

Colfax Conditions Task Force
Recommendations for a
West Colfax Avenue Corridor Reinvestment Plan & Area

November, 2005

Introduction

The Colfax Conditions Task Force was convened by the Lakewood Reinvestment Authority (LRA) in August 2005. This group of citizens, business owners, neighborhood representatives, and residents was tasked with reviewing the Colfax Reinvestment Conditions Survey and providing recommendations to the LRA and the Lakewood City Council with regard to the use of reinvestment (urban renewal) along the Colfax corridor. This recommendations document is the final product of the task force. The work of the task force is advisory only, and is in addition to the public process required by urban renewal law.

Members of the Task Force

Dave Abbink
West Metro Fire Protection District

Deidra Garcia
Principal, DRG Construction
Chair, Alameda Business Improvement District

Tom Gleason
Board Member, GoldCrown Foundation, a non-profit organization located within the West Alameda Ave. Corridor

Bruce Heitler
Chair, Lowry Redevelopment Authority

Bill Marino
Chair, Colfax Conditions Task Force
Chair, Planning Commission

Bob Murphy
City Council, Ward 2
Chair, Colfax Citizens Advisory Committee

Tom Murray
Owner, Lakewood Brick Company

Nancy Osborn-Nicholas
Executive Director (former), Jeffco Action Center
Board Member, West Colfax Community Association

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Planning Commission, Ward 1

Mary Ann Proctor
Leasing Agent, Propp Realty
Board Member, West Colfax Community Association

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Owner, Rockley Music
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Doug Stiverson
Owner, West Side Cycle & Fitness
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George Valuck
Executive Director, Alameda Gateway Assoc.

Sharon Vincent
Neighborhood Representative, Two Creeks
Board Member, West Colfax Community Association

Cheryl Wise
City Council, Ward 1

Fran Yehle
Neighborhood Representative, Eiber

Plan Objectives

The following are proposed objectives for inclusion in the reinvestment plan:

1. Encourage and support the voluntary rehabilitation of buildings and sites within the West Colfax Avenue Corridor Reinvestment Area.
2. Retain, stabilize, and encourage the expansion and improvement of existing businesses within the reinvestment area.
3. Support and encourage the development and/or redevelopment of small businesses and locally-owned businesses.
4. Prevent the decline of property values and quality of life in neighborhoods that surround the reinvestment area, and develop quality projects that are compatible with and complement the surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Address and correct infrastructure and flood plain issues within the reinvestment area.
6. Improve the quality, look, and function of the reinvestment area by incorporating superior design standards that include public areas, public amenities (gathering places, mini-parks, etc.), safe and attractive pedestrian connections, and landscaped medians.
7. Create identifiable destinations such as enhanced retail, entertainment, cultural and intellectual facilities that will attract shoppers, tourists, students, local residents and people from throughout the metro area.
8. Encourage and support the development of a mix of businesses and housing opportunities appropriate and attractive for people of various income levels.
9. Build upon and emphasize the history and unique character of the area.
10. Provide identity and beauty to West Colfax Avenue and the reinvestment area by providing art work, sculptures, green space, landscaping, and pedestrian enhancements.
11. Address the parking needs of businesses, residents and customers by optimizing land uses and providing safe and attractive parking areas.
12. Meet the goals and objectives of the Lakewood Comprehensive Plan and the West Colfax Avenue Action Plan and all other adopted plans and guidelines that have influence within the Reinvestment Area.

Eminent Domain

The following policies should guide the authorization and use of eminent domain:

A. The City Council must consider whether to authorize eminent domain on a case-by-case basis for each property within a redevelopment project. In order to consider the use of eminent domain for a project, the Council must make a finding that the redevelopment project is essential to meeting the goals of the reinvestment plan, and that the project cannot be accomplished without the use of eminent domain.

B. In determining whether to authorize the use of eminent domain for the project, the Council should take the following into account:

1. The use of eminent domain should not be restricted if the owner is a willing seller who wants the LRA to use eminent domain for any reason. Where there are multiple ownership interests on a single property, "owner" means those controlling a majority of the interests.
2. Eminent domain should not be used where private market forces are attracting reinvestment that supports the goals of the West Colfax Avenue Action Plan.
3. Eminent domain should not be used on:
 - a. A property for which historic designation is being pursued.
 - b. A residential property that is owner-occupied.
 - c. A property where the business is owned and operated locally within the Metro Denver area, and is in good repair.
 - d. A property that has recently been redeveloped or remodeled, and is in good repair.
 - e. A property whose overall design meets the design standards in the Colfax Overlay Zone or any other applicable plan, and is in good repair.
 - f. A property is in good repair if:
 - i. the structure, roof and foundation are sound with no evidence of shifting, buckling or movement; and
 - ii. exterior surfaces and facades have the intended color or appearance with no fading, cracking, peeling or other damage; and
 - iii. glass surfaces and windows are intact; and
 - iv. all building mechanical systems are in good working order; and
 - v. all site improvements, such as parking lot and pedestrian surfaces, signage, and lighting are in good working order and show evidence of regular maintenance and cleaning; and
 - vi. there are no other conditions which present a danger to life or property from fire or other causes or to public health, safety or welfare.
4. Even where a property falls under the categories in section 3, eminent domain may be appropriate if the property is necessary to correct, eliminate or prevent the spread of conditions such as floodplain, public infrastructure deficiencies or environmental contamination. (If only a portion of a property is needed to accomplish the project, then eminent domain should be used only on the portion).

5. Where authorized, eminent domain is to be used as a tool of last resort, only after reasonable efforts to reach a negotiated settlement have failed.

Other Powers

Financing

The reinvestment plan should specify how the LRA and the West Metro Fire District will agree to work together to address the issue of allocating tax increment revenue to meet the needs of both fire protection and reinvestment within the area.

Relocation

LRA should adopt a relocation policy for both owners and tenants that provides for more assistance than the minimum required by both State and Federal laws, similar to the LRA policies for Villa and Creekside.

Plan Advisory Group

To assist with implementation of this Plan, a citizen's advisory group shall be formed by the LRA. The purpose of this group is to provide input and recommendations to the LRA and to ensure strong communication between the LRA and the West Colfax Avenue businesses. The recommendations of the advisory group will be sought on a project-by-project basis as the project and/or projects are identified. It is recommended that the advisory group include business and property owners within the West Colfax Avenue Corridor Reinvestment Area, members of the Lakewood City Council, and members of the Lakewood Planning Commission.

Boundary

The reinvestment area boundary should be as depicted on the attached map.