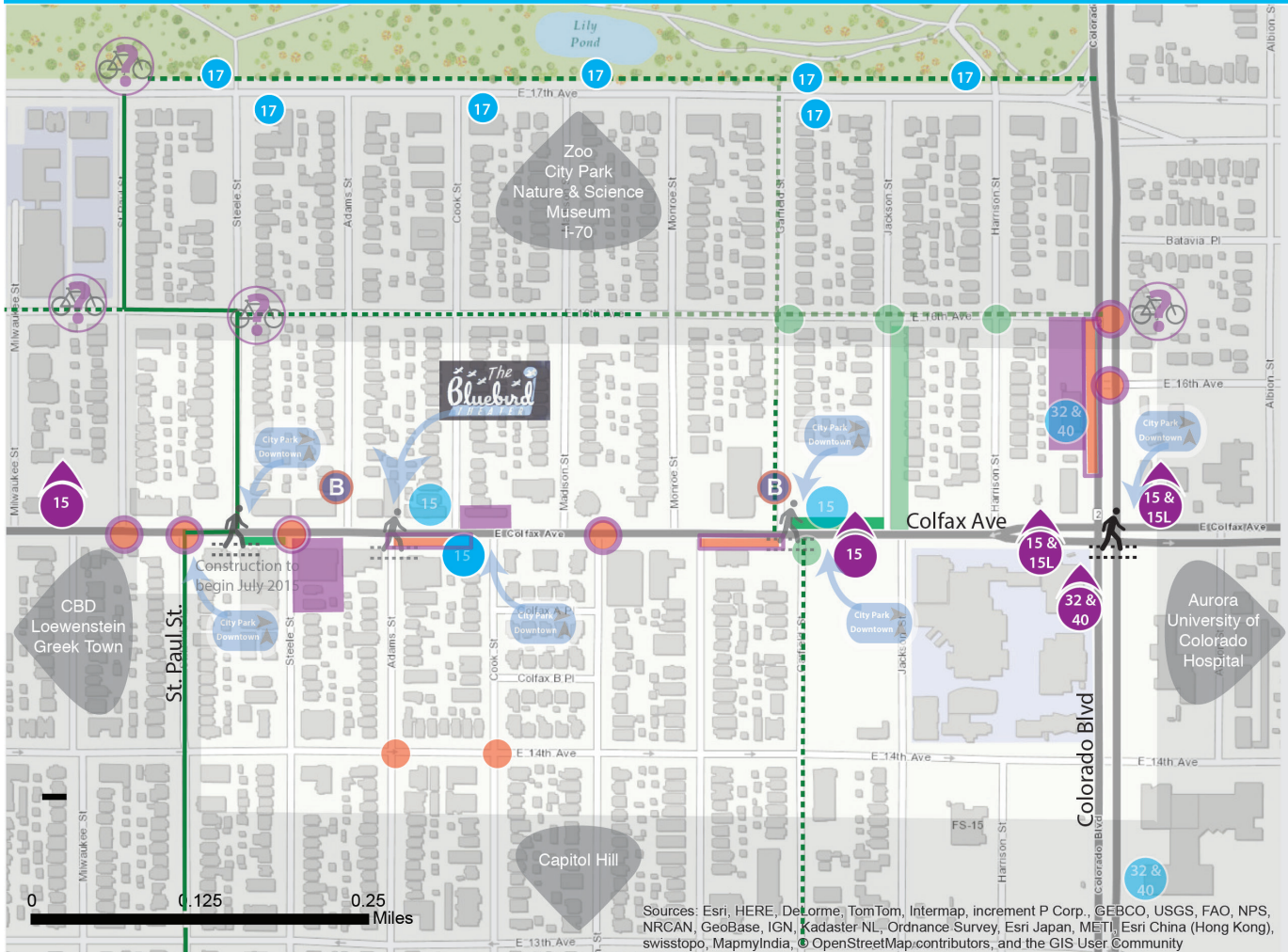


GUIYANG, CHINA



Bus Shelters & Area Context

Bluebird Business Improvement District, Spring 2015



Maintenance ensures reliable service



Improved bus shelter maintenance improves area image and can decrease rates of vandalism



Brand bus shelters to reflect area values and vision



Traffic light & pedestrian signal



B-Cycle stations



RTD bus shelter



Bike route gaps



Catalytic Sites



Targeted Pedestrian Intersection crossing improvement locations



Targeted Pedestrian sidewalk improvement locations



Suggested future bike routes



Bluebird Business Improvement District Area



Potential wayfinding sign locations



Bike route, on road shared lane



RECOMMENDATIONS MOBILITY & SAFETY

CONNECT BIKE ROUTES



UNKNOWN



MID-TERM

IMPROVE MOBILITY AND BIKE
SAFETY

Current bike routes hint at the idea of connected bike ways. East High School, City Park, Colfax and Colorado Boulevard all present barriers for bikers. Connecting the gaps will increase biker confidence and allow bikers to safely reach the district, thus supporting the multi-modal goals of the area.

Please see the mobility analysis map for suggested bike routes.



INCREASE BIKE PARKING



\$5,000 PER
LOCATION



MID-TERM

PROMOTE BIKING WITH EASY TO
USE, ACCESSIBLE PARKING NEAR
ESTABLISHED BIKE ROUTES AND
KNOWN AREAS OF HIGH USE

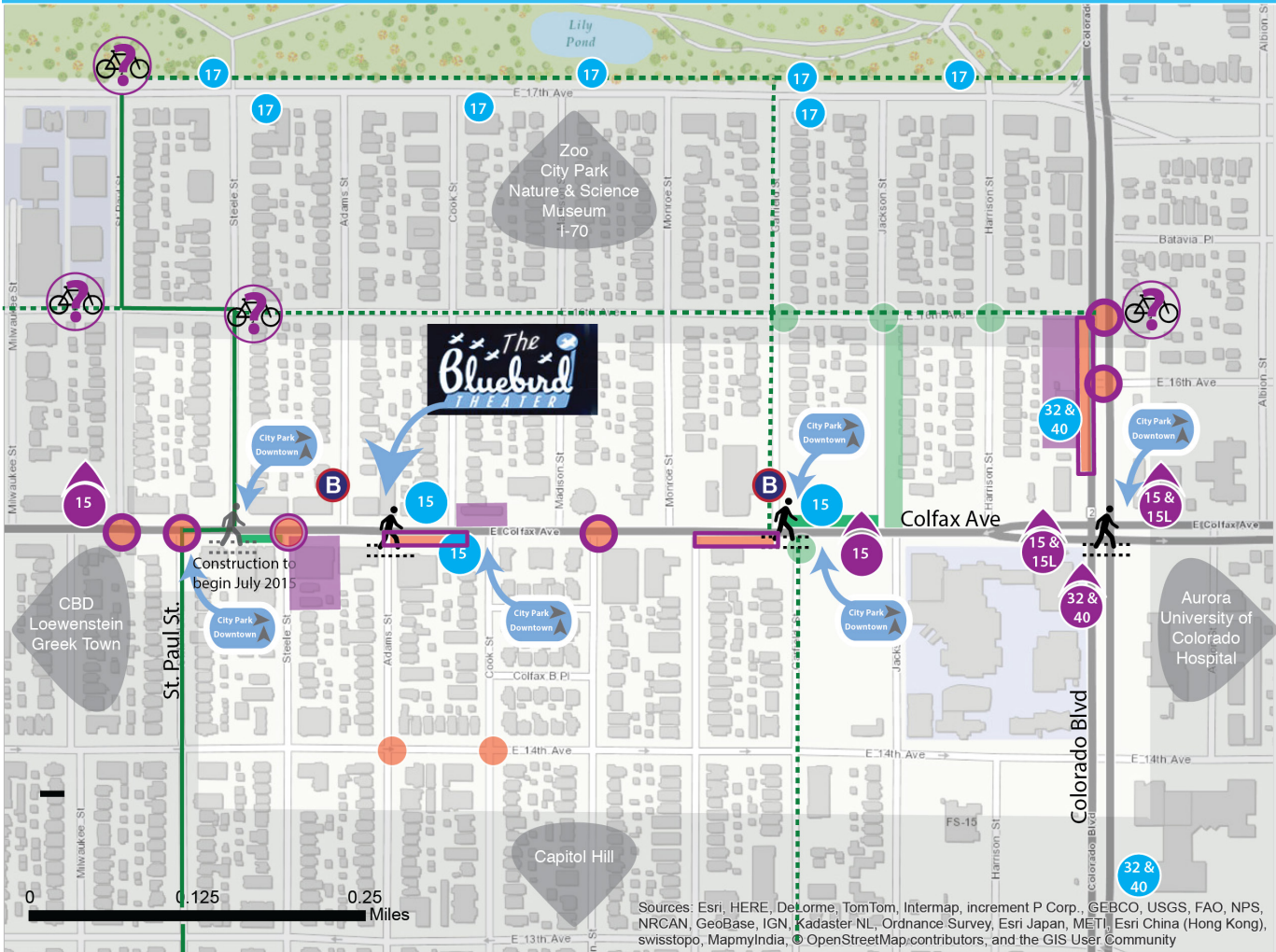
Currently few places offer bike parking. Additional bike parking facilities should be offered on Colfax and side streets with bike routes to encourage biking and make accessing the district easier for cyclists.

Studies have shown that adding bike parking can increase business revenues. It is a cost effective way to encourage new patrons to visit the area.



Multi-Modal Mobility Analysis

Bluebird Business Improvement District, Spring 2015



Traffic light & pedestrian signal



B-Cycle stations



RTD bus shelter



Bike route gaps



Catalytic Sites



Targeted Pedestrian Intersection crossing improvement locations



Targeted Pedestrian sidewalk improvement locations



Suggested future bike routes



Bluebird Business Improvement District Area



Potential wayfinding sign locations



Bike route, on road shared lane



RECOMMENDATIONS

PLACEMAKING

WAYFINDING SIGNS



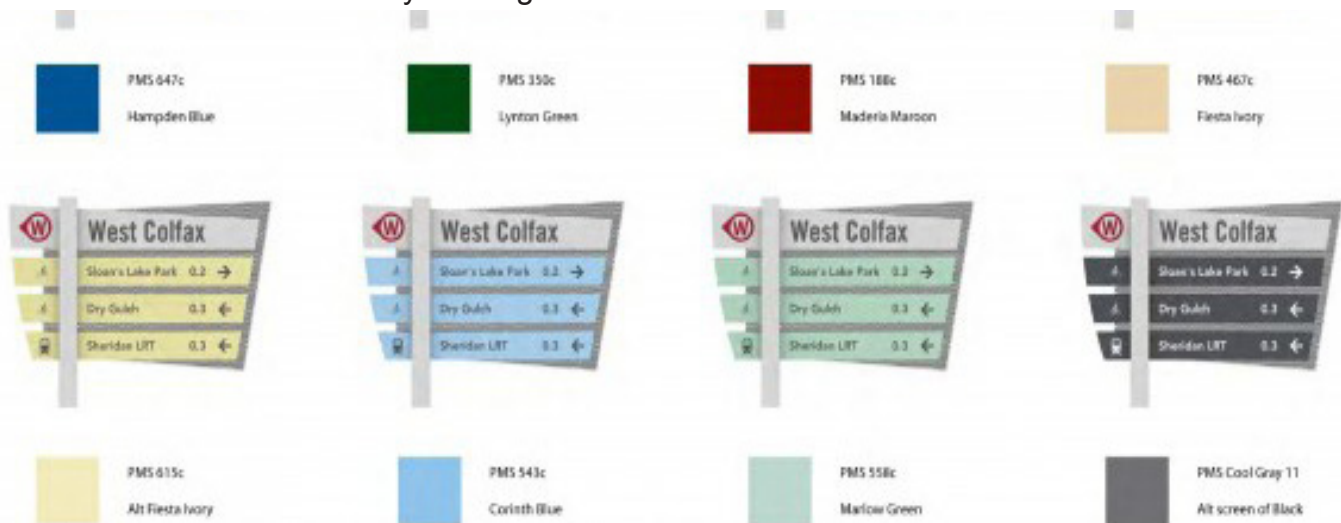
\$10,000



PHASED:
IMMEDIATE & LONGTERM

HELPING PEOPLE GET AROUND
AND FIND AREA ASSETS

The BBID has cultural and community assets in close proximity, but limited viewsheds and unclear wayfinding make them seem far away. Wayfinding signs, that are branded to the BID logo and image will help residents and visitors navigate to parks, zoos and museums that are all within walking distance. Additional wayfinding can indicate where bus and bike connections are located and businesses that are within easy walking distance of the BID.



Above: West Colfax Business Improvement District Wayfinding Signs, Denver, CO



Grasham, Oregon



Orleans, Indiana



Sioux City, Iowa

BRANDED BUS STOPS



\$50,000



PHASED:
IMMEDIATE & LONGTERM

PLACEMAKING &
IMPROVED TRANSIT EXPERIENCE

Bus stop branding and improvements will support the image and identify of the neighborhood. Branded bus stops can also curtail vandalism by allowing passengers to interact or invest in the space and connect with a sense of place.



Above: West Colfax Business Improvement District Brand Bus Stop, Denver, CO



Left: Baltimore creates a fun and useful bus shelter.

Right: Bogotá, Columbia bilingual library bus shelter



RECOMMENDATIONS PLACEMAKING

REOCCURRING, SMALL SCALE EVENTS



\$2,000 PER
EVENT



MID-TERM

ENHANCE THE BRAND OF THE
BBID AND PROMOTE RECOGNITION
OF THE BBID

Stakeholders have expressed a desire to have recurring, smaller scale events and opportunities for the community to come together. Summer farmers markets and local businesses can offer spaces for community meet ups and discussions or the opportunity to highlight local artists and bands.

ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN WEBSITE



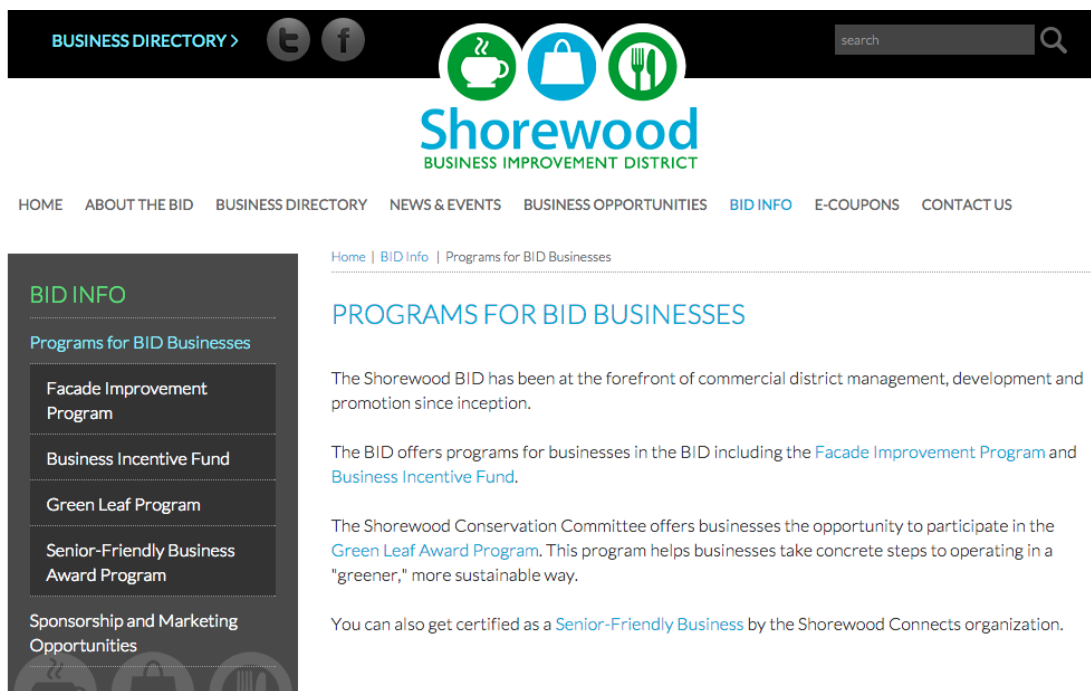
\$3,000 +
\$100/MONTH



PHASED:
IMMEDIATE &
CONTINUING

ENHANCE THE BRAND OF THE
BBID AND PROMOTE RECOGNITION
OF THE BBID

The bluebirdbeat.com website has the potential to be a robust resource for business owners, property owners, visitors and residents. It is unclear to some residents and business owners how the BBID is communicating with them and if the communication is coming from the BBID. A clear and consistent website will help stakeholders understand how the BID is serving them. Below: Shorewood BID Website



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



UNKNOWN

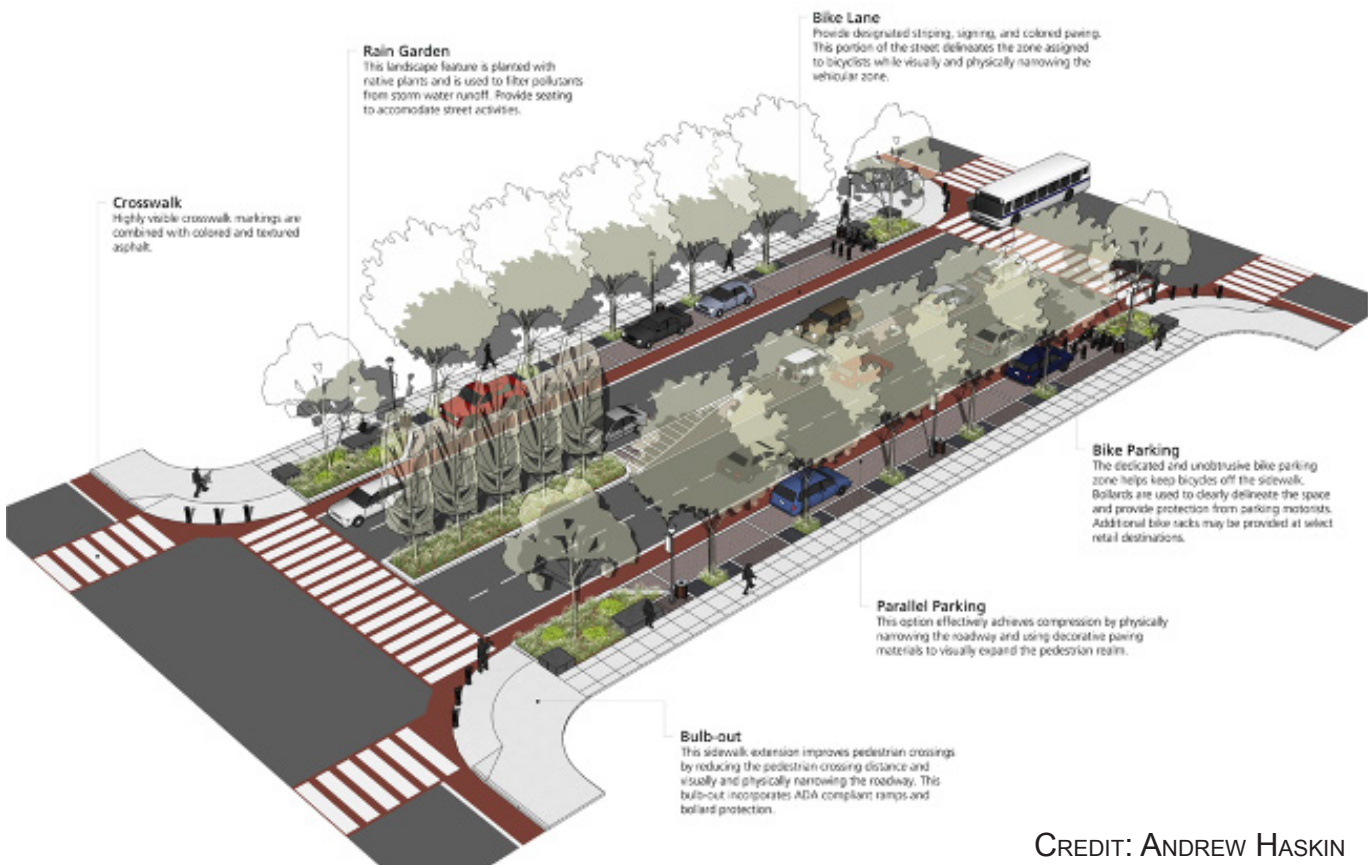


PHASED:
MID & LONG TERM

PROMOTE A SENSE OF PLACE
AND ENHANCE THE PEDESTRIAN
SHOPPING EXPERIENCE TO
PROMOTE ECONOMIC VITALITY

Streetscape improvements that this area would benefit from include more trees, planted shrubs and flower, pedestrian scale lighting, benches, trashcans and public art. These improvements can be realized through grants, matching programs for business owners and OED programs.

STREETSCAPE



CREDIT: ANDREW HASKIN

LOGO CREATION



\$5,000



IMMEDIATE

ENHANCE THE BRAND OF
THE BBID AND PROMOTE
RECOGNITION OF THE BBID

The BBID current logo is outdated. An updated symbol that is easily recognizable will support the BBID branding and recognition. This will promote the image of the BID and identify the area as a place and destination for visitors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC VITALITY

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION



\$1,000



PHASED:
IMMEDIATE &
LONG-TERM

INCREASE INVESTMENT THROUGH
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNERS'
KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRAMS

The Denver Office of Economic Development has a plethora of information to help busy business owners. Also, Colfax and the BBID are uniquely suited for many of these programs as program eligibility for many programs is specific so certain areas, which contain the BBID. Connecting business owners with this information and highlighting that they are uniquely eligible may assist business and property owners in investing in their properties. Education can come in the form of one-on-one conversations, written material or workshops.

AREA EVENTS MINI-GRANT



\$1,000 TO
\$5,000



MID-TERM

SUPPORT PLACEMAKING AND
VITALITY

Stakeholders have expressed a desire to have more frequent, small neighborhood events. The BBID can support this by offering mini-grants for events in the district. The events should support the mission of the BBID and clear criteria for grant funds should be established. This is a great way for the BBID to leverage funds.

Bluebird District Music Fest is a new area event for the summer of 2015. This event should be highlighted on the website and in the digital newsletter. It was created by local business owners. In the future the BBID should look to support area stakeholders through the event mini-grant. This is the type of event that survey respondents would like to see more of.

BDMF
BLUEBIRD DISTRICT MUSIC FESTIVAL
JULY 10-12, 2015
DENVER, CO

DISTRIBUTE MENU OF OED PROGRAMS



\$3,000



IMMEDIATE

SUPPORT BUSINESS INVESTMENT

The OED has identified several programs that are geographically limited in Denver and apply specifically to the BBID. They offer programs that can help business owners finance improvements on very competitive terms. Distributing a funding resource menu and providing support services for local business who want to make improvements supports economic vitality and area investments.

COLLABORATION WITH COLFAX ORGANIZATIONS



\$100



IMMEDIATE

INCREASE ECONOMIES OF SCHOOL AND LEVERAGE WORK COMPLETED ON SIMILAR ISSUES AND NEEDS

Multiple plans identify that districts and neighborhoods along Colfax are confronted with overlapping issues and concerns. Working with other Colfax agencies and form more formal collaborations will align visions and target areas to collectively invest time and effort to incite change. Examples including submitting joint grant requests and creating a unified vision for ROW improvements. Collaboration currently occurs, but more consistent meetings and information exchanges will strengthen these efforts.

FACADE IMPROVEMENT MATCH GRANT



UNKNOWN



MID-TERM

SUPPORT BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND PLACEMAKING

A facade improvement match grant can help spur improvements that update the exteriors of buildings and create a more vibrant street front. The BBID can help bring together public dollars, BBID dollars and private dollars to spur facade upgrades.

DIGITAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



\$50/
MONTH



IMMEDIATE

INCREASE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES AND EVENTS

A digitally distributed monthly newsletter can support businesses, update residents and highlight new openings. The newsletter can have a local business highlighted monthly, with a spotlight on the owner. Events can be advertised. As new businesses open, or businesses make investments, these can also be highlighted.

The newsletter is also a good way to solicit feedback. Since it is digital, recipients can click links to surveys or provide feedback via e-mail.

RECOMMENDATIONS ECONOMIC VITALITY

ZONING TECHNICAL SUPPORT



VARIES BY
PROJECT



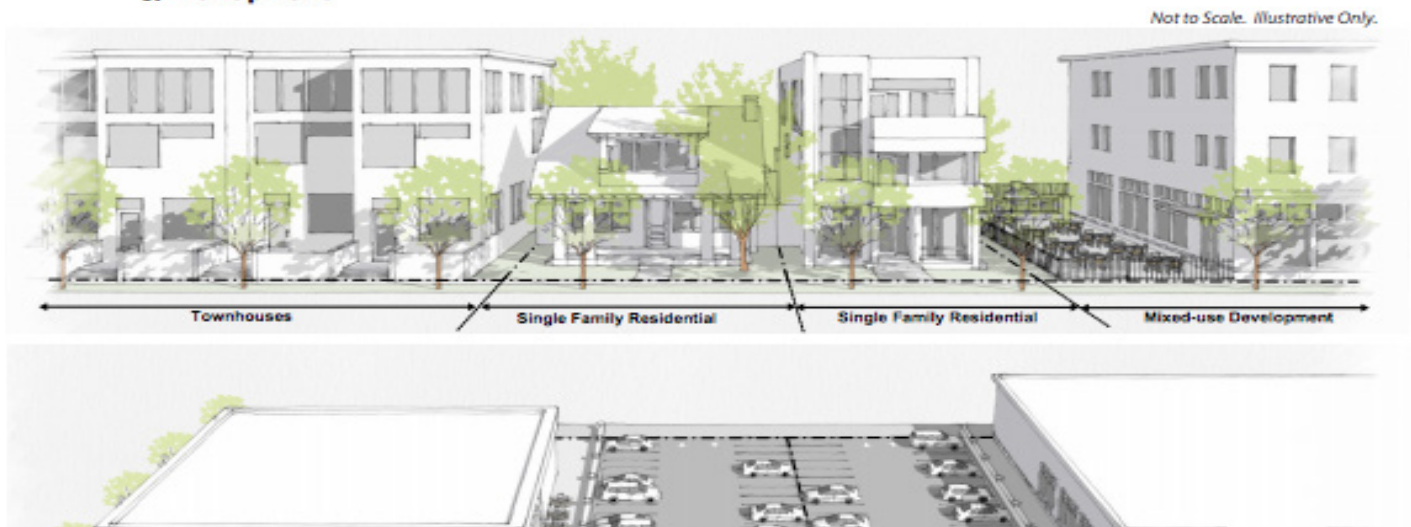
IMMEDIATE

INCREASE PROPERTY OWNER
CAPACITY FOR INVESTMENT

Several property owners within the area have expressed the desire to redevelop structures based on new zoning. For many business owners there may also be a need for rezoning. Providing assistance in understanding their current zoning and the feasible options that it present and the potential for zoning revision can remove barriers for property owners to invest in redevelopment.

Article 5. Urban Neighborhood Context
Division 5.3 Design Standards

J. Shopfront



Denver Zoning Code offers pictures to guide development. One concern of local property owners is being able to fit the required parking spaces in the development. The City of Denver offers innovative strategies, such as including car-share and bike-share spots, to decrease the overall parking needed for a development. Navigating the zoning code to figure out the highest and best use of a site is something property owners need.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY WORKSHOP



\$5,000



MID-TERM

SUPPORT BUSINESS INVESTMENT

The immediate term recommendation of economic opportunity education will provide insight into programs that multiple business owners are interested in learning about on a more in-depth basis. Partnering with OED, the BBID can provide a more details and tailored view of these programs to interested business and property owners. All businesses along Colfax in the district are in the Denver Enterprise Zone. The Denver Enterprise Zone is a State of Colorado tax credit program that allows businesses in the zone to receive tax credits against their state tax liability. Businesses that move to or expand in the Denver Enterprise Zone have the potential to save on their Colorado business income taxes each year. There are ten state tax credits available to businesses within the Zone and one state tax credit available to any taxpayer with a state tax liability.

CREATE A NON-PROFIT



\$3,000



MID-TERM

INCREASE BBID CAPACITY TO
LEVERAGE FUNDS

A non-profit associated with the BID will allow the BID to apply for additional grant funding options that are not available to for profit entities. The BID can use this funds to implement programs and for the achievement of the goals identified in this plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS ECONOMIC VITALITY

CATALYTIC SITES

1565 Colorado Boulevard

Parcel Size = 46,875 sq. ft.

Current Use: Vacant Hotel

Owner: Jeff Oberg

C-MS-5

This parcel is the largest area of vacant land in the district. It has access to two major arterials. The current footprint of the building uses just over half of the available land space. The zoning for this parcel may be an issue for future development. There may be a potential in increase the zoning, while be sensitive to neighbors and community concerns.



3401 - 3459 E. Colfax

Parcel Size: 3,125

The facade of this building is outdated and windows have been largely covered up. The sidewalk is very wide, but offers no shade or other amenities. The storefronts are sleepy and outdoor seating would help to activate the area. The current uses include a computer repair store, temporary labor store, retail shop and vacant storefront. Current zoning: C-MS-5. However, without assemblage redeveloping this very shallow parcel to five stories would be very difficult. The renderings show this parcel with a facade update, outdoor seating, pedestrian amenities and desired improvements for pedestrian safety on Colfax Ave.

3401 - 3459 E. Colfax

CATALYTIC SITE #1



By exposing and modifying the obscured architectural character of the original buildings, we can reveal and retain the palimpsest of past existence while setting the scene for new interactions to take place. The body is invited to pause in the microcosm of the streetscape, and those passing through are given equal consideration with an articulated pathway under the trees. A highly transparent and perforated facade, with high windows and retractable garage doors blends the experiences of indoor and out. Planter boxes lend softness and visual interest to the block, while also providing seating and creating separation from the vehicles. Sidewalk bulbouts serve many purposes as well: the added space can accommodate benches, landscaping, or bicycle/scooter parking, and if used at a corner crosswalk, it reduces the path of travel across the street. The bulbout is a signal of pedestrian activity, and traffic will proceed more apprehensively as the road narrows. A planted median strip will also slow traffic and protect crossing pedestrians, and aid in instructing cars where to turn on the seemingly infinite turn lane of E. Colfax Avenue.



tactile boarding strip



local wayfinding



open storefront and seating



branding synergy



planters separate sidewalk from parking



3401 EAST COLFAX AVENUE

May 7, 2015

RECOMMENDATIONS ECONOMIC VITALITY

CATALYTIC SITES

3200 E. Colfax Ave. + 1470 Steele + 1464 Steele St.

Parcel Size = 11,288 + 5,940 + 5,940 = 23,168 sq. ft.

Current Use: Vacant Hotel

Owner: Jung Kil Kim

C-MS-3 and residential

A single owner has three contiguous properties and would like to assemble the properties for development. This project will require rezoning for all of the parcels. There is precedent for this type of rezoning. The proposed redevelopment will activate the street and bring more households to the district. The building is designed to encourage outdoor use and walking.

3200 E. Colfax Ave. + 1470 Steele St. + 1464 Steele St.

MAY 7, 2015



CATALYTIC
SITE #2



The mixed-use development is typically mixed only in that residential and commercial functions co-occupy the same site. We imagine a more intrinsic marriage in which the block's residents and passing consumers have more opportunity to interact. A dual-level stepped primary facade invites people both visually and physically into the building's spaces. By alternating volume and void we unfurl the main facade, optimizing the potential for light, visibility, and pedestrian access. The structure addresses its context by balancing the massing of the commercial corridor to the north with its residential neighbors to the south. Resisting the trend of exclusively luxury apartments and high-end retail, efforts can be made to provide a variation of commercial services that cater to a wider cross-section of our city's inhabitants, as well as offering a range of income levels that are available to a wider range of income levels. By putting the parking within the lower level of the building, we can allocate more space for bike and scooter parking, car-share parking, public transit, and pedestrian right-of-way as we move away from our auto-centric urban habitation.



context-sensitive stepped facade



dedicated carshare parking



dedicated scooter parking

3200 EAST COLFAX AVENUE

