



# West Colfax Avenue Action Plan

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### Executive Summary

The West Colfax Avenue Action Plan was developed through the cooperative efforts of West Colfax Corridor Advisory Committee and the City of Lakewood. The West Colfax Corridor Advisory Committee was comprised of business owners, commercial property owners, residents and representatives of the registered neighborhood organizations located adjacent to Colfax Avenue. By working together, a vision has been established and action steps identified to beautify and enhance the economic vitality of West Colfax Avenue from Sheridan Boulevard to Indiana Street.

The West Colfax Corridor Advisory Committee started the planning process with an in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities that exist on Colfax Avenue. Upon completion of this analysis, the Committee developed a Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, and Action Steps designed to achieve the Vision for the corridor.

As the Committee worked through the planning and visioning process for Colfax Avenue, the over-riding theme was a belief that Colfax Avenue is more than just a road. Specifically, the Committee believed that Colfax Avenue should be:

- A vibrant, unique and attractive *place* that provides a mix of small and large businesses and unique housing opportunities.
- A *place* that unites neighborhoods and celebrates the historic and eclectic character of northern Lakewood.
- A *place* that effectively and attractively balances vehicular needs with those of the pedestrian and the transit user.

Using these concepts as a framework, the Committee developed a Vision Statement for Colfax Avenue that states:

### *West Colfax Avenue* **Vision Statement**

As a celebration of the historic and eclectic character of north Lakewood, Colfax Avenue will be a place that unites neighborhoods and provides a variety of vibrant businesses and housing opportunities for generations to come.

Seven Guiding Principles were developed to achieve the Vision for Colfax Avenue. These Guiding Principles provide the structure of the Plan. The Guiding Principles are as follows:

**Guiding Principles**

Achieve the Vision

Make it Sparkle

Make it Vibrant

Maximize Transit Invest Wisely

Value History

Get the Zoning Mix Right

Key Action Steps related to the seven Guiding Principles include: updating and revising the Colfax Overlay Zone District to really develop a unique character and sense of place, analyzing the use of urban renewal powers to encourage redevelopment of properties along the corridor, forming a business improvement district, assisting property and business owners with façade improvements, developing events such as the Colfax Marathon to market the corridor and build excitement around the vision for Colfax Avenue.

In developing the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Action Steps, the Committee members realize that successful implementation of the West Colfax Avenue Action Plan is going to depend on forming creative partnerships and using creative financing strategies. The Action Plan cannot be implemented by just the City or just the business community, achieving the vision for Colfax Avenue will take a strong and creative partnership that includes business owners, property owners, neighborhoods, the City, other agencies such as the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, Colorado Department of Transportation, and the Regional Transportation District.

### **Achieve the Vision – Short Range Action Steps – Implement in 1 to 5 Years**

V1. Build community excitement around Colfax Avenue and the West Colfax Avenue Action Plan. Build upon bright spots along the corridor.

V2. Assess the feasibility of various financing strategies including but not limited to: formation of a business improvement district; creation of special improvement districts; creation of local improvement districts; creation of parking districts; use of urban renewal tools; use of public improvement fees; use of Brownfield remediation funds; etc.

V3. Create a pedestrian and bicycle focus for the corridor. Remember that Colfax Avenue is not just for cars.

V4. Proactively establish public/private partnerships to implement the vision for Colfax Avenue e.g., West Colfax Community Association, neighborhood organizations, property owners, business owners, Lakewood Reinvestment Authority, other districts, etc.

V5. Develop a specialized business profile piece for Colfax that includes demographics, land-use, zoning, neighborhood characteristics, types of uses, amenities (recreation centers, transit, etc), events, etc.

V6. Develop and implement a range of community events and special events to increase visibility of Colfax in the metro area and to increase identity of the corridor, for example:

- a. Colfax Marathon and related events such as the sidewalk sale the week before the Marathon.
- b. Research into the feasibility of having a Farmer's Market on Colfax Avenue.
- c. Coordination with events at the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design including the Art Show and Blue Grass Festival in mid to late June, the Italian Car Show in early June, and art shows throughout the year.
- d. Research the feasibility of hosting a motorcycle show to showcase motorcycle related businesses along the corridor.
- e. Development of a high level event that is specific to the Corridor. .
- f. Development of a schedule of events for the corridor – use larger businesses as places to hold events.
- g. Consider hiring a coordinator to organize events.
- h. Development of an events website to promote and advertise events along the corridor.
- i. Use the West Colfax Community Association's website to advertise and promote events.

V7. Advertise events and special features of the corridor. Use tools such as: community bulletin boards, message signs, call-in numbers, private signs (like advertisements at Pickerings Automotive), Bravo magazine, Sentinel, Channel 8, Regional Transportation District bus stops and light rail stations. Use highly visible City owned properties to advertise events and the corridor.

V8. Co-market with merchants along to corridor to increase the benefit their events to all merchants along the corridor.

V9. Market West Colfax Avenue. Develop a marketing plan for Colfax Avenue that outlines the area's desirability. Focus on unique businesses in the corridor, history, affordability, mix of uses, adjacent to light rail transit, etc.

V10. Review action steps on an annual basis and develop an implementation schedule for the Colfax Plan.

#### **Achieve the Vision – Mid-Range - Implement in 6 to 10 Years**

V11. Develop a "brand" for Colfax Avenue that incorporates history, transportation, gateway to the mountains, and the eclectic nature of Colfax Avenue. Let the “brand” evolve out of the positive developments and events happening along the corridor.

#### **Achieve the Vision – Long-Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

V12. Hold Lakewood on Parade on Colfax Avenue, perhaps after Marathon has been in place for several years.

## **Make it Sparkle – Short Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 to 5 Years**

- S1. Develop, increase and ensure the development of a signature style for the corridor. Use this signature style to unify the corridor and provide identity. Keep and enhance the eclectic character of the corridor. Analyze and update the existing Overlay zone District to ensure that the District addresses: architecture, landscaping, site design, parking design, parking lot location (parking lots to sides and rear of buildings), building materials (brick, glass block), development of small gathering places, decorative lighting, banners, interesting signage, provision of art, use of neon, development of water features, incorporation of history, etc.
- S2. Identify gateway locations and treatments to define and connect the corridor. Ensure that treatments are of an appropriate scale to make a statement. Use these gateway areas to create “visual rest stops” along the corridor. Use these areas to create pedestrian focus and to ensure that Colfax Avenue is not just auto oriented.
- S3. Use design and development standards to create a mix of uses within buildings. Incorporate these standards into the Colfax Overlay Zone District.
- S4. Implement a proactive review process for all façade changes along Colfax Avenue.
- S5. Educate businesses and property owners on various redevelopment strategies. Develop a “work book” or “toolkit” for people wishing to develop and redevelop along Colfax Avenue. This workbook should provide design examples and associated cost information. The workbook should include examples of potential “make over” options. The workbook should be provided in both print and web versions. Use the workbook as an asset for being a member of West Colfax Community Association.
- S6. Implement effective, consistent, and attractive buffers between Colfax and the adjacent neighborhoods. Consider the use of wrought iron fencing, landscaping, berms, etc.
- S7. Establish consistent, attractive, and safe pedestrian connections along Colfax Avenue. Implement defined areas for pedestrians to cross Colfax. Implement count-down timers and pedestrian refuge areas in medians.
- S8. Establish consistent and attractive connections between light rail stations and Colfax Avenue. Use parking structures to enhance views to and along the corridor.

S9. Maintain and enhance views and vistas along Colfax Avenue. Provide design assistance through the development review process to protect these assets.

S10. Proactively enforce maintenance and nuisance codes, ordinances, and regulations.

S11. Schedule three clean-up events of the corridor per year. Involve businesses and neighborhoods. Schedule and hold on a Saturday.

**Make it Sparkle – Mid-Range Action Steps - Implement in 6 - 10 Years**

S12. Provide incentives to achieve the architectural vision for the corridor. Provide architectural assistance to business and property owners who are redeveloping properties along the corridor.

S13. Provide incentives for the provision of art.

S14. Research alternatives related to a business inspection program.

S15. Educate business owners and property owners regarding maintenance and nuisance codes, ordinances, and regulations.

**Make it Sparkle – Long Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

None listed

### **Make it Vibrant – Short Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 to 5 Years**

- V1. Attract retail uses and restaurants to locate on Colfax Avenue. Ensure sufficient parking for uses.
- V2. Proactively seek to provide mixed income housing within the Colfax Corridor.
- V3. Throughout the corridor, share marketing efforts amongst the businesses in the corridor.
- V4. Pursue Federal New Market Tax Credits. These Credits must be used in an area that meets the Federal criteria defining “economically distressed”. The U.S. Government for use has approved the use of these credits in the year 2006 for several areas in the Denver metro area including the JCRS Shopping Center, Oak Street and Colfax Avenue, and 6<sup>th</sup> and Sheridan.

### **Make it Vibrant – Short to Mid Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 to 10 Years**

- V5. Facilitate redevelopment of sites, including but not limited to: provision of information about grant programs, tax credits, meetings with local banking institutions, connections to the Small Business Development Center, assistance with the City of Lakewood’s development review process, etc.
- V6. Proactively seek businesses that will attract and keep people in the corridor e.g., restaurants, destination shopping areas, businesses that are unique to the corridor, businesses that provide a mix of day and night activities, etc.
- V7. Identify and inventory uses along Colfax Avenue, note where compatible and complementary businesses are located and market to other related types of businesses.

### **Make it Vibrant – Mid Range Action Steps - Implement in 6 - 10 Years**

- V8. Continue to support family owned businesses and locally owned businesses. Call Fort Collins (CSU) – they have an excellent program.
- V9. Re-establish a newspaper for Colfax Avenue e.g., “Life Begins on 40”.

V10. Establish a storefront on Colfax that coordinates marketing, leasing, vision, and community involvement in the corridor.

**Make it Vibrant – Long Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

None listed.

### **Maximize Transit – Short Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 to 5 Years**

T1. Utilize the West Colfax Community Association as a clearinghouse for all planning efforts related to the implementation of light rail transit along 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This effort would supplement City planning efforts for station areas and the work of the Regional Transportation District in implementing the light rail line.

T2. Support the planning principles provided by the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panel. The principles and recommendations include building two parking structures to disperse traffic, ensuring that the bridge design is open to prevent division of the neighborhoods, developing zoning tools to encourage residential uses and mixed use development, ensuring that density is located near the light rail station, and ensuring that the single-family character of the adjacent neighborhoods is protected.

T3. Develop station area plans that address land use and design. Identify standards or an overlay district to ensure that areas around the stations are attractive and provide a desired identity for the community. These standards should ensure quality development, allow for flexibility in building design and include the ability for the structures to expand their intensity and density should the need arise in the future. The standards should allow for the provision of residential, office and commercial uses to be located above parking structures.

T4. Use the City's performance-based review process to ensure quality results at the light rail stations.

### **Maximize Transit – Mid Range Action Steps - Implement in 6 - 10 Years**

T5. Facilitate traffic flow around stations to minimize traffic and parking in residential areas. Minimize cut-through traffic in neighborhoods by ensuring direct and clear connections to transit stations. Work to ensure that adequate parking is provided for light rail stations.

T6. Develop a trolley circulator bus to connect Colfax attractions and connect Colfax with Belmar and Mills.

T7. Research the feasibility of developing a transportation management association for employers along Colfax and near the light rail stations.

**Maximize Transit – Long Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

None listed.

### **Invest Wisely – Ongoing Action Steps - Implement from Now into the Future**

I1. Use public facilities and investments to make area attractive and to provide identity along the corridor. These investments include: drainage facilities, sidewalks, decorative brick pavers, bike paths, art, statues, green space, landscaped medians, pedestrian refuge on medians, etc. Investments also include upgrading landscaping along the corridor both on the sides of the road and within medians.

I2. Continue to address drainage issues along the corridor. Work with businesses to address these issues in creative and attractive ways.

I3. Work with the Lakewood Police Department to continue their program of meeting the business owners along Colfax Avenue. Visits have been completed for the 2005 calendar year.

### **Invest Wisely – Short Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 to 5 Years**

None listed.

### **Invest Wisely – Mid Range Action Steps - Implement in 6 - 10 Years**

I4. Analyze parking needs throughout the corridor. Include the analysis of creating a parking district. Where parking is deficient, use vacant lots to provide shared parking. Ensure that there are signs along the corridor to direct people to parking areas.

I5. Work with the Lakewood Police Department to increase use of bicycle patrols.

### **Invest Wisely – Long Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

I6. Implement creative and environmentally friendly lighting and streetlights that are pedestrian friendly and provide enhanced identity for the corridor.

I7. Research the feasibility of establishing a police substation on the corridor.

### **Value History – Ongoing Action Steps - Implement from Now into the Future**

H1. Incorporate history and the preservation of historical elements into the identity of Colfax Avenue by incorporating these elements into the Colfax Overlay Zone District and any future design standards for the area.

H2. Appoint a historical committee to be responsible for working with property owners to preserve and enhance historical aspects of the corridor. Currently, neighborhoods are working with City of Lakewood's Historical Committee, the Colorado State Historical Society, and the West Colfax Community Association to inventory and protect historical assets.

H3. Implement a series of historical markers throughout the corridor. Focus on the history of transportation, retail, and agriculture.

H4. Along and adjacent Colfax Avenue, historical assets should be inventoried and mapped. This inventory can then be used in marketing efforts for the corridor and to protect the assets as the corridor continues to grow and evolve.

H5. Continue to preserve, enhance, and revitalize neighborhoods.

### **Value History – Short Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 – 5 Years**

H6. Conduct historical walking tours of neighborhoods. Some suggestions include ghost tours and tours of unique aspects of the areas.

### **Value History – Mid Range Action Steps - Implement in 6 - 10 Years**

None listed.

### **Value History – Long Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

None listed.

### **Get the Zoning Mix Right – Short Range Action Steps - Implement in 1 – 5 Years**

M1. Develop zoning tools and standards to encourage and allow creative, flexible, mixed-use developments. Zoning tools should:

- encourage the provision of a mix of housing types and densities.
- allow for the provision of housing above retail, office and parking garages.
- ensure quality design.
- ensure that development fits with the adjacent neighborhoods.

M2. Use the City’s performance-based review process to ensure quality results along the corridor and to ensure that developments complement adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Get the Zoning Mix Right – Mid Range Action Steps - Implement in 6 - 10 Years**

None listed.

### **Get the Zoning Mix Right – Long Range Action Steps - Implement in 10+ Years**

M3. Provide incentives for the rehabilitation of multi-family housing units that are in proximity to light rail stations.