LIVE. WORK. PLAY.
The Downtown Area Plan: 5 Years Later

a report by
The 2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program Class
November 15, 2012

On behalf of the 2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program class, it is our pleasure to present our program report, The Downtown Area Plan: Five Years Later.

The Downtown Denver Leadership Program is intended to engage emerging leaders by familiarizing them with Downtown Denver; in this case, specifically, the Denver Downtown Area Plan, a guiding document published by the Downtown Denver Partnership and the City and County of Denver in 2007.

This report is the product of a nine-month Leadership Program project undertaken by our class to assess the current state of the Downtown Area Plan. Through our research, guest presentations, stakeholder interviews and community and class surveys, we have developed an evaluation of the Plan strategies and have provided suggestions for further refinement and progress moving forward.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our assessment and we thank you for taking the time to read our evaluation of the 2007 Downtown Area Plan.

Sincerely,

Brianna Borin  
2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program  
Class Trustee

Lisa Lorman  
2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program  
Report Committee Co-Chair

Scott Anderson  
2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program  
Report Committee Co-Chair
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................... 4

2. Downtown Area Plan Strategy A – A Prosperous City ........................................... 7

3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B – A Walkable City ............................................. 17

4. Downtown Area Plan Strategy C – A Diverse City ............................................... 28

5. Downtown Area Plan Strategy D – A Distinctive City ......................................... 32

6. Downtown Area Plan Strategy E – A Green City .................................................. 37

7. Downtown Area Plan District Strategies ............................................................. 43

8. Downtown Denver Leadership Program Class of 2012 - Call to Action ............... 49

9. Thank You ........................................................................................................... 50

10. Appendix ........................................................................................................... 51

    a. Class Roster .................................................................................................... 51

    b. Schedule / List of Guest Speakers ............................................................... 52

    c. List of Stakeholder Interviewees ................................................................. 53

    d. Class Survey Results ................................................................................... 54
PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND GOALS


Our goal as a class was to summarize the progress of the Plan from 2007 through 2012, indicating successes, setbacks, partial completions and next steps, all from our perspective as emerging leaders in the Downtown Denver business community.

The subjective and expansive nature of a project like this should not be ignored, and we worked to be thorough and constructive with our criticism of incomplete strategies, as well as celebratory and generous with our praise of successful projects.

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN SUMMARY

The DAP takes a broad look at the Downtown area and lists the issues to be addressed over a 20-year timeline. These issues are organized by all-encompassing strategies/goals for Denver, which are elaborated upon in more specific policies, projects and programs to achieve the larger goals.

These broad strategies are: A Prosperous City, A Walkable City, A Diverse City, A Distinctive City, and A Green City. A sixth section was added to these strategies to address issues within each separate neighborhood or district in Denver; this section we titled District Strategies. The DAP also addresses seven transformative projects - initiatives identified as the most crucial to the advancement of Downtown. These projects are: Energizing the Commercial Core, Building on Transit, Grand Boulevards, Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods, Connecting Auraria, Downtown’s New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square, and A Rejuvenated Civic Center.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The first step in our assessment was a general “introduction” to Denver via a guided bus tour, and we thank Shawn Snow from Denver History Tours for conducting and narrating that excursion. At each subsequent month’s session, guest speakers from the Downtown business community, such as Tracy Huggins from the Denver Urban Renewal Authority; Brad Buchanan from RNL and the Denver Planning Board; Tom Clark from the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation; John Desmond from the Downtown Denver Partnership; and several others (see Appendix B for a full list) presented a topic about Denver to our class.

These presentations about the inner workings and the advancement of Downtown Denver helped to frame our thinking as a group, giving us a platform from which to do initial research about the status of each of the DAP strategies and goals. This initial research was
meant to build a general foundation about plans and studies developed at the city level.

The next step was to formulate a list of stakeholders, generated from the original DAP Steering and Technical Committees, as well as from current leaders of neighborhood associations, Denver City Council members, City and County of Denver employees, and Downtown business owners (see Appendix C). Each stakeholder was interviewed by a small team from the class, with emphasis on discussing the achievements of the DAP and suggestions from the stakeholder’s point of view about achieving the Plan’s goals.

The compilation of the information from the stakeholders, approximately 80 individuals in total, as well as the filtering and ordering of that information, was pulled together by several key members of the class to organize the production of the report and presentation.

HOW THIS REPORT IS ORGANIZED

This report is organized by each broad goal for Downtown’s development so that it may be read in its entirety or referenced by section, as appropriate. The final chapters convey our call to action, as well as our thanks and appendices.
2007 Goal: Ensure Downtown’s continued primacy as the business center of the region and establish its role as a leader in the 21st century global economy. Add 35,000 new jobs by 2027.

What makes a city great is its level of business activity, as well as the number of individuals wanting to live, work and recreate there. Denver is becoming that city! Coupled with Denver’s proximity to the mountains and its outstanding climate, people continue to migrate to Colorado and, more specifically, to Denver.

Denver has benefited by having a growing population and an educated workforce. Denver is the top city to which 25-34 year olds are moving (1); it is the top city where people want to live (2); it is third among the top U.S. growth cities for relocating families (3); and it is the fifth-best city for young adults (4).

Businesses seek to locate in cities with a growing population and a business-friendly environment. Companies are seeking cities and states with low tax rates, affordable rents, a diverse array of employee housing, good transportation infrastructure, an educated workforce and great local schools. To that end, the corporate income tax rate in Colorado is among the lowest in the nation at 4.63% - ranked sixth by the Tax Foundation (5). Colorado was rated the fifth-best state to do business in by CNBC (6) and the third-best state for economic competitiveness (7).

Denver has done well in respect to transportation. With the addition of the Regional Transportation District’s (RTD) FasTracks, Downtown Denver has expanded its reach into the neighboring communities. There is much excitement surrounding the East Line from Denver Union Station to Denver International Airport, which will be operational in 2016. The redevelopment of Denver Union Station as the central hub for FasTracks is reinforcing Downtown’s position as a regional and metro transit center (see breakout section in Chapter 3). Additionally, Denver B-cycle is the first large scale municipal bike sharing program in the United States, and according to the 2011 Downtown Denver Commuter Survey over half of Downtown Denver commuters use alternative modes of transportation to get to work.

As a result, Denver has been successful in recruiting new companies to the Downtown area, such as DaVita, Intrawest and Pentax Imaging. Local, regional and state officials are not, however, relying on recruiting companies to grow Denver’s business community. Startup Colorado, for example, is a new regional initiative to increase the entrepreneurial spirit across Colorado’s Front Range. The goal is to multiply connections among entrepreneurs and mentors, to improve access to entrepreneurial education and to build a more vibrant entrepreneurial community. The Department of Commerce’s decision to locate the new satellite U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Downtown Denver will reinforce Denver’s position as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurism in the region. Denver needs to continue to focus on jobs of the future in industries such as high tech, biotech and alternative energy, and continue to convene key public and private sector partners to identify factors and trends impacting businesses, employees, customers and residents in Downtown Denver.
Denver also continues to grow as a hub for arts and culture, which are key economic drivers. The Denver Performing Arts Complex, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, Downtown festivals and events, and numerous other activities have kept Denver moving in the right direction, attracting people and businesses to Downtown. Civic, government and business leaders use these cultural resources to create a brand identity for Downtown Denver. Within the next few months, the Downtown Denver Partnership intends to highlight the events, people, and businesses of Denver to further develop Denver’s brand identity by launching a multimedia platform which will capture and promote the “micro stories” of Denver innovators, entrepreneurs, artistic leaders and those who are “pushing the envelope” in their respective business or cultural fields. The overall vision is to promote Denver as the “Urban Center of the Rocky Mountain West.”

Implementing the Downtown Area Plan’s vision and leveraging the variety of amenities, multi-modal transportation infrastructure, walkable urban neighborhoods, innovative business climate and emerging green economy to entice the nation’s future workforce will continue to bring businesses and jobs to Denver.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

• Continue to promote Denver’s position as the source for a talented, educated workforce.
• Continue to promote Denver’s brand as the “Urban Center of the Rocky Mountain West.”
2. Downtown Area Plan Strategy A: A Prosperous City

A2 - ENERGIZING THE COMMERCIAL CORE – TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT

2007 Goal: Invigorate the Commercial Core by enhancing the pedestrian and transit experiences and creating an economically thriving district for business, retail and tourism.

The 16th Street Mall currently serves as the main artery of Downtown Denver. Residents, employees and visitors use the Mall shuttle to travel the length of Downtown. However, in the next few years the Downtown Denver Circulator (DDC) will increase and improve the pedestrian and transit experience. The DDC will be a part of FasTracks, RTD’s voter-approved comprehensive plan to expand quality transit service in the Metro Denver region. The Circulator is a high-frequency bus service that will connect passengers from Denver Union Station (DUS) to Civic Center (traveling along 18th and 19th Streets). DUS will serve as the major transportation hub of Downtown Denver with all of the FasTracks rapid transit lines converging there. The DDC will accommodate the increase in Downtown transit trips from passengers brought in on the new FasTracks lines, and final design and construction is slated to begin in 2013. The DDC will open to the public in 2014, concurrent with the opening of the underground bus facility at Denver Union Station.

The Denver Theatre District (DTD) is a not-for-profit entity created to enhance Downtown Denver through public art investment, as well as city and regional art and cultural programs. The DTD extends from the 16th Street Mall and Arapahoe Street to Speer Boulevard; Speer Boulevard to Welton Street; Welton Street to 14th Street; 14th Street to Champa Street; and Champa Street to the 16th Street Mall. Theatre District signage and activation updates have been completed in order to stimulate economic activity and promote the arts within the DTD’s geographic boundaries.

In November of 2009, 14th Street property owners and electors voted to contribute $4 million to the overall $14 million cost of a large-scale streetscape project through the formation of a general improvement district. This project has recently been successfully completed. Through this public-private initiative, sidewalks were expanded to encourage outdoor seating and ground floor shopping and dining uses that bolster the pedestrian experience on 14th Street (see breakout section on 14th Street Initiative).

Retail businesses serving the needs of Downtown residents, visitors and employees are largely concentrated along the 16th Street Mall. One goal in the 2007 Downtown Area Plan is to strengthen the vitality of the 16th Street Mall. Due to efforts by both the public and private sectors, Downtown Denver was selected as a location for Colorado’s first H&M flagship store, an enormous win for the Downtown retail community. The 16th Street Mall needs to continue to serve as a destination for employees, residents and visitors, providing unique dining, entertainment and shopping experiences. When the Downtown Circulator comes online, more of the Downtown area will be accessible to visitors, workers and residents. The Circulator will also promote additional development and investment on the “named streets” between 14th and 16th Streets.

Photo: Larry Laszlo, CoMedia
SUCCESS STORY:
14TH STREET INITIATIVE – “AMBASSADOR STREET”

With connections to the Colorado Convention Center, the Denver Performing Arts Complex and six Downtown hotels, 14th Street is the front door to many visitors experiencing Denver for the first time. As a part of the 14th Street Initiative, this newly transformed public realm invites visitors to walk, bike, dine and experience Downtown Denver.

The 14th Street Initiative represents significant sidewalk and streetscape enhancements spanning the twelve blocks between Market Street and Colfax Avenue. The emphasis on wider sidewalks has encouraged the creation of sidewalk cafes and better connections with street-level retail. A diversity of sidewalk materials, granite seating, planters and over 200 trees were added in order to enhance the pedestrian experience and activate the public space. Expanded intersection corners allow rapid and safe pedestrian crossings, and a new dedicated bicycle lane connects the Cherry Creek Trail and Civic Center Park, allowing for better connectivity for commuter and recreational bicycle transit. New pedestrian lighting, accent lighting and way-finding monuments maintain the elegance and grandness of the street, welcoming and guiding Downtown visitors. Sponsored by the Downtown Denver Partnership and the City and County of Denver, the 14th Street Initiative defined the vision of this vibrant Downtown corridor beginning in 2005, the Better Denver Bond Program funded $10 million of this project in 2007 and two years later 14th Street property owners voted to contribute an additional $4 million to the project through the creation of the 14th Street General Improvement District. Construction of this monumental project began in October 2010, and was successfully completed in the summer of 2012.

SUCCESS ELEMENTS:
• “Ambassador Street” – Welcoming and connecting visitors to an elegant and outdoor Downtown.
• Vibrant Downtown corridor – Complimenting the arts and entertainment district with modern streetscape.
• Public Private Partnership – Collaborating and committing to transformative progress.
• Increased transit options – Connecting bicycle commuters to Downtown.
• Revitalized public realm – Activating the pedestrian experience by adding street landscaping and trees.
• Enhanced retail environment – Encouraging street-level retail with outdoor connections.

STAKEHOLDER QUOTES:
• “Exciting transformation of a central spine”
• “Public infrastructure encouraging private investment”
• “Keeping development and progress happening”
• “A big step in the right direction”
• “A huge success”
• “Pulling people downtown”
• “A model for public realm design”
• “Adding to the revitalization of downtown”
A3 – COMPREHENSIVE RETAIL STRATEGY

2007 Goal: Improve Downtown’s overall economic vitality by restoring the area as an important retail center for an expanding residential, workforce and visitor customer base. Add approximately 1.5 million square feet of diverse retail uses that serve these customers throughout the plan area by 2027.

The main components of achieving the goals for a comprehensive retail strategy involve reinforcing existing and developing new retail clusters; building a public market; creating and implementing a marketing plan to promote Downtown Denver’s retail businesses; and encouraging neighborhood-serving retail in every district.

Currently, Denver’s Office of Economic Development has a retail study and analysis under consideration which will help to provide a foundation for retail strategies moving forward. The 16th Street Mall continues to serve as the spine of Downtown Denver and is the most sought after address for retailers and restaurants. Building from that strength, the Downtown Denver Partnership developed a multi-phase retail development plan with the goal of enhancing and diversifying the retail mix in the Central Business District. As part of that plan, the Partnership conducted an analysis that established a trade area and identified prospective retailers that would be attracted to Downtown Denver’s demographics and activity drivers. The Partnership is in the process of actively recruiting the identified retailers by highlighting existing and potentially new retail clusters. Streetscape projects completed along California and 14th Streets have created more desirable retail storefronts and have set the stage for new retail clusters in the future. In addition, the blocks of the 16th Street Mall between Welton and Curtis Streets, considered the “core” of the Mall, have had significant resources invested in them over the past five years with the aim of activating the core and supporting surrounding retailers. In the spring of 2011, the Marketplace on the Mall program was launched with the placement of eight retail merchandising units. These semi-permanent structures were the first of their kind in the Mall’s history.

A feasibility analysis was completed in September of 2010 to determine the viability of a public market in Downtown Denver. The findings of this analysis determined that a public market would be feasible under certain circumstances. While Downtown residents and workers may be in favor of such an idea, a suitably-sized space to accommodate such a market has yet to be identified. Additionally, this project would require significant investment and ongoing capital to ensure local vendors would be able to provide their goods at a reasonable cost. Concepts are still under consideration, and further research and funding will be necessary.

Over the past five years a number of approaches have been attempted to promote and market Downtown retail businesses. Finding an effective overall strategy has proven to be challenging given the wide variety of retailers and retail centers throughout Downtown Denver. In 2010, the Downtown Denver Partnership created “Winter in the City” to promote events and encourage shopping during the holiday season. This initiative advertises and markets the events and services that Downtown offers to residents, visitors and employees. In addition, a new consumer marketing initiative is currently being developed by the Downtown Denver Partnership with the goal of promoting Downtown retailers and increasing retail sales.
Parking is critical to neighborhood retail establishments, as is the flow of traffic on one-way streets through Downtown. As Denver continues to seek out retail tenants and anchors, studying the conversion of one-way traffic to two-way traffic through Downtown will be an important piece for retailers looking at potential traffic flows, parking strategies, and pedestrian realm streetscape improvements near their stores. In 2010, the City and County of Denver formally approved the first major overhaul to its zoning code since the 1950s, and as part of that process, reduced or eliminated parking requirements were considered in some of Denver’s neighborhoods. Many of the zone districts in Downtown and the Downtown neighborhoods underwent only minor refinements and renaming as part of the zoning code update. Those zone districts that have parking requirements have yet to be reviewed or studied for necessary improvements.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Recruit national, first-to-market retailers and continue to promote incubation of regional and local retailers using the 16th Street Mall as the catalyst.
- Continue improvements to 16th Street Mall streetscape.
- Study the conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets as it relates to retail tenants and large retail anchors.

**A4 – CLEAN AND SAFE**

**2007 Goal:** Downtown Denver remains an environment where people feel safe and the streets and sidewalks are clean, well-maintained and well-lit - basic underpinnings of an enjoyable urban experience for residents, workers and visitors.

The four components of the plan to address issues of cleanliness and safety include the following strategies: implement Denver’s Road Home; strengthen regulatory requirements for building, sidewalk and property maintenance; expand clean and safe programs, including policing, ambassador and sidewalk washing beyond the Business Improvement District boundaries; and install more uniform and consistent lighting of sidewalks, parks and open spaces.

Seven years into the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, Denver’s Road Home has developed 2,653 new affordable housing units; exceeded its goal of 942 units of housing for the chronically homeless (defined as having no habitation for one year or more); and prevented 5,871 families/individuals from becoming homeless through eviction with outreach services. Also, the Denver’s Road Home Employment Sub Committee helped 5,253 homeless people obtain full or part-time employment (8).

Denver’s Road Home started very strong, but because of the recent downturn in the economy its momentum has slowed, coinciding with decreasing private donations and a decline in public funding (85% public and 15% private). Over the past seven years, the program has collected an average of $7.5 million per year.
In May 2012, the Denver City Council approved an Unauthorized Camping Ordinance in an effort to discourage people from camping in public rights-of-way. The intended outcome was to get homeless people into much needed services, and it would appear that the new policy is working as homeless camps have essentially disappeared. However, the need for shelter beds, already at or above capacity, has increased. An October 10, 2012, Denver Post article said that the city may announce a new shelter for the winter months, and efforts are being made to open the city’s first 24-hour homeless drop-in shelter (9).

Although there is a need for more homeless shelters, communities tend to oppose these shelters being built in or near their neighborhoods. Because of this, the organizations that serve the homeless community struggle to expand their reach and improve their facilities. Denver might consider using Dallas’ Bridge Shelter as a model for future expansion. Bridge is visually appealing and the design promotes safety within its walls for the homeless community. Such an approach would be a benefit to both the homeless and neighborhood communities (10).

Downtown has seen progress in improving building, sidewalk and property maintenance in the past five years. For example, property owners voted in favor of creating the 14th Street General Improvement District to finance $4 million for streetscape improvements. The Downtown Denver Partnership and Downtown stakeholders completed a second block of the California Street streetscape project to reinforce the connection between the Convention Center and the 16th Street Mall, and continue efforts to improve the 16th Street Mall by renovating its pavers, electrical systems and infrastructure. The Business Improvement District estimates that approximately $60 to $65 million dollars is needed to achieve the improvement goals established for the Mall.

Several Downtown stakeholders were interviewed regarding the cleanliness and safety of Downtown, and while overall the stakeholders feel that Downtown is clean and safe, they mention that improvements could still be made. The Lower Downtown area (LoDo) is a good example of a district that has made great strides, but still faces real or perceived issues of safety. With many bars, night clubs and restaurants, LoDo caters in part to the late night scene, and public safety and cleanliness are ever-present issues. Fortunately, late night incidents have declined over the past few years because of efforts by LoDo merchants and the Denver Police Department. Some stakeholders also feel that the layout and design of certain blocks along the 16th Street Mall encourage homeless individuals to congregate, often times creating a distraction or a nuisance to visitors, residents and employees.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus on jobs of the future, such as high tech, biotech, alternative energy and new startup ventures.
- Promote more Downtown events and companies in an effort to create a distinctive brand.
- Continue to attract destination-type retailers and restaurants.
- Initiate marketing efforts for Denver’s Road Home.
References:
2. Harris Poll, 2011
5. Tax Foundation, 2012
6. CNBC, 2012
7. Beacon Hill Institute, 2012

Additional References:
www.advancecolorado.com
www.downtowndenver.com
www.rtd-fastracks.com/dus_10
www.denvertheatredistrict.com/

Interviewees:
Holly Barrett – LoDo District
Kelly Brough – Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
Tom Clark – Denver Metro Economic Development
Josh Comfort – Real Estate Development Services
Josh Davies – LoDo Neighborhood Association
Chris Frampton – East West Urban Management
Laurie Helmick – Luxe Salon
Cassie Milestone – Downtown Denver Partnership
Bennie Milliner – Denver’s Road Home
Mark Sidell – Gart Properties
Joe Vostrejs – Larimer Associates
Elbra Wedgeworth – Denver Health
Barb Weiske – Auraria Higher Education Center
DENVER AREA PLAN – ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

“The people of this region have the capacity, the skills and the spirit to reduce the pain of this recession and find unexpected opportunity in tough times.”

- Mayor Hickenlooper, January 2010

When the Downtown Area Plan was completed in July of 2007, the unemployment rate in the United States was under five percent, median prices for homes were at all-time highs and stocks were within months of trading at record highs as the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) soared toward 14,000 points in October 2007. Although national foreclosure rates were increasing during that year, the phrases “sub-prime”, “too big to fail” and “systemic risk” did not enter the everyday lexicon until well into 2008. Within two years, the unemployment rate spiked to 10%, housing prices plummeted, foreclosure rates dramatically increased and the DJIA declined to less than 6,600, constituting more than a 50% reduction in stock market value. Although this boom and bust cycle has been a recurrent theme throughout the history of capitalism, the Great Recession and the ensuing sluggish recovery were discussed in almost every stakeholder interview, and necessitate more consideration within the current and future evaluations of the Downtown Area Plan.

THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT RECESSION ON DENVER

Unfortunately, the City and County of Denver was not spared by this devastating financial crisis. At the low point during the preceding five years, over 89,000 jobs were lost in Metro Denver, and over 19,000 in just the City and County of Denver, as the unemployment rate trended along with the broader U.S. job market (see Chart 1). Foreclosure rates in Denver doubled in 2007 from previous annual averages (see Chart 2) which, in turn, contributed to a decline in Denver property tax revenues of over 20%, or $16,500,000 from 2007 to 2008 (see Chart 3). Finally, the city’s largest source of revenue - sales and use tax - decreased by over 7.5% or $33,750,000, from 2008 to 2009 (see Chart 4). Mayor Hickenlooper cited these unprecedented challenges in his annual budget message in...
January 2010 by stating “Our city has never experienced the kind of economic downturn we have seen in the past year…we are experiencing the worst drop in city revenue since 1933.” As the entire U.S. banking system scrambles to deleverage and recapitalize, and as homeowners struggle to meet their personal mortgage obligations and reduce their monthly expenses, Denver has likewise been covering a budget deficit for four consecutive years that has forced leaders to reconsider all facets of government spending. As a result of these revenue shortfalls, Denver has closed a combined budget deficit of over $440,000,000 during the last four years with painful financial cutbacks and ongoing sacrifices.

Weakened economic conditions also added pressure on tenants in the Metro Denver office market. Quarterly direct office vacancy rates rose to 13.6% in mid-2009, while average lease rates per square foot dropped below $20 in late 2010(2). Similarly, the prevailing economic headwinds caused more than a 10% decline in per capita personal income for Denver employees from 2008 to 2009(3).

**FINANCIAL RECOVERY**

While the lumbering U.S. recovery has yet to fire on all cylinders, the financial markets have rebounded strongly with the DJIA now approaching an all-time high of 14,100, reached in October of 2007(1). Although Denver’s and the nation’s job markets have not recovered to pre-recession levels, the trend, albeit slow, is one of job growth and reemployment. Likewise, the housing markets appear to be recovering from their lows, both locally and nationally. Foreclosure rates have returned to their pre-crisis levels and U.S. housing prices reported a 2.2% quarterly increase in June of 2012, the largest gain since late 2005(4).

Rebounding trends are also beginning to appear for Metro Denver’s office market, with vacancy rates falling to as low as 12.2% and average lease rates per square foot rising back to $20 according to the most recent second quarter 2012 report(2). Likewise, per capita personal income figures for Denver are recovering from their lows, though still far below their highs prior to the Great Recession.

While Denver’s sales and use tax revenues have yet to surpass levels reached in 2007, the trend is improving. Denver’s leaders have positioned the city to capitalize on future growth opportunities by managing the budget deficits without severely depleting reserves, allowing Denver to maintain a AAA credit rating.

**DENVER PIONEERS**

As a direct result of the Great Recession, some of the ambitions spelled out in the 2007 Downtown Area Plan have been hindered or stalled due to the prevailing economic constraints. However, the recent development successes of 14th Street and Denver Union Station have demonstrated Denver’s resilience in the face of economic adversity.

Often, while interviewing stakeholders in evaluation of the 2007 Downtown Area Plan, the term “pioneer” was used when referring to Denver residents, employees and leaders. During the Depression of 1893, after silver prices collapsed, causing the ranks of Denver’s unemployed to swell, it took a pioneering spirit for the city to maintain construction efforts on the Capitol building. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, as U.S. unemployment surpassed 25% and gross domestic product fell by over 30%(1), it took a pioneering spirit from city leaders to exploit the opportunity of the Civilian Conservation Corps and build Red Rocks Amphitheatre. It is this same pioneering spirit, a steely resolve to overcome our most recent economic barriers, which has already proven effective and will continue to be necessary as we work toward accomplishing the goals within the 2007 Downtown Area Plan.

**Sources:**

1. Bloomberg  
2. CoStar Realty Information, Inc.  
3. US Department of Commerce, BEA  
4. S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Indices  
5. FDIC
B1 – AN OUTSTANDING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

2007 Goal: Make every street safe, comfortable and attractive for pedestrians as recommended in the Downtown Denver Pedestrian Master Plan.

The goal set in 2007, to create an outstanding pedestrian environment, has not yet been fully realized, with many of the facets of that goal still in progress. The original goal sought the implementation of several strategies to improve the pedestrian experience throughout Downtown, including creating pedestrian priority zones, improving ground floor uses along streets to make more pedestrian-friendly and attractive building frontages, drafting landscape requirements to aesthetically improve surface parking lots, enhancing existing and creating new connections between Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, implementing a comprehensive wayfinding system to guide pedestrian traffic, and converting selected one-way streets into two-way streets.

Although not every aspect of the 2007 goal has been achieved, there are numerous successes to highlight.

First, very popular pedestrian connections between Downtown’s Commercial Core and the Highland neighborhood through the Central Platte Valley, and to the Ballpark Neighborhood through Lower Downtown, have been established. The extension of the 16th Street “spine”, complete with sculptural spanning bridges, public art and comfortably-scaled walkways, has been very successful in connecting to the Highland neighborhood. These improvements have spurred recent growth in the Lower Highland, including new bars, restaurants and residential development.

Next, the transformation of 14th Street into the Ambassador Street has been completed and is an enormous success (see breakout section in Chapter 1). The streetscape improvements along California Street are a similar success. Both of these projects utilize flower, shrub and tree planting; paving; lighting; ground-floor frontage and multi-modal elements to create comfortable, pedestrian-scaled streetscapes. They are precedents that the city should follow as it improves the remainder of the numbered and named streets in Downtown Denver.

Finally, the 16th Street Mall, which recently celebrated its thirtieth anniversary, is set to undergo numerous improvements. Approximately $10 million worth of improvements along the Mall will enhance the pedestrian experience in the Commercial Core (1).

Despite these successes, there is still much work to be done to increase the safety, comfort and aesthetic quality of the pedestrian experience in Downtown Denver. For example, cohesive landscape requirements for the surface lots throughout Denver have not yet been implemented. Maintaining efficiencies in space counts for surface parking lot owners limits the ability to address improvements, and the surface lots sprinkled throughout Downtown create a patchwork of inconsistency in the pedestrian experience. Too few safe pedestrian connections to Arapahoe Square, as well as to the Golden Triangle, the Auraria Campus, and Capitol Hill, are a concern that stakeholders mentioned frequently. The Grand Boulevards of Speer Boulevard, Lincoln Street, Broadway and Colfax Avenue present significant challenges due to the perceived and real physical barriers they create between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. And, despite the successes of the new California Street and 14th Street districts in creating their own identity, yet another system of signage and
wayfinding in Downtown must now be negotiated. This is an indication that the city should consider making implementation of a single, comprehensive, consistent signage system at the pedestrian level a priority.

Economic and budgetary challenges that began in 2008 have created a headwind to capital improvements in pedestrian rights-of-way throughout Denver. Budgetary shortfalls of nearly $450 million have stalled many projects, including plans for streetscape improvements, enhanced pedestrian connections, and the development and installation of signage and wayfinding strategies. These economic challenges also have negatively impacted development of surface parking lots and other vacant properties, improvements that could also enhance the pedestrian experience.

The silver lining, however, is that pedestrians in Downtown have begun to change their use of Downtown streets and sidewalks, most prominently exemplified by utilization of alternative modes of transportation during the recession. Piep van Heuven at Bike Denver drew an interesting conclusion regarding the state of the economy and the increased use of bicycles for transportation; simply stated that the recession has led to a decrease in the use of automobiles, which aligns with the goal of enhancing Denver’s pedestrian environment. As people attempt to save money on high fuel costs, parking and automobile maintenance, the use of bicycles and walking has become more popular, as has utilizing RTD’s bus and light rail systems.

So what are the next steps? What needs to happen in order to continue to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment in Downtown Denver? Several stakeholders offered that the city should consider changing one-way streets to two-way streets, and that creating a task force or initiative to issue an RFP for a feasibility study may be an option to begin this process. This would be one step toward improving both on-street parking strategies and the pedestrian realm as a whole. Completions of two-way street conversions in the Golden Triangle area (on Cherokee and Delaware Streets) may serve as a precedent for study, especially for pedestrian movement, traffic flows and on-street parking in a Downtown-adjacent context.

With regard to developing comprehensive signage and wayfinding, these projects cannot move forward without the necessary funding. Nonetheless, designs for such a system could be identified through a prize-based, open competition that recognizes the best designs. Designers, design firms and students could participate to help generate interest in the process. In light of the current budgetary shortfalls, other streetscape improvements may need to be addressed through select public-private partnerships, similar to the partnership that funded the 14th Street initiative, whose improvements to street frontage has created substantial private benefits.

Finally, developing a focused, multi-modal strategy for the larger street corridors surrounding Downtown would strengthen connections to surrounding neighborhoods. Developing a strategy based solely on a pedestrian/cyclist perspective that incorporates how pedestrians and cyclists use and cross these streets may influence how the city manages both automobiles and pedestrians on these larger streets.
3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B: Walkable City

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Solicit designs for a comprehensive wayfinding strategy, as well as for the physical designs of signage, through a design competition.
- Complete a study of conversion of Downtown’s one-way streets to two-way streets, with specific emphasis on the cohesion of the pedestrian realm.
- Study the pedestrian experience, from a safety, aesthetic and spatial point of view, with regard to surface parking lots. Advocate for trees and small landscape islands. Speak with parking lot owners about art installation programs to help with the aesthetic appeal ie: http://onasphalt.com/about/index.html (2).
- Initiate a comprehensive study of Speer Boulevard, Auraria Parkway, Colfax Avenue, Broadway, and Lincoln Street to strengthen the pedestrian connection to adjacent neighborhoods.

B2 – BUILDING ON TRANSIT – TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT

2007 Goal: Reinforce Downtown as the region’s largest and most convenient transit district with local, regional, statewide and national connections.

Since 2007, the achievements within the transformative Building on Transit goal were certainly dynamic, with a high level of success in the face of severe economic challenges.

The most high-profile regional transportation accomplishments are the Denver Union Station and FasTracks projects (see breakout section). The Denver Union Station redevelopment continues to transform Downtown into a progressive, transit-centered hub. It includes eight at-grade passenger rail tracks accommodating an expanded RTD light rail commuter rail system, a consolidated and updated underground Regional Bus Facility, renovations to the Historic Train Hall and improved public plaza spaces connecting the project with the rest of Downtown (3). Standing alone, these improvements would be impressive, but there is much more to come to the 19.8-acre site. Real estate development spurred by the transit project has been explosive, as well. The highlight to date has been the relocation of the world headquarters for DaVita, a Fortune 500 company, to the Denver Union Station district (4).

While the FasTracks project has been successful, it has run into challenges along the way, including a 50% reduction in revenues that has slowed RTD’s initiative to provide 122 miles of new commuter rail and light rail. The FasTracks project also provides 18 miles of Bus Rapid Transit and enhanced parking services at Park-n-Ride stations (5).

In addition to Denver Union Station and FasTracks, the arrival of car-share services such as eGo Carshare (6), a local non-profit organization, and Occasionalcar, has been well received throughout the metro area. A peer-to-peer car-share program called Relay Rides (7) also has expanded to Denver, offering car owners a chance to rent their cars when not in use. Occasional Car provides thirty cars at a rate of $4.99 per hour (along with application and small monthly membership fees) (8), and is adding fifty members every month, according to Denver’s Channel 7 News (9). These alternative automobile transit options are affordable for short and long trips, and may help to entice residents to live Downtown. These car-sharing programs, similar to bicycle-sharing programs, are gaining popularity in cities across the country, especially as more people reside in city centers.
3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B: Walkable City

Such monumental successes have been tempered by other challenges, however. For example, Metro Denver’s focus on large regional transit systems has meant that some aspects of the Building on Transit goal have been neglected. The draw of capital and attention away from local transit studies and away from investment in Civic Center Station on the east side of Downtown has left the transit spine through Denver unevenly weighted toward Denver Union Station on the west side. Small-scale transit-oriented projects that lack implementation and momentum include the cross-town circulators. While Denver’s Public Works Department initiated a feasibility study on the Colfax Avenue Corridor, which investigated a “modern streetcar” system (10), studies for other circulators along Broadway or Speer Boulevard should be addressed as part of a multi-modal study of the future of the grand boulevards. A cross-town circulator, moving perpendicular to the 16th Street Mall and connecting the Auraria Campus and the Ballpark Neighborhood, has been studied, but delivery of these studies and data, as well as finding sources of funding for future projects, has been challenging. A similar streetcar proposal has been studied for the Welton Street Corridor through to Downing Street as part of the Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan, but should include spurs to better connect the Auraria Higher Education Center and Civic Center Station (11).

The future of Civic Center Station should be studied in parallel with the future of Civic Center Park, where changes in the Park’s programming and event focus may shed some light on future use of the station itself. Perhaps the station could be used as a streetcar hub rather than solely as a bus station. Studying such an option could possibly be a good opportunity for RTD, in conjunction with the city of Denver, to look for private investment in redevelopment of the Civic Center Station area.

Stakeholders also believe that studies already undertaken at the city and regional level should be combined with local and neighborhood circulation studies to anticipate commuters’ needs as they attempt to travel to and from Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. RTD could use its smart cards to collect extensive data on ridership for future regression analysis – analyzing and isolating data such as age, ethnicity, gender, average distance travelled and average time for trips, as well as combinations of transit modes (bus, rail, pedestrian and bicycle). Digital Urban, a London-based spatial analysis group, utilized similar data to gather, organize and visualize information about the London Underground system. Such metrics, combined with Downtown Denver Partnership commuter surveys, smart phone tracking, GPS and GIS tracking, as well as tracking the use of bicycle-sharing and car-sharing programs, could help to inform decisions about future planning efforts (12).

Finally, further incentivizing the use of car-share programs for Downtown residents to use for local and regional trips (to the mountains, for instance) through social media and social discount sites may help to increase ridership among these companies.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

• Study the future of Civic Center Park in tandem with the future of Civic Center Station.
• Utilize data driven from RTD EcoPass users, car-share programs and bike-share programs to generate information for analysis of current and future transit needs.
• Further incentivize people to combine car-pooling with car-sharing by offering discounts for multiple person ridership.
SUCCESS STORY:
DENVER UNION STATION

New wayfinding signage at the light rail station at 17th and Chestnut Streets defines the surrounding six city blocks as the “Union Station Transit Center.” With connections to light rail, regional bus transit, the 16th Street Mall shuttle, the Downtown Denver Circulator, commuter rail and Amtrak, Denver Union Station will be the epicenter of regional transit for Downtown Denver.

Denver Union Station serves as the hub of the RTD FasTracks program, a multi-modal transit vision for the entire Denver metropolitan area. FasTracks was approved by voters in November 2004, and includes 122 miles of rail rapid transit, 18 miles of bus rapid transit, 31 new Park-n-Rides with over 21,000 new parking spaces, and enhanced bus network and transit hubs. FasTracks extends north to south from Longmont to Castle Rock and east to west from Golden to Denver International Airport. All transit modes intersect at Denver Union Station, in the heart of the Central Platte Valley in Downtown Denver. Major transit elements within the Denver Union Station redevelopment project consist of the relocation of the existing light rail station to a new three track light rail terminal, construction of a new 22 bay underground regional bus terminal and construction of a new eight track commuter rail terminal. Constructed with future capacity in mind, the Denver Union Station transit center will handle over 200,000 transit trips daily by the year 2030. The seven year visioning and planning process for the project was led by RTD, the City and County of Denver, the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, and the Union Station Neighborhood Company (USNC) as master developer, whose team included the architect (SOM), design engineer (AECOM), and general contractor (Kiewit). Full construction began in 2010, and since then three schedule milestones have been completed: the temporary Amtrak station opened in February 2011, the new LRT station opened in August 2011 and the new light rail public plaza opened in May 2012. The entire remaining portion of the project is scheduled for completion by April 2014.

SUCCESS ELEMENTS:
• World class transit district – Centralizing all public transit modes in Downtown Denver.
• Modern transit architecture – Complimenting the historic station with artistic and iconic architecture elements.
• Public-Private Partnership – Collaborating and committing to transformative progress.
• Vision for future expansion – Dreaming of the next twenty years and beyond.
• Expansive new public spaces – Activating the pedestrian experience.
• Development opportunities – Enhancing the area with residential, commercial and retail markets.

STAKEHOLDER QUOTES:
• “Regenerating the whole area”
• “A standout success”
• “Transforming faster than expected”
• “Ambitious, pie in the sky project accomplishment”
• “Propelling the heart of downtown”
• “Compelling, successful public space”
• “Serves as a national model”
• “Incredible project for Denver”
3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B: A Walkable City

B3 – BICYCLE CITY

2007 Goal: Provide clear bicycle network connections into and through Downtown, and incorporate services and facilities that address the whole trip.

Advances in making Denver a great city in which to bicycle are well documented and are among Denver’s great successes. Between Denver B-Cycle and the Denver Moves Master Plan, the Bicycle City portion of the Downtown Area Plan has been well-implemented as a whole. Although some progress has been made regarding the accommodation of bicycles throughout the city, further education for cyclists and motorists on how to share Downtown streets should continue to be a priority. Additionally, more on-street signage regarding local, district and regional bike trail connections, as well as additional bike lanes, should be provided.

Implementation of Denver B-Cycle in 2010 created the first large-scale municipal bike-sharing program in the United States, and has led to the installation of 53 B-Cycle stations and 530 bicycles in Denver. B-Cycle has increased its ridership from 100,000 users in the first year to 200,000 users the second year, with the goal of expanding to a total of 80 stations by the first quarter of 2013, with 130 stations in the next three to five years. With stations currently at or near Denver Union Station, Civic Center Station and Market Street Station (which is the most widely used B-Cycle station), Denver has greatly increased the availability of flexible, shared modes of transportation as a valuable part of the greater multi-modal transit picture.

When cars, buses, pedestrians, bicycles, scooters, light rail trains, street cars, mall shuttles and the occasional Segway, all move throughout Downtown, it becomes increasingly important that each commuter is aware of their surroundings. Specifically, the interface between cars and bicyclists and pedestrians is critical. According to Piep van Heuven, Denver cyclists should make up at least 5% of the overall transit demographic to ensure that drivers and cyclists are comfortable with each other. Boulder, for instance, is in the 10% range. As a city, Denver bicycle transit makes up 2.2% of the overall transit demographic, while over 6% of Downtown Denver commuters bike to work. Denver is also one of the silver-ranked cities according to the League of American Bicyclist’s Bicycle Friendly communities, which ranks cities by bronze, silver, gold and platinum designations on their bicycle law enforcement, engineering, education, evaluation and planning.

Recent accomplishments in the provision of bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods include the 14th and 16th Avenue bicycle thoroughfares. A planned 12th Avenue bike lane, mentioned in the Downtown Area Plan, has encountered challenges posed by a major bus route and the potential reduction of on-street parking, and may be shifted to 11th Avenue as an alternative.

A broader success story has been the creation of the Denver Moves Master Plan in May 2011, a comprehensive physical environment and action-oriented plan designed to expand the vision for non-motorized transportation and recreation systems in Denver. This plan builds upon several updates to Bicycle Master Plans from 1979 to 2001, and suggests the addition of 270 miles of multi-use, separated in-roadway, enhanced shared-roadway and bike boulevard facilities to the existing 172 miles of multi-use and bicycle facilities in Denver.

Finally, a few potential future steps to move A Bicycle City forward over the next fifteen years should...
be considered. First, as employee demographics and trends in transportation modes continue to change, businesses should continue to be incentivized to include locker rooms, showers and safe bicycle storage facilities in their tenant improvement projects. Including storage and locker rooms will allow more people to bike to work more often. Also, a potential partnership between Denver B-Cycle and RTD should be explored, combining B-Cycle membership with RTD’s EcoPass to enhance the options available to Downtown employees and residents. Advertising campaigns could be combined as well, and could better inform people about the vast number of combinations of non-vehicular transit that are available.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Encourage and incentivize companies in the Denver area to locate shared bike storage and locker room facilities.
- Explore partnerships and synergies between RTD and Denver B-Cycle.

### Success Story: BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

Denver is a city that is being continuously transformed by bicycle improvements. On Earth Day of 2010 Denver became the first city in the country with a city-wide bicycle sharing program; in 2011 and 2012 Denver hosted the U.S. Pro Cycling Challenge; and since 2005, Denver has more than doubled the miles of bicycle lanes and shared rights-of-way on city streets.

With the adoption of the 2008 Denver Strategic Transportation Plan, the City and County of Denver made a statement about how Denver views transportation. The Plan represents a movement away from car-centric planning and toward diverse transportation options. In addition, Denver created the Denver Moves planning document for “making bicycle and multi-use connections”. This document lays out goals for a significant increase in the bicycling and walking mode share. For instance, one goal is that by 2020, 15% of all commuters will bicycle or walk to work. Since 2005 Denver has seen a 57% increase in the number of commuters bicycling to work, indicating progress on that goal. In 2012, bicycle commuting reached 2.2% of all commuters, over four times the national average. In 2008, Denver had 60 miles of bicycle lanes and shared bicycle/automobile rights-of-way on city streets. By 2012, there were more than 137 miles of bicycle lanes and shared rights-of-way. The Bannock Street bicycle lanes and cycle track were created, serving as a major connection from southern neighborhoods and the Cherry Creek Trail into Downtown Denver. This also created the first bicycle signal in the city at 14th Street. Champa Street, Stout Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard bicycle lanes provide bicycle connections into Downtown Denver from the northern and eastern neighborhoods. They are some of the city’s longest corridors for continually connected bicycle lanes.

**SUCCESS ELEMENTS:**

- Increased bicycle lanes and shared rights-of-way – Creating opportunities for bicycle travel.
- Changes to public policy – Opening doors for bicycle connections.
- Bicycle sharing with B-Cycle – Setting the standard for modern city transportation options.
- Connections to surrounding neighborhoods – Embracing local communities, arts and culture.
- U.S. Pro Cycling Challenge – Putting Denver on the national map as a “bicycle city.”
- Denver Moves – Setting high goals for increasing bicycle and pedestrian activity.

**STAKEHOLDER QUOTES:**

- “Bicycling really took off in Denver in the past five years”
- “Incentivizing people to get out of their cars”
- “Lots of bicycle lanes completed”
- “Steady improvement in bicycle connectivity”
- “Increasing the bicycle culture”
- “Providing people with the opportunity to be healthy”
- “Almost a top tier city for bicycle programs”
- “Denver is the leader in bicycle sharing”
3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B: A Walkable City

B4 – PARK THE CAR ONCE

2007 Goal: Make parking easy to find and access, and connect parking facilities with clear and logical transit and pedestrian linkages.

Parking in Denver, whether by residents, visitors or employees, is an area of concern that is expected to continue to be problematic in the future. Consequently, this is a topic that has experienced few successes in relation to the Downtown Area Plan.

One notable success, though, is the publication of the Denver Strategic Parking Plan, completed by the city in October 2010 (16); however, failure to implement and communicate the Plan has hindered further progress. There also are some larger potential issues that stem from a problem of perception about parking in the Downtown area, as well as concerns about the physical design of Downtown’s one-way street public rights-of-way.

Based on communication with stakeholders, the general perception when searching for parking Downtown is that parking must be sufficiently close to the ultimate destination. Anything beyond a block or two away from the destination seems to be too far; hence the perception that there must be a parking shortage. There is the somewhat contradictory view, as well, that if the city supplies less parking, people will change their behavior patterns to utilize alternative means of transportation. Unfortunately, while this line of reasoning tends to work for residents and perhaps Downtown employees, for visitors to the Downtown area a failure to provide enough parking turns them away. And whereas residential developments tend to provide parking for their tenants, they provide little to no parking for guests and visitors.

Downtown Denver would benefit from the conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets, implementation of district-level parking strategies, surface-lot landscape requirements and more frequent cleaning. Moreover, the city’s efforts to bag and close off meters are often confusing to visitors. Meter timing is an issue as well; some meters allow two hours for a maximum stay, while others allow five; 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. is free, but overnight is not, etc.

Each of these issues, however, shares a simple, common element that could lead to real solutions: dissemination of information in a real-time manner. In the short term, giving people information that is constantly updated might be an option, perhaps by creating a comprehensive application for phones, tablets and computers that indicates where meters have been closed off, where an open meter is, where a garage or lot with available spaces is located, what the cost is, how far away from the destination the parking space is, and so on. [P24]This requires coordination between the city, its on-street meters and parking lot owners, but giving people extensive information sets based on both their destination and their current location would alleviate frustration. Such an application also could include an alarm reminder for when a user’s time at a meter or parking space will expire. The proximity-to-destination problem, however, may require changing the way the information is framed. For example, if a Downtown destination is eight blocks away from the parking space, the person parking may be less inclined to park at that space than if the application communicates that it is really only a half mile walk. It is possible that the way the numbers are presented could functionally change the parker’s attitude, as well. Perhaps this application could tell parkers not that the garage is a half a mile away, but that it’s 100 calories away, making a benefit out of the distance rather than simply a
length. The Downtown Denver Partnership could sponsor the creation of such an application, which could build on the parking program on its website (17). But the application would work in real time and be much more dynamic.

Simplification of metering times should be a priority. Suggestions include color-coding meters based on maximum stay allowances and not charging for the hours between 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. Simplification of the closure process could be handled digitally rather than with bags, which are often not removed immediately following an event or closure. The digital read-out could display the message “closed – do not park” to make sure the message is clear and concise. Finally, Downtown retailers and businesses could identify public parking garages and surface parking lots, and coordinate with the lot managers and owners to determine a minimum financial investment in order to acquire parking validation rights for a system of Downtown parking lots.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop an application and/or service for people parking Downtown that offers real-time information about surface lot space, on-street and garage spaces available near their destination. Offer information about pricing and caloric information about the walk to and from the destination from each parking space.
- Simplify metering and extend free parking hours after “bar-closing”, 2:00 a.m. until 7:00 a.m.
- Pair Downtown restaurants and businesses with parking lot and garage managers to offer district-parking validation with a certain minimum purchase.

B5. GRAND BOULEVARDS – TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT

2007 Goal: Transform Speer Boulevard, Colfax Avenue, Broadway, Park Avenue and Auraria Parkway into celebrated, multi-modal boulevards to overcome the physical and perceptual barriers of these major thoroughfares.

The Grand Boulevards transformative project has gained a minimal amount of traction in the past five years, and lacks a focused strategy for improvements to Broadway and Speer Boulevard. Nonetheless, successful efforts include the improvements and planning for Colfax Avenue through the cultural district in eastern Downtown.

As an additional matter, developing a strategy to address the Brighton Boulevard corridor would benefit the Downtown Area Plan going forward. This boulevard section runs outside of the study area, but has a direct impact on the experience of transitioning from Interstate 70 into Downtown Denver (18). The city of Denver should consider studying future development and use of the River North district. The Brighton Boulevard corridor is an important link from Downtown to the Front Range region via the Interstate 70 corridor, and should not be overlooked or undervalued.

With regard to the original 2007 Plan, the challenges and potential next steps regarding the Broadway and Lincoln Street corridors should be addressed. The Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan, adopted by City Council in May of 2011, addressed three separate concepts for the future of Broadway north of Downtown Denver (19). These concepts include either preserving Broadway as it exists today with some improvements, vacating Broadway from 19th Street to Park Avenue, or reducing...
3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B: A Walkable City

travel lanes and implementing pedestrian improvements. While these concepts demonstrate the many options available for Broadway and Lincoln Street north of the city, further study should take place through the Golden Triangle, Cultural Core, Civic Center and Commercial Core districts. A grander scheme might be to close Lincoln Street and create two-way traffic circulation on Broadway, allowing for the creation of a grand, linear park and possibly installing a streetcar corridor along Lincoln Street. Since Lincoln Street is the more residentially-oriented boulevard, provision for alley-loading for houses and frontage onto the park may help to bolster home prices and development along the corridor, as well as provide a linear park connection from South Broadway to Capitol Hill, and on to Arapahoe Square. Broadway would benefit from building frontage onto two-way streets, which could incorporate wider street frontage for restaurants and spill-out space, diagonal parking, and, potentially, landscape medians, all of which would slow automobile traffic, increase pedestrian presence and make the commercial establishments along the parkway more attractive.

Pedestrian safety and connectivity across Speer Boulevard have been a much-discussed issue in recent months, especially as the University of Colorado Denver strengthens its presence within the Downtown fabric and the Denver business community improves its relationship with the Auraria Campus. There have been many suggestions for improving pedestrian access between Downtown Denver and the Auraria Campus across Speer Boulevard, including proposed bridge and tunnel structures to move pedestrians back and forth. These are interesting architectural solutions, but they violate urban design principles in the process, aside from being prohibitively expensive. Taking pedestrians off of the street robs the pedestrian realm of a smaller-scale, human presence. This could potentially lead to safety issues along Speer Boulevard, as well as higher automobile speeds. The better solution would be to widen and detach sidewalks on the outside of the boulevard, to selectively peel back the landscape along the Cherry Creek trail on the inside of the boulevard to allow visibility along, into and from the Cherry Creek path, and to widen bridges on the named streets that intersect with Speer Boulevard to allow for safer pedestrian thoroughfares.

Improvements and planning for the Colfax Avenue corridor have enjoyed some notable success. Feasibility studies and planning for a streetcar system along Colfax Avenue, coupled with some pedestrian crossing and right-of-way improvements in the cultural core near Civic Center Park, will change movement along Colfax and will help to scale down the perceived size and speed of Colfax Avenue as it moves through Downtown Denver. Areas of potential future development along Colfax Avenue are at the crossing of Speer Boulevard and at the crossing of Broadway. A comprehensive boulevards study of Broadway, Colfax and Speer may identify opportunities and fundamental changes to the circulation and frontage along these arteries. Areas of concern are the pedestrian crossings at the Auraria Campus lightrail station on Colfax Avenue, which are dangerous intersections that might benefit from slower traffic speeds and pedestrian crossing improvements.
3. Downtown Area Plan Strategy B: A Walkable City

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include the Brighton Boulevard corridor in the study area and under the purview of Grand Boulevards.
- Explore an extreme idea - shutting down Lincoln Street and creating an extensive linear park, while making Broadway a two-way street through Downtown and south to I-25. Utilize urban design students at UCD to explore this idea and develop concepts as part of a design studio.
- Study the Speer Boulevard corridor as it relates to connectivity to Auraria; study better effectiveness of at-grade crossing rather than above or below-grade crossing; study visibility into, out of and along the Cherry Creek trail corridor.

References:
9. Channel 7 News Denver, April 21, 2012
14. http://www.downtowndenver.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=08RegiT0HAs%3d&tabid=566
17. http://www.experiencedowntowndenver.com/

Interviewees:
Bill Effenbein - RTD
Jerry Glick – Columbia Group
Rhonda Knop – Golden Triangle Association
Mark Najarian – City and County of Denver
Susan Powers – Urban Ventures
Bill Sirois - RTD
Emily Snyder – City and County of Denver
David Tryba – Tryba Architects
Piep Van Heuven – bikedenver.org
James Wadell – Denver B-Cycle
C1 – DOWNTOWN LIVING

2007 Goal – Expand housing options to broaden the array of household types and income levels in Downtown, and provide amenities for a range of people. Add 18,000 new housing units to Downtown by 2027.

The first and arguably most important facet of this goal involves the challenge of creating a diversity of affordable Downtown housing. A variety of residential options includes housing for families, seniors, students, faculty and Downtown employees. In the last five years, approximately 458 new apartments and condominiums have been developed within the Downtown area, and the Denver Union Station project is expected to add another 219 units. Senior housing has not grown as rapidly as hoped for due in part to the competition for low income tax credits. Another factor in the evolution of housing options is the Construction Defect Action Reform Act. This legislation broadens the “construction professional” definition to include Architect, Contractor, Subcontractor, Developer, Builder, Builder Vendor, Engineer and Inspector, which in turn adds more hurdles to new construction. Collaboration between developers, the city and local housing agencies will be imperative to finding creative solutions to foster growth. This task could be championed by the Mayor’s Housing Task Force, which is charged with analyzing the housing inventory and housing needs for the city. Further, updates to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance will also help to ensure the availability of home ownership opportunities for Denver’s moderate-income families. Finally, successful pursuits of housing options will hinge on close proximity to transit stations for the convenience of urban dwellers.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

• Provide incentives for diversity in residential development in and adjacent to Downtown Denver.
• Actively support the Mayor’s Housing Task Force in the development of a diversity of housing options.

C2. A FAMILY-FRIENDLY PLACE

2007 Goal – Attract children and their parents to visit, go to school, recreate, explore and live Downtown.

While Downtown Denver has excelled in many ways as a Family-Friendly Place since the 2007 Plan was created, there is room for improvement. Due in part to the variety of sporting, dining, and entertainment venues within the Downtown area, in addition to museums, parks and various cultural events, families are routinely drawn Downtown for a variety of recreational activities. The addition of schools and the creation of safer pedestrian and biking environments would go far in making Downtown an even more family-friendly place.

According to the Denver Post, Denver is currently the “fastest growing large, urban school district in the United States” (1). The Denver Public School District’s growth of 10,300 students since 2007 identifies a clear need for the Downtown area to provide early childhood education and school expansion – all contributors toward a family-friendly place. With the significant increase in students, the demand for schools has resulted in the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2013. Also, a variety of options exist for early childhood education. The Denver Early
Childhood Council and Qualistar Colorado support this effort by providing educational materials and resource listings for parents to determine the most appropriate environment for early education in Downtown and surrounding areas. Despite all of this, more work is needed to bring quality educational options to the Downtown area to continue making it an attractive option for family living.

Beyond housing and school expansion, options for Downtown family activities and play areas require expansion as well. Confluence Park and Skyline Park are two successful park areas that should be referenced in new development pursuits[2]. Denver could also consider adopting a similar strategy as the city of Englewood; their Development Code requires residential projects to set aside park space within the project’s plans and budget. Or, in lieu of providing park space, a park dedication fee is an available option. This fee is based upon the number of acres of development and is allocated toward park improvements. With parks and public open space, however, come some of the challenges presented by the transient population. This in turn can have an impact on a park visitor’s sense of safety. Public assistance for the homeless population would be required to ensure that the parks are available to and visited by all Metro Denver residents.

Streets and boulevards that move families in and out of Downtown Denver are an important area of focus in the creation of a family-friendly city. Recommendations include modifying the one-way streets to two-way streets, and re-evaluating the shared use of streets by cars, buses, bikes and pedestrians. Both options would require a significant economic investment, and a cultural change in how families and business people move in and around the Downtown area.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Provide school options for new and existing Downtown families.
- Support Denver Parks and Recreation in new park development and actively engage with developers for the inclusion of family parks within development plans.
- Study opportunities and impacts for two-way streets in the Central Business District.
4. Downtown Area Plan Strategy C: A Diverse City

**C3 – EMBRACING ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS – TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT**

2007 Goal – Link Denver’s neighborhoods more closely with its Downtown.

While researching the Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods section, several stakeholder comments mentioned that circulator, pedestrian and bicycle routes have not developed as quickly as they would have hoped. The safety of people walking or riding bikes is still a high priority in the development of these routes. The general sense is that the economic downturn has impacted the advancement of each strategy, and route reductions may present an additional challenge to linking adjacent neighborhoods to Downtown. One recommendation is to update the Downtown Multimodal Access Plan (3) for potential changes in the volume of commuters. It is also recommended that vocal advocates for pedestrians and bike improvements participate actively in the development of neighborhood connectivity.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Review and update the Downtown Multimodal Access Plan.
- Establish public-private partnerships or other creative joint ventures to fund neighborhood connection improvements.

**C4 – AN INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN**

2007 Goal – Recognize and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of Downtown residents, employees and visitors while making Denver a more inviting worldwide destination.

Denver International Airport (DIA) is the largest airport in the United States by area (53 square miles), and the second largest in the world (4). With this asset’s close proximity to Downtown Denver, the planned extension of the light rail line and the redevelopment of Denver Union Station, Downtown Denver has the potential to be a magnet for international travelers (5). Becoming An International Downtown is a strategy with many differing definitions to stakeholders in the Downtown business community. Globally, it is defined as being welcoming and accessible to international visitors, as exemplified by new direct flights between Denver and Tokyo, and between Denver and Reykjavik, Iceland. Locally, it is viewed as a celebration of the cultural diversity in and around the adjacent Downtown neighborhoods. Both visions for an international Downtown provide an opportunity to increase international commerce and enhance the lives of Downtown residents.

Diverse and culture-specific markets or businesses should be sought out and promoted for development among the Downtown business and retail communities. Another recommendation for advancing the International Downtown goal is the incorporation of cultural icons throughout Downtown Denver. This goal could be achieved easily by displaying flags of the world at significant venues - DIA, the Colorado Convention Center, Civic Center Park and Denver Union Station to name a few.

Greater efforts are needed to expand international wayfinding systems starting at DIA (6) and transitioning into Downtown. Locally, Downtown cultural celebrations are highly successful, with the Cinco De Mayo celebration, Denver Powwow, Martin Luther King Jr. Marade, Five Points Jazz Festival,
Black Arts Festival, St. Patrick’s Day Parade and Oktoberfest among the many celebrations that draw significant crowds from the entire metro area to Downtown Denver (7).

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Review wayfinding systems for international travelers from DIA to Downtown.
- Collaborate with culturally diverse neighborhoods to advance markets and businesses.
- Recognize cultural icons throughout Denver’s prominent Downtown areas.
- Continue cultural celebrations in and around Downtown.

References:
1. Denver Post [10/16/2012].
3. [http://www.denvergov.org/infrastructure/PolicyandPlanning](http://www.denvergov.org/infrastructure/PolicyandPlanning)
7. [www.denver.org/pdfs/visitdenver_multicultural_visitorbrochure.pdf](http://www.denver.org/pdfs/visitdenver_multicultural_visitorbrochure.pdf)
5. Downtown Area Plan Strategy C: A Distinctive City

D1 – DISTRICT EVOLUTION

2007 Goal: Restore and activate the iconic features, such as mountain views, major public buildings, cherished historic buildings and parks and parkways that provide distinctive identity to Downtown and the Denver region, and foster a collection of identifiable districts throughout Downtown.

The unfortunate reality is that the downturn in the economy has had a major impact on the city’s ability to move forward with proposed projects in this portion of the Downtown Area Plan. There were several high profile projects that were completed, but others were put on hold because of a lack of financial support. The good news stemming from the negative economic outlook was the creation of public-private partnerships that allowed for projects to come to fruition that otherwise would not have been moved forward.

There were several public-private partnerships that rose to the top. They include improvements to the 16th Street Mall, the 14th Street Initiative, and, of course, the Denver Union Station redevelopment. The Denver Pavilions and 16th Street Mall welcomed H&M as a huge draw to retail shoppers. 16th Street also benefited from a variety of beautification projects and received a boost from companies such as Southwest Airlines, who have brought life to Skyline Park with seasonal programming, such as a winter ice skating rink and summer basketball courts. The 16th Street Mall continues to be a lively destination any day of the week. No longer simply a destination for business people at lunch and weekly conventioneers, the 16th Street Mall has become a sought after destination for both tourists and locals. (1).

The 14th Street project involved stakeholders from the public and private sectors. Property owners and voters approved the funding for the project (see breakout section in Chapter 2). Teams of people from both sectors executed the plan and the results can be seen today in the wider sidewalks, landscaping, signage, and an all-around improved pedestrian experience (2).

The Denver Union Station Project Authority teamed with the City and County of Denver, RTD, DRCOG and CDOT to create the district’s plan. But that was not done without the input of private groups such as numerous neighborhood associations and local businesses. In fact, the commitment of the first private investor for the Station’s North Wing Building opened the door for other government funding so the project could continue. In a variety of development opportunities, it makes sense to combine financial resources and the expertise from the two sectors to drive change – these partnerships are here to stay (3).

The use of public funding to incentivize historic building preservation has been postponed because of the economy, raising the question of how to continue achieving this goal. Tax incentives should be provided for businesses to incentivize them to make improvements to their buildings. It’s also worth looking at creative opportunities to connect neighborhoods, such as the redevelopment of the Evans School at 11th Avenue and Acoma Street. The city will need to work closely with the DDP and other organizations to provide the infrastructure to allow these projects to happen.

Additionally, as the economy begins to show signs of improvement, the Downtown Area Plan should be reviewed to determine what funding options are available to execute some of the goals that have
not yet been accomplished. Connecting neighborhoods is a piece of this goal that is struggling. It would be helpful if Downtown streets became two-way thoroughfares and if there was an increase in the number of public transportation options. The city might consider creating incentives for individuals to purchase property in Downtown Denver, increasing the density of property owners that may result in the ability to gain services in Downtown, such as a public school and full-service grocery store.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Tax incentives should be given to businesses to encourage them to make improvements to their buildings.
- Connect neighborhoods by adding two-way streets and improving bicycle and pedestrian-friendly transportation options.
- Create incentives to buy Downtown Denver properties instead of renting.

---

**D2 - CONNECTING AURARIA - TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT**

**2007 Goal: Fully integrate the Auraria Campus and the Downtown core through strong physical, social, economic and programmatic connections.**

The Auraria Campus is quite unique. It is one of the only college campuses in the United States that is home to three separate higher education institutions, and because of its location in Denver’s urban core, building a bridge between the Auraria Campus and Downtown Denver is of paramount importance.

The Downtown Area Plan’s goal to Connect Auraria means not only a physical connection, but also a connection to the programs, businesses and entertainment amenities that Downtown has to offer. The schools on the campus have focused on organizing into separate “neighborhoods”, giving each institution the chance to brand their own identity within the campus. This has been helpful for the institutions on the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) property, but there has not been much activity to physically connect the campus to Downtown or to surrounding neighborhoods. According to the Auraria Master Plan, AHEC would like the city to show more support in this area. The city’s plans to create a Grand Boulevard along Colfax Avenue stopped at Speer Boulevard and did not include the portion of Colfax Avenue that borders the Auraria campus. This leaves a great opportunity to help bridge the two areas.

Stakeholders interviewed on this topic shared that Chicago provides a good example of connecting neighborhoods, which may help to provide guidelines in Denver’s effort to connect Auraria to Downtown. Locally, a group of business, higher education and community leaders created a group
5. Downtown Area Plan Strategy C: A Distinctive City

named the Connect Auraria Coalition. The Connect Auraria Coalition provides guidance and direction on how to execute the Auraria Master Plan, a collaborative and positive move in the right direction.

Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU of Denver) and the University of Colorado Denver (UCD) have both taken strides to improve the connection. UCD opened its Business School in Downtown Denver at 1475 Lawrence Street, requiring students to make the connection across Speer Boulevard. This move was a key element in the creation of UCD’s “educational corridor” and offers additional exposure and two-way connections to Downtown businesses and employees. MSU of Denver plans to build new athletic fields on the opposite side of Colfax Avenue, and has built a new Student Success Building, located at 890 Auraria Parkway. The Student Success Building houses the Center for Advanced Visualization and Experiential Analysis (CAVEA), a specialized theater with advanced technology that allows users to make better decisions through the use of computer modeling and simulation. CAVEA will bring people from the business, education, government and non-profit sectors together to analyze decisions and policies before they are applied. Finally, MSU of Denver opened the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center in 2012. The building is home to the SpringHill Suites® Denver Downtown, and functions as an extensive learning laboratory for the growing population of hospitality students. Even with these successes, the physical connection between Downtown and the campus still remains the largest obstacle to effectively connecting Auraria.

Section ten of the Auraria Master Plan focuses solely on the connectivity of the Auraria campus to the surrounding neighborhoods and to Downtown Denver (4). The institutions on the Auraria campus must ensure that they continue to be proactive in their efforts to expand and reach out to these surrounding communities. They have done a great job thus far and the leadership of those institutions should be commended. The Connect Auraria Coalition needs to stay involved and encourage the business community to stay engaged with the schools on the campus to create new opportunities for the students of the Auraria institutions through internships, educational programs and other opportunities. The city of Denver needs to keep the physical connectivity of the campus to Downtown Denver across Auraria Parkway and Colfax Avenue a top priority. These are opportunities that will promote clean and safe environments for students, business people and the community at large.
5. Downtown Area Plan Strategy C: A Distinctive City

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The three institutions on the Auraria campus must continue to be proactive in their efforts to connect with Downtown.
- The Connect Auraria Coalition must stay involved and serve as a champion for change on this project.
- The City and County of Denver should review opportunities to continue the Grand Boulevard on Colfax Avenue to the west of Speer Boulevard, especially as MSU expands their athletic fields to the south side of Colfax Avenue near Interstate-25.
- Continue to identify ways to physically connect the campus across Speer Boulevard so that pedestrians and bicyclists can safely cross.

**D3 – DOWNTOWN’S NEW NEIGHBORHOOD: ARAPAHOE SQUARE - TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT**

2007 Goal:  Redevelop Arapahoe Square as a cutting edge, densely populated, mixed-use area that provides a range of housing types and a center for innovative businesses.

While Arapahoe Square has seen a few redevelopment efforts near the perimeter of the neighborhood, it has been slow to transform from an underutilized neighborhood to a cutting edge and densely populated one. The reason the city is making a concerted effort to revitalize the area is its close proximity to the central core and its potential to be a high-density urban neighborhood.

Stakeholders in the area generally agree that the goals set forth in 2007 are ambitious, and that there are a number of factors that have contributed to the relatively slow development of Arapahoe Square. The economic recession, high cost of real estate, and resources being directed to the Denver Union Station Redevelopment have been a few of the notable challenges. Additionally this area has faced redevelopment challenges given its proximity to Denver’s social services providers. This issue must be addressed, potentially with the creation of a 24-hour shelter and a wider distribution of service providers inside and outside of the district. The social service providers in the area are currently expanding operations with mental health facilities, shelters and transitional housing to accommodate the rising homeless population.

There have been successful development efforts in the district in the past five years. Examples include 2020 Lawrence, a large-scale apartment building currently under construction, and a 6-unit townhome project built at 21st and Curtis Streets.

There is growing political support for this district with the adoption of the 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan, which was a positive step in ensuring that redevelopment occurs at the right density, with the correct mix of uses and with the right housing types to become the cutting edge center for innovative development envisioned in the 2007 Plan (5). An Urban Redevelopment Area has been formed and strategies for using tax increment financing are now a realistic option in the district.

Once the economy rebounds and the redevelopment efforts in and around Denver Union Station are completed, Arapahoe Square could be a significant redevelopment area in Downtown Denver. The
city must decide which way the district can best be utilized and must regulate allowable uses through zoning. The Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan is the first step in that process.

References:
1. Downtown Denver Business Improvement District Pedestrian Count Report
3. Maria Garcia Berry, CRL & Associates – Panel discussion from DDPLP class 2012

Interviewees:
Jim Basey – Centennial Bank
Councilman Albus Brooks – Denver City Council, District 8
Brad Buchanan – Denver Planning Board, RNL
Frank Canon – Union Station Neighborhood Co.
Caryn Champine – City and County of Denver
Dana Crawford – Urban Neighborhoods
John Desmond – Downtown Denver Partnership
Cole Finegan – Hogan Lovells
Jack Finlaw – City and County of Denver
Jerry Glick – Columbia Group
Tracy Huggins – Denver Urban Renewal Authority
Courtland Hyser – City and County of Denver
Walter Isenberg – Sage Hospitality
Ellen Ittleson – City and County of Denver
Ayline McCallum – Downtown Denver Partnership
Jynx Messacar – Merchants Office Furniture
Councilwoman Judy Montero – Denver City Council, District 9
Bill Mosher – Denver Housing Authority, Trammell Crow Company
David Tryba – Tryba Architects
Dave Zucker – Zocalo Development
6. Downtown Area Plan Strategy D: A Green City

E1. AN OUTDOOR DOWNTOWN

2007 Goal: Strengthen connections between existing parks, plazas and recreation areas, and enhance the realm to provide venues for outdoor activity throughout Downtown.

In 2007, the Downtown Area Plan steering committee was committed to incorporating Downtown’s potential for developing and improving its sustainability efforts. As a result of this commitment, the creation of a specific strategy focusing on building a greener Downtown Denver was established. The overall focus of this strategy was to develop and improve Downtown’s outdoor environment by providing venues for residents, employees and visitors to gather, relax and recreate in public spaces, fostering a stronger balance between urban life and the outdoors. The 2012 assessment of the Plan’s strategy shows that the city has made significant progress in creating a better outdoor environment in regard to the development of the five key strategies.

The first focus of An Outdoor Downtown addresses the need for the creation of a green public realm by adding trees and landscaping on roadways and in open space. Downtown Denver has made substantial progress on these initiatives by implementing a few key projects. The recent 14th Street improvements are a good example (see breakout section in Chapter 1). The 2011 16th Street improvement initiative has a strong focus on incorporating green public realm components, as well. Unfortunately, the progress on 16th Street has slowed due to the lack of grant and investment opportunities. A green public realm is a great way to enhance the visual components of a city, but sometimes lacks the necessary approval from neighboring communities. Therefore, with more private investment and community involvement, the 16th Street initiative can be accomplished. The city has also taken significant strides in accomplishing Governor Hickenlooper’s 2006 Mile High Million initiative. This initiative’s goal of planting one million trees in the Denver Metro area by 2025 has resulted in about 250,000 trees being planted in and around Metro Denver (2).

Denver has also been extremely successful in hosting events that promote biking and walking in Downtown. These events continue to be both educational and interactive, and are a great opportunity to engage Downtown and surrounding communities. The U.S. Pro Cycling Challenge, a cycling race that finishes in Downtown Denver, is an excellent example of this type of event. Recently completing its second year, the Challenge continues to bring thousands of visitors to the Downtown area and encourages large-scale community engagement promoting bicycling as a viable transportation alternative (3). Another event that continues to grow is the annual Bike to Work Day. This event engages employers and encourages commuters to ride their bikes to work instead of driving.

The creation of Walk Denver in 2011 addresses the educational component of this strategy, focusing on educating community members and providing them with a comfortable, walkable environment that fosters healthy lifestyles and economic growth (4). The creation of Denver B-Cycle, Downtown Pedi-cabs and Pedal Hoppers has also brought alternative transportation (walking and biking) to the forefront, and has allowed alternative transportation to be more accessible in the Downtown area. Continued efforts to increase the marketing and the overall public awareness associated with these activities will need to be addressed as this goal continues to move forward.

Another key component in the development of An Outdoor Downtown is the creation of the Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan, a plan with immense potential, continuing to be developed by
6. Downtown Area Plan Strategy D: A Green City

the City and County of Denver and other stakeholders. The costs for further development and implementation of the Master Plan, however, have slowed this process considerably. In order for the Master Plan to be fully completed and begin implementation it will take significant resources and commitment from both the public and private sectors.

Once completed, the Master Plan will specifically address the biking and walking trails located between Downtown, Cherry Creek and the South Platte River Trails. Recently, the City and County of Denver created the Denver Bicycle Program, which evaluates initiatives that can assist in changes regarding bike paths. Unfortunately, many goals are difficult to achieve due to various regulations and ordinances (5). The Parks and Open Space Master Plan would provide the city with a more comprehensive picture as to how to better connect open spaces and paths, as well as provide correct signage for all paths. The Cherry Creek bike trail has been improved, but its connection to the Platte Park trail still needs additional work to allow for increased safety for bicyclists. The connection of these paths will also allow for more use of open spaces and promote healthy living within surrounding communities. With strong financial investment and public sector work, the process should begin moving forward with clear direction for all parties involved.

The Downtown Denver Partnership and the city of Denver have successfully activated Skyline Park by staging various programs and events in the park. The partnership with Southwest Airlines to sponsor seasonal programming has allowed for an increase in new family and business-friendly activities. The Southwest Airlines Ice Rink, Concert Wednesdays, Southwest Airlines Basketball Courts and Movies in the Park are all examples of events that have increased the visibility and activation of Skyline Park (6). As the number of these types of events increase, additional focus on how to balance and encourage day-to-day use of the entire park will need to be addressed. Examples of this may include seating improvements to encourage outdoor business meetings, free wireless-internet access, exercise equipment and regularly scheduled community-based events, such as weekly yoga sessions and lectures. Continued partnerships with the private sector, similar to the collaboration with Southwest Airlines, could provide a source of funding for the implementation and sustainability of these initiatives. Safety and cleanliness concerns regarding Skyline Park have also been expressed, so a continued security presence and maintenance efforts will need to be maintained to continue the progress made in Skyline Park.

Overall, the Downtown Denver community has made great strides in meeting the strategies of An Outdoor Downtown as outlined in the 2007 Downtown Denver Area Plan. With an increase in private investment and other alternative funding sources, many of the strategies can continue to move forward. In addition, the completion and implementation of the Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan will provide guidance and direction for both public and private stakeholders in successfully completing these initiatives.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Complete and implement a Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- Increase marketing and public awareness to promote bicycling and pedestrian-friendly events in Downtown Denver.
- Increase consistency of events and programs at Skyline Park.
2007 Goal: Strengthen Civic Center as an outdoor amenity to attract visitors, residents, workers and students to the Park.

Achieving the goal of A Rejuvenated Civic Center is currently a work in progress. Approximately 50% of the overall restoration and reactivation of Civic Center Park identified in the Civic Center Master Plan of 2005 has been completed. Pedestrian walkways and access points along the boundaries of 14th Street, Colfax Avenue and the Denver Art Museum have been reconstructed, but areas for improvement remain around the RTD Civic Center Station facility. The goal of a rejuvenated Civic Center is currently identified as “in progress” primarily due to challenges related to funding and the reduction of the city’s budget. Another challenge to meeting the goal was the recent Occupy Denver activities in Civic Center Park. However, the recent renovation of the McNichols Building (also known as Carnegie Library) is one example of efforts toward achieving the goal of enhancing safety, providing services, accommodating cultural festivals, providing community amenities, improving adjacent streetscapes, and attracting mixed-use activities to Civic Center Park (7).

In 2007, the Civic Center Conservancy’s efforts to reactive the park were initiated through the allocation of nine million dollars toward the transformation of historic park structures. In addition, the 2005 Civic Center Master Plan has guided the restoration of the Greek Theater, Pioneer Park, Sculptures, Linear Gardens, Festival Gardens, Great Lawn and Broadway Terrace to their original historic integrity (8). In November 2011, Occupy Denver activities resulted in several of the restored structures being damaged. As a result of this and ongoing economic challenges, the Conservancy will need to continue to work with the City and County of Denver and relevant stakeholders to restore, enhance and reactivate Civic Center Park.

Civic Center Park continues to be an attractive location for cultural events, such as Civic Center Eats, Independence Eve, Bike-in Movie Series, the Pro Cycling Challenge, Rock and Roll Marathon, Taste of Colorado, People’s Fair, and the Cinco de Mayo Parade. Several new cultural and community events have been established within the last five years and these events continue to draw guests to Civic Center Park.

The recently completed 14th Street Initiative has improved some street enhancements and pedestrian access connections to Civic Center Park along Colfax Avenue, but the full extent of improving pedestrian connections has not been realized. Funding and the physical space limitation of the streets have been the primary challenges in completing this portion of the overall strategy.

The overall 2007 goal can be achieved through the strengthening of the partnership between the Civic Center Conservancy and the city of Denver, and continuing to look for creative funding mechanisms such as public-private partnerships. Establishing and encouraging mixed-use development along the park perimeter will contribute to a sense of safety with increased passive surveillance of the park by retail patrons and residents. Empowering the Civic Center Conservancy to own and manage the cleanliness, safety and maintenance of the park could help to improve the state of the park itself. This system could be modeled similar to the staffing efforts of the Business Improvement District’s services on the 16th Street Mall. Updates to Denver’s policies and ordinances, such as the new camping
6. Downtown Area Plan Strategy D: A Green City

ban, will help address safety and cleanliness concerns. Continued activation of Civic Center Park and the McNichols Building, and increasing the number of events and activities, as well as discussion with RTD regarding the future use of Civic Center Station, will also be critical to overall rejuvenation of Civic Center Park.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Continue street enhancements and pedestrian access along all Civic Center perimeters.
- Encourage mixed used facilities and use along Civic Center perimeters.
- Focus on improving overall cleanliness and safety concerns and perceptions.

**E3 – SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES**

**2007 Goal: Incorporate sustainability as a core value for Downtown and integrate its concepts into all future projects, programs and policies.**

Overall, achieving the goal of incorporating sustainability into Downtown Denver is making progress. Greenprint Denver’s initial plan and the hiring of Denver’s new Chief Sustainability Director have significantly contributed toward achieving this goal (9). The completion of the nation’s first LEED Platinum skyscraper (1800 Larimer Street), first LEED Gold Museum (the Museum of Contemporary Art) and first LEED Gold state cultural history museum (History Colorado) are all examples of Downtown’s sustainable building efforts (10). The expansion of existing transportation programs is in process, particularly with the continued development of Denver Union Station and the increased popularity of car-sharing programs. Denver is developing and updating a sustainable storm water management system, and is creating stronger sustainability guidelines for surface parking lots. However, many opportunities for improvement exist, and sustainability should be a core focus going forward.

The Downtown Denver Partnership conducts an annual survey on the transportation habits of Downtown employees. The results are especially useful for companies looking at relocating to Downtown Denver and for those companies interested in restructuring their transportation benefits. Also, car-sharing program participants doubled between 2010 and 2011, and the popularity of such services is increasing nationally (11). These factors are keeping transportation demand management in the forefront for both employers and employees.

Integrating green street elements to new and existing infrastructure has been difficult during the recent economic downturn. These improvements, such as bio-swales and parking lot landscape elements, will minimize impervious surfaces and water runoff. Existing rules and regulations for landscaping of surface parking lots are over 20 years old and need updating to reduce the heat island effect and stormwater impact (12). The 14th Street Initiative has been a successful example of the introduction of green street elements and can be a model for other street improvement projects.

Expanding waste reduction programs is a key issue, but without systems that encourage waste diversions (i.e. three-way sorting bin systems, trash tax, incentives and marketing recognition) for Downtown companies and residents, this goal can be difficult to achieve. The added hurdles of space constraints and proper staff training can also discourage waste diversion, and a citywide waste management plan is needed to research these issues and find solutions.
It is important to note the successes achieved to date that have made sustainability a core value for the Downtown community. Denver’s Wastewater Management has created a program called “Keep It Clean” that provides education programs about stewardship of Denver’s stormwater system and the role it plays in protecting our natural water resources. This program is targeted toward youth and students with the goal of having them act as change agents within their families (13). The Colorado Convention Center’s rooftop solar panels and the expansion of existing transportation programs are also encouraging. Lastly, the city’s hiring of a Chief Sustainability Officer will allow for greater attention to be paid to the initiatives required to meet this goal.

There are several steps that can be taken to improve the sustainable use of resources in Downtown Denver: (i) increase the efforts to educate public and private entities on the benefits of sustainable use of resources; (ii) update rules and regulations to encourage sustainable use of parking lot landscaping; and (iii) establish special taxing districts within the city to secure funding for necessary sustainable stormwater management upgrades, green street elements and landscaping upgrades. Establishing neighborhood plans pertaining to updating sustainable stormwater management systems can be developed to allow government agencies and private entities to work on addressing these issues on a smaller scale. Creating an overall waste management plan for Downtown would also help make Downtown Denver a model for sustainable use of resources. Greater recognition of Downtown companies and residential developments that are setting positive examples for waste reduction would help set the standard for future initiatives. Additional incentives for businesses and residents to divert waste would establish motivation to comply with the goal’s principles. City initiatives for combined three-way litter sorting systems (landfill, recycling, composting) in city-operated buildings, on city streets and in parks would demonstrate continued leadership and commitment by the city. Downtown Denver has created significant positive momentum toward sustainability, but continuing to implement new ideas will be fundamental to accomplishing this overall strategy.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Create and implement a Waste Management Plan for Downtown Denver to encourage business and residential sustainability practices.
- Update rules and regulations for landscaping of parking areas.
- Identify funding options to update sustainable stormwater management systems.

References:
2. The Mile High Million [http://www.milehighmillion.org/pages/section/who-we-are](http://www.milehighmillion.org/pages/section/who-we-are)
6. Downtown Area Plan Strategy D: A Green City


Additional References:
Denver B-cycle http://denver.bcycle.com/
Bike 2 Work Day http://www3.drcog.org/biketowork
Denver Wastewater Management Plan www.denvergov.org/wastewatermanagement
Green Print Denver Climate Action Plan http://www.greenprintdenver.org/about/climate-action-plan-reports/

Interviewees:
Mark Bernstein - City and County of Denver
Jon Bartles - Auraria Higher Education Center
Caryn Champine - City and County of Denver
John Desmond - Downtown Denver Partnership
Lindy Eichenbaum - Civic Center Conservancy
Jill Jennings Golich – Auraria Higher Education Center
Michelle Weingarden - Greenprint Denver
7. District Strategies

Downtown’s districts are the heart of the city, each providing a unique personality and character that offers diversity and variety for visitors, employees and residents. The Downtown Area Plan’s goal for the districts is:

**Build upon the existing mosaic of Downtown districts to enhance the richness in commerce, lifestyles and experiences that no single district could achieve on its own. Together these districts make up the foundation for Denver to be a premier national and international city in the 21st century.** (2)

There certainly have been successes, but opportunities remain, as well; overall, achieving the goal is still a work in progress. This overview provides a perspective on significant successes and areas of focus for the future for all districts, as well as a breakdown of specific successes and areas of focus by district.

Some key examples of successes and opportunities in Downtown’s unique districts include:

**THE 14TH STREET CORRIDOR – COMMERCIAL CORE**
Improvements have transformed 14th Street into Denver’s “Ambassador Street,” welcoming visitors to Downtown Denver with an enhanced pedestrian experience, improved livability and opportunities for retail and business (3).

**UNION STATION DEVELOPMENT – LODO**
The redevelopment of Denver Union Station is a unique project that will bring together many different transportation modes, along with private development, to create a bustling urban center and multimodal transportation hub. Denver Union Station will be the centerpiece of a new age of connectivity in the region (4).

**HISTORY COLORADO CENTER – CULTURAL CORE**
The History Colorado Center is the newest addition to the Cultural Core, boasting the country’s first LEED Gold state cultural history museum (5).
KEY AREAS OF FOCUS FOR ALL DISTRICTS

The Leadership Program class’ research, in combination with stakeholder input, identified key areas of focus across all districts. The following list includes topics and initiatives of larger transformative challenges and opportunities across districts.

CONTINUE TO FOSTER PUBLIC-PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Public-private development is a key factor in the success of Denver Union Station’s redevelopment and will continue to be as the economy recovers. Stakeholder input suggests that private sector influence has led to many of Downtown’s residential developments, as well as further development of streetscapes in some districts.

Considerations

• Invite influential district leaders who have played a role in current successes to share advice, perspective and the recommended best approaches to making public-private relationships more effective.
• Develop an overarching retail strategy for the city. The need for a comprehensive retail strategy that will provide direction across districts was voiced by many of the stakeholders (2).
• Develop a comprehensive strategy that allows the districts to work together to address retail needs in a way that will build upon the character of each district. The strategy should include what is needed to compete and co-exist with adjacent districts.
• Recruit a full-service supermarket for Downtown Denver.
• Continue to adapt to the needs of Downtown residents and workforce.

A CLEAN AND SAFE CITY

Overall, cleanliness and safety resonated as a priority for stakeholders. According to Travel + Leisure Magazine 2011, Denver was ranked the 5th safest city in the country (6).

Considerations

• Consider public-private partnerships to aid in improving Denver’s homeless situation.
• Develop stronger neighborhood support in key areas, such as Civic Center Park and Arapahoe Square, to create programs that will help increase public safety.

ARAPAHOE SQUARE

This district is a focus of stakeholders for a variety of reasons. While progress has been made in the development of a plan for the district, a wide variety of challenges still need to be addressed.

Considerations

• The social services providers and the population that they serve must be part of the continuing conversation as how to best encourage development in Arapahoe Square.
• Fragmented and often isolated ownership has limited the development of surface parking lots.
• Re-routing of traffic through the district will provide opportunities to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
7. District Strategies

**SUCCESSES AND AREAS OF FOCUS BY DISTRICT**

**COMMERCIAL CORE**

Success/Progress:
- The 14th Street redevelopment has created a vibrant corridor into Downtown Denver (3).
- The activation of Skyline Park is meeting the needs of the community by providing entertainment in the heart of the Commercial Core (5).

Areas of Focus:
- As the Downtown Area Plan predicted, Denver has become a leading city in attracting the next generation of the national workforce. In the last year alone, the Downtown residential population has grown 35% (7). A key component to progress within the Commercial Core will be the continued focus on meeting the needs of both residents and employees within the Core:
- The 16th Street Mall will be a critical component to the ongoing success within the Commercial Core. While progress has been made and improvements are underway, continued focus is required on how to best provide entertainment, restaurants and services that employees, visitors and residents will use. The recent $7.98 million dollar grant from the Federal government will be a great start toward meeting this need (8).
- The planned Downtown Denver Circulator (DDC) will also be beneficial in allowing the Commercial Core to be able to connect with neighboring districts and adjacent neighborhoods. The DDC will begin service in 2014 (9).
- Long term, the Commercial Core will continue to face the challenge of how best to attract the millennial generation work force. More efforts by leadership to promote ideas to foster a dynamic work environment within the Commercial Core will be critical for the district’s success.

**LOWER DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Success/Progress:
- The redevelopment of Denver Union Station is the key effort currently underway, and this district continues to enhance its vibrancy through additional development, such as the redevelopment of the Office Depot site at 16th and Larimer Streets.
- The Sugar Cube and the Saddlery buildings are great examples of exciting new development in the district.
- Lower Downtown has enjoyed ongoing development of restaurants and small retailers that continue to add to the character of this community.

Areas of Focus:
- The district must continue to be vigilant about maintaining its historic character as it continues to be a key district for both commercial and residential activity.
- Community leaders and investors should focus on enhancements to complement the street design and maintain the pedestrian-friendly guidelines as stated in the Lower Downtown Neighborhood Plan (12).
- A defined retail strategy.
7. District Strategies

BALLPARK

Success/Progress:
• The Ballpark neighborhood has seen success in residential development with several projects underway, including a residential building under construction at 22nd and Blake Streets.
• Consistent growth in both retail and restaurants within the district.

Areas of Focus:
• As with Arapahoe Square, continued efforts need to be made by neighborhood leadership, including public-private partnerships, to address the homeless issue in this community.
• Continued focus on historic preservation, as well as enhancements to pedestrian access, should be immediate priorities for this district.
• The Ballpark district will benefit from a planned transit station in the vicinity of 35th and Downing Streets as part of the extension of the Central Corridor line under the FasTracks transit program, as well as the transit station at 40th Street (10).

CULTURAL CORE

Success/Progress:
• Civic Center Park has benefited from new efforts in park activation by the Civic Center Conservancy, providing events such as Civic Center EATS.
• The recent opening of The History Colorado Center and the construction of the Ralph Carr Judicial Center are highlights for this district.
• The renovation of 14th Street enhanced this district by providing better access to the Denver Performing Arts Complex and the Convention Center.

Areas of Focus:
• Ongoing pedestrian improvements on Speer Boulevard, 14th Street, Colfax Avenue and the 14th Avenue and Broadway intersection will be critical, especially as pedestrian traffic increases with the continued success of Civic Center Park and the 14th Street corridor.

GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Success/Progress:
• Residential development and growth has continued in this district.
• The opening of The Clyfford Still Museum has added to the character and culture of this district.

Areas of Focus:
• The activation of the Evans School continues to be an opportunity. Private and public sector leaders need to work together in developing ideas for activating the school site.
• As with other key districts, this district will benefit greatly from the Downtown Denver Circulator, which is expected to terminate in the northern part of the district and connect to Denver Union Station (9).
7. District Strategies

AURARIA

Success/Progress:

• The area north of Auraria Parkway has become central to Denver’s sports and entertainment scene, with multiple transportation options connecting the Pepsi Center, Elitch Gardens Amusement Park, the Children’s Museum and the Downtown Aquarium.
• According to the Auraria Higher Education Center Master Plan update, the development of an urban campus that is more tightly connected with Lower Downtown is well underway (11).
• There is visible growth taking place, with development of the Metropolitan State University Student Success Building, the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center and the University of Colorado Denver’s Business School at 1475 Lawrence Street.

Areas of Focus:

• Ongoing development of Speer Boulevard into a grand boulevard with a clear connection to Downtown should be the next step in effectively tying the Auraria campus to Downtown.

CENTRAL PLATTE VALLEY

Success/Progress:

• The Central Platte Valley has been successful in enhancing multi-modal connections throughout the district.
• In addition to consistent residential growth and development, there have also been successes in commercial development throughout this district, including the area around Millennium Bridge.

Areas of Focus:

• Continued family-focused efforts in this district will be critical for success.
• This district could be a candidate for locating a Downtown school.
• Increased efforts on additional family-friendly amenities, such as daycare centers and other family-oriented activities, should be a focus for this district.

References:
1. Perspective comments and recommendations are derived from DDP Leadership Class Stakeholder interviews consisting of public and private sector leaders living and working in Downtown Denver.
6. Travel + Leisure 2011
7. Apartment Realty Advisors, 2012

Photo: Larry Laszlo, CoMedia
8. 2012 Leadership Program Call to Action

The strides taken in the first five years of the 2007 Downtown Area Plan’s implementation have been quite extraordinary, especially in the wake of one of the greatest economic recessions since the 1920s. However, many of the goals are still in varying states of completion, from the barely started to the nearly completed. The accomplishment of many of the remaining goals outlined in the Downtown Area Plan seems daunting, but does not require only the big, transformative changes to take place in order for them to be successful. Accomplishment lies in the balance of big – and small - achievements.

The larger transformations take time, political will and large funding commitments. But it is these projects, such as the Denver Union Station redevelopment and FasTracks, which can completely transform Downtown Denver. The big, transformative moves going forward will need:

- Public and private sector leadership.
- A positive, pioneering spirit in a tough economy, a Denver tradition!
- Support for the efforts of Denver’s Road Home to identify new opportunities for shelters and social services providers.
- Conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets.
- Attraction of a large, catalytic development to Arapahoe Square.
- Implementation of new zoning in Arapahoe Square.
- Support for residential development through grocery stores, livable streets and schools.

The smaller, momentum-building initiatives around a city are very important. They’re generally community-led, quickly implemented and directly impactful for a neighborhood or district. The small moves will:

- Create projects that are essential to creating inspiration and momentum in the city.
- Exploit the opportunity to create leaders.
- Create a temporary living street for people, and demonstrate the potential of angled on-street parking, pedestrian-scaled streetscape and two-way vehicular traffic.
- Utilize social media campaigns to get volunteers to help plant trees, clean up streets, volunteer at local shelters and support neighborhood events.
- Promote retail activity through cash mobs and pop up stores.
- Engage future leaders and show them how to promote positive change in their city.
- Demonstrate how small enhancements make a big impact on the urban environment.

The 2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program class would like to extend a call to action for you to get engaged in your city. Whether you join a neighborhood association, talk to a city council member, form a non-profit organization, or lead a taskforce within an organization like the Downtown Denver Partnership, the donation of your time and effort will help to drive the momentum behind many of these initiatives. Whatever the type or scope of your involvement, it’s time to get involved!
9. THANK YOU

We would like to thank Jim Kirchheimer, Beth Warren and Bonnie Gross from the Downtown Denver Partnership for all of their support and hard work in managing the Downtown Denver Leadership Program, as well as Shane Stowell from RHR International for his presentations and contributions on effective leadership and management techniques.

A special thanks to the monthly DDLP session guests, whose names can be found in Appendix B, for their presentations on business, leadership and life in Downtown Denver.

Many thanks to the numerous stakeholders, who graciously offered their time and their expertise to our class; the full list of stakeholder interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

And lastly, we would like to thank you, the reader, for taking the time to read this report.
## APPENDIX A: 2012 DDLP CLASS ROSTER

### 2012 DOWNTOWN DENVER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM - REPORT COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott Anderson (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Jennifer Deusser</td>
<td>Jerry Mason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Lorman (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Monty Everson</td>
<td>Jay Rael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor Bartel</td>
<td>Patrick Fairfield</td>
<td>Ruth Rohs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Beiser</td>
<td>Fred Fischer</td>
<td>Nathan Starck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Brannum</td>
<td>Brian Higgins</td>
<td>Mike Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Adams, Gates Corporation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evan Lichtenfels, RedPeak Properties, LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Allen, Intermountain Electric</td>
<td></td>
<td>Andrew Lillie, Hogan Lovells US LLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Aronson, The Ritz Carlton, Denver</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leah Lindahl, The Kenney Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor Bartel, Rothgerber Johnson &amp; Lyons LLP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lisa Lorman, Metropolitan State University of Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cari Bayens, Polsinelli Shughart PC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nate Lowery, Hensel Phelps Construction Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Beiser, BKD CPAs &amp; Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vincent G. Martinez, Planning For Public Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhonda Bell, AECOM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Mason, Auraria Higher Education Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Bernstein, City &amp; County of Denver</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clayton Mitchell, Kaiser Permanente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam Borges, Residential Niche</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Mott, Artifex10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brianna Borin, Snooze an A.M. Eatery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Muniz, Colorado Business Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Brannum, GroundFloor Media</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alex Myers, Rothgerber Johnson &amp; Lyons LLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Bromley, Kiewit Building Group Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Turid Nagel-Casebolt, City &amp; County of Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Carroll, Faegre Baker Daniels</td>
<td></td>
<td>Khanh Nguyen, Colorado Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caryn Champine, City &amp; County of Denver</td>
<td></td>
<td>Naoko Nishitani, DaVita Healthcare Partners Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ Chapman, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deanna “DeeDee” Osterlag, Wells Fargo Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Clendinning, Children’s Hospital Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharon Panas, Xcel Energy Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Deesser, Bellico Credit Union</td>
<td></td>
<td>Todd Papazian, CBRE – Global Corporate Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghan Dougavito, Tryba Architects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin Petty, Gold Crown Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monty Everson, JE Dunn Construction Company</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brian Phetteplace, Downtown Denver Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Fairfield, UMB Bank Colorado</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nadine Pietrowski, GHP Financial Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Fischer, Northern Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diego Plata, MWH Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Ford, Dufford &amp; Brown, PC.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin Pruett, Anadarko Petroleum Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Frandina, Kutak Rock LLP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cody Purdy, Hays Companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Fulenwider, Urban Ventures LLC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jay Rael, Heinrich Marketing, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarajane Goodfellow, Jones Lang LaSalle</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarissa Raney, Holland &amp; Hart LLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Green, Denver Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>Allison Recker, Vectra Bank Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Halliger, Cresa Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth Rohs, The IMA Financial Group, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hagan, McWhinney</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stacey Rose, Pure Brand Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Harrington, Van Gilder Insurance Corp.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lindsey Rothrock, Maye White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Higgins, Raw Architecture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Melissa Rummel, Denver Housing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lou Ann Hight, SATERPAULL ARCHITECTS, INC.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jorge Sanchez, Hermes Worldwide Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Hoffman, Denver Urban Renewal Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td>Henry Schloss, Maxwell Print Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Holt, Encana Oil &amp; Gas (USA) Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Angela Shields, Suncor Energy (U.S.A.) Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Holzwart, Humphries Poli Architects, PC.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emily Silverman, City &amp; County of Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia Johnson, Emily Griffith Technical College</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brett Sisco, Mortenson Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Jones, Image Brew</td>
<td></td>
<td>Christopher Smith, Colorado State Board of Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Kass, Polsinelli Shughart PC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Kelner, Kiewit Building Group Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peter A. Smith, Steele Street Bank &amp; Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dustin Kitson, Snell &amp; Wilmer L.L.P</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nathan Starck, Valley Crest Design Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Lamb, Xcel Energy Company</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mike Sullivan, GHP Financial Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Lederhos, Steele Street Bank and Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mike Trueblood, Comcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Lentz, Colorado Rockies Baseball Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>Audrey Will, Pear Workplace Solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 Co-Chair  
2 Executive Chair  
3 Presentation Committee  
4 Class Trustee  
5 Social Committee

Report Layout & Design – Megan Moye Zacher, Zebra Incorporated
APPENDIX B: GUEST SPEAKERS

February 21, 2012
Ferd Belz, Chair, Downtown Denver Partnership
Tami Door, Downtown Denver Partnership
Chris Geddes, studioINSITE, 2009 Class
Sydney Hamilton, RNL, 2006 Class
The Honorable Michael Hancock, Mayor, City and County of Denver
Steve Katich, DDLP Chair, JE Dunn Construction Company
Jennifer Kaufman, US Bank, 2007 Class
Chris Murray, Hogan Lovells US LLP, 2011 Class

March 6, 2012
John Desmond, Downtown Denver Partnership
Cassie Milestone, Downtown Denver Partnership
Brad Segal, Progressive Urban Management Associates

March 20, 2012
Tom Clark, Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation

April 17, 2012
Ferd Belz, L.C. Fulenwider
Mike Dino, Patton Boggs
Tracy Huggins, Denver Urban Renewal Authority
Gail Klapper, Colorado Forum
Elbra Wedgeworth, Denver Health

May 15, 2012
Mark Bernstein, City of Denver, Department of Parks and Recreation
George Delaney, City of Denver, Department of Public Works
Ellen Ittelson, City of Denver, Department of Community Planning and Development
Molly Urbina, City of Denver, Department of Community Planning and Development

June 19, 2012
Frank Cannon, Continuum Partners and Union Station Neighborhood Company
Lindy Eichenbaum Lent, Civic Center Conservancy

July 17, 2012
Courtland Hyser, City of Denver, Department of Community Planning and Development
Barb Weiske, Auraria Higher Education Center

August 21, 2012
Brad Buchanan, RNL and Chair of the Denver Planning Board

September 18, 2012
Maria Garcia Berry, CRI Associates
Bruce James, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Shrek
Chris Nevitt, Denver City Council
Mimi Roberson, Presbyterian / St. Luke’s
Jon Schlegel, Snooze A.M. Eatery
Elbra Wedgeworth, Denver Health
APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES

The following stakeholders are presented in order of the groups, organizations, or companies they are associated with;

City and County of Denver
- Mark Bernstein
- Brad Buchanan
- Caryn Champine
- Crissy Fanganello
- Jack Finlaw
- Courtland Hyser
- Ellen Ittelson
- Mark Najarian
- Emily Snyder
- Ginger White

Downtown Denver Partnership
- John Desmond
- Tami Door
- Kate Haher
- Aylene McCallum
- Brian Phetteplace
- Cassie Milestone

Denver City Council
- Albus Brooks, District 8
- Judy Montero, District 9
- Jeanne Robb, District 10

RTD
- Bill Elfenbein
- Bill James
- Bill Sirois

Denver Bike Initiatives
- Terry Malouf, Bicycle Colorado
- Piep Van Heuven, bikedenver.org
- James Waddell, Denver B-Cycle

Denver Sustainability Initiatives
- Jerome Davis, Xcel Energy
- Adam Schlegel, Snooze A.M. Eatery
- Michelle Weingarden, GreenPrint
- Denver

Neighborhood Associations
- Jennifer Arzberger, Kids Downtown Denver Organized
- Holly Barrett, LoDo District
- Frank Cannon, Union Station Neighborhood Co.
- Josh Davies, LoDo Neighborhood Association
- Rhonda Knop, Golden Triangle Association
- Chris Shears, LoDo District
- Tara Webber, Ballpark Neighborhood Association

Miscellaneous Denver Organizations
- Kelly Brough, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Clark, Denver Metro Economic Development
- Lindy Eichenbaum Lent, Civic Center Conservancy
- Cole Finegan, Hogan Lovells
- Jamie Gomez, Colorado Housing & Finance Authority
- Tom Gougeon, Gates Foundation
- Tracy Huggins, Denver Urban Renewal Authority
- Bennie Milliner, Denver’s Road Home
- Bill Mosher, Denver Housing Authority
- Edward Nichols, History Colorado
- Brad Segal, P.U.M.A
- Marren Stewart, Live Well Colorado
- Bill Vidal, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Elbra Wedgeworth, Denver Health

Small Business Sector
- Laurie Helmick, Luxe Salon
- Walter Isenberg, Sage Hospitality
- Jynx Messacar, Merchants Office Furniture
- Jon Schlegel, Snooze A.M. Eatery
- Jim Turner, Hotel Teatro

Financial Sector
- Jim Basey, Centennial Bank
- Patti Gage, CoBiz Financial
- Hasan Salem, US Bank
- John Yarberry, Wells Fargo Bank

Auraria Campus
- Jon Bortles – Auraria Higher Education Center
- Jill Jennings Golich – Auraria Higher Education Center
- Stephen Jordan, Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Erin Trapp, Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Barb Weiske, Auraria Higher Education Center

Developers / Property Owners
- Dana Crawford, Urban Neighborhoods
- Josh Fine, Focus Properties
- Chris Frampton, East West Urban Management
- Jerry Glick, Columbia Group
- Evan Makovsky, NAI Shames Makovsky
- Randy Nichols, Nichols Partnership
- Susan Powers, Urban Ventures
- Mark Sidell, Gart Properties
- Joe Vostrejs, Larimer Associates
- David Zucker, Zocalo Development

Architects / Designers
- Gary Desmond, AR7 Architects
- David Tryba, Tryba Architects
The 2012 Downtown Denver Leadership Program class conducted a survey based on a Community Survey done in conjunction with the Downtown Denver Area Plan. This survey was arranged to compile our thoughts about the progress of the DAP over the past five years, and to assess our future priorities as a class compared to the community at large. Below are the survey results:

### Demographic Data of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Denver Residents</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Denver Residents</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Residents</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Property Owner</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Business Owner</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Employee</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### State of Denver - Past 5 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Appearance</td>
<td>Better</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Better</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Same</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Worse</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Better</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Better</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Same</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Worse</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a Place to Live</td>
<td>Better</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Better</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Same</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Worse</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Place to Walk</td>
<td>Better</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Better</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Same</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Worse</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Place to Work</td>
<td>Better</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Better</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Same</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly Worse</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Safety of Downtown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Better</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Same</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Worse</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Museums and Cultural Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education and Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Connections to Civic Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Housing Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sports and Entertainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Special Events/Festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Family Friendly Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Connections to Auraria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Shopping Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ease of Parking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Jobs and Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Connections to Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Emphasis</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Emphasis</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Emphasis</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: CLASS SURVEY RESULTS

Importance of Downtown Denver Characteristics in 2025 (ranking of most important)

**Heart of a Cutting Edge 21st Century City**  
1

**safe/diverse/sustainable community**  
2

**fun and entertaining destination**  
3

**walkability, recreation and outdoor lifestyle**  
4

**reflecting its unique western heritage**  
5