

# West Colfax



VISION

2040

Action Plan  
Adopted August, 2015

COVER IMAGE

Mural at 13th Avenue and Lamar Street. "Hear the Train A Humming" by Bobby Magee Lopez / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring  
Mural funded by Lakewood Community Development Block Grant



40W Ribbon-Cutting, 2012 / Photo Barbara Gal

# Experience Lakewood's West Colfax



Cindy Baroway / Photo Ryan Muncy Photography

## A creative community...come be inspired!

This document represents the collective efforts of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. The group has dedicated time, expertise, and passion for West Colfax to support the evolution of this historic corridor in a way that aligns with the vision and values of the community. The overarching goal is to shape West Colfax into a place where locals and visitors come to create fresh opportunities, connect with diverse experiences, and celebrate culture both old and new. The community and this plan have a clear message that is both a vision and an invitation to all who wish to join in the journey: Experience Lakewood's West Colfax - a creative community...come be inspired!

“West Colfax is more than just a street. People live here, they make memories here, they work here, they celebrate important events here, and they love it here! West Colfax is a community!”

- Cindy Baroway, Lakewood City Council, 2008-2015

# WEST COLFAX LATELY

Lakewood's Perspective on Colorado's Most Famous Avenue | Pilot Edition



6 The Evolution of  
an Unlikely Pair

10 Return of the Neon—  
The Resurgence of West Colfax

18 Casa Bonita ...  
For Adults?

Cover of Pilot Magazine Edition / West Colfax Lately, 2015

## The Lakewood West Colfax Corridor is a great place to do business

### It is...

- A vibrant, growing area with the right zoning in place
- Home to the 40 West Arts District, one of twelve Colorado Creative Districts
- Adjacent to the West Rail Line
- Home to Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design with over 1,500 students enrolled

### It has...

- The West Colfax Community Association that works in partnership with the City of Lakewood in organizing businesses, neighbors, and events to showcase the corridor
- A vested Business Improvement District in place
- Opportunities everywhere for residential and commercial development
- Decades long vibrant businesses that dot the corridor such as Rockley Music, Chicago's, and Casa Bonita
- A unique history that continues to capture one's imagination
- Infrastructure investments that have been implemented and additional investments that have been approved by City Council

Lakewood is a forward-thinking City ready to partner with you. 5

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Casa Bonita



Colfax Avenue in Lakewood / Photo Ken Takahashi

# Plan Organization

This plan is organized by the key topics that are critical to addressing issues & implementing important actions.

The topics are:

- Cultural Identity  
(History)
- Infrastructure  
(Physical & Organizational Readiness)
- Connectivity  
(Transportation)
- Placemaking  
(Design & Physical Improvements)
- Vibrancy  
(Marketing & Promotions)
- Celebrate Colfax  
(Economic & Cultural)

Under each topic category are Goals and specific Action Steps developed and delineated by the West Colfax Vision Group Committee of community members. This Plan organization is discussed in greater detail in the appendix (see Viable, Livable and Memorable discussion).

Implementation of these Goals and Action Steps identified in this Plan will continue to be a collaborative effort between the Lakewood West Colfax business organizations (Lakewood-West Colfax Business Improvement District, West Colfax Community Association, and 40 West Arts District), the City of Lakewood and other civic organizations (i.e. Lakewood Historic Preservation Committee); with the business community taking a strong and frequently a lead role in implementation.

This collaborative effort has been ongoing since the adoption of the 2009 Colfax Action Plan. The intent of this Plan is to update and expand upon that plan based upon progress that has been made and to extend the vision for West Colfax in Lakewood well into the future.

# CHAPTER 1

## CULTURAL IDENTITY

transportation heritage  
eclectic • entrepreneurial  
architectural uniqueness

diversity  
historical assets  
unity

# Cultural Identity

When Jack Kerouac, an American novelist and poet, first traveled Colfax, Lakewood was not yet a city. What he saw then and what travelers see today are uniquely different but surprisingly the same. West Colfax, US Highway Route 40, was once a traveler's dream, much like the famous Route 66. Travelers had places to rest their heads for a good night's sleep, dine at Davies' Chuck Wagon Diner, a place to enjoy a meal and entertainment at Taylor's Supper Club.



Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design



Historic Scatterday's Lumber Sign

Today, you can still dine at Davies'. While Taylor's is long gone, Lakewood is home to the iconic Casa Bonita where you can enjoy the atmosphere and be entertained.

In 2013, Lakewood took a major step toward recognizing its past and created a Historic Preservation Commission. The following spring, the State of Colorado granted the City Certified Local Government (CLG) status. The City's Historic Preservation Commission can make recommendations to the City Council concerning the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The commission also can provide information on state and federal preservation tax credits and other potential funding sources for preservation activities. That same year, 40 West Arts District was awarded a state grant to survey nearly 600 buildings along West Colfax Avenue from Sheridan to Youngfield. The results of this survey were shared with the public in 2015. There is much interest in preserving the cultural identity of West Colfax and the following section provides recommended goals and action items for preservationists, the Lakewood West Colfax BID, Lakewood, and the community.



Davies' Chuck Wagon Diner

## GOAL CI-1

Develop a Lakewood West Colfax history museum to preserve the oral and visual history of this commercial byway and to illustrate the impact it had on Lakewood's development.

### Action Steps

#### CI-1a.

Record oral histories of West Colfax residents and business owners and index the Sentinel and other newspapers from 1919 to the present.

#### CI-1b.

Develop a public-private partnership to create a museum or experience that celebrates elements of West Colfax's past. These efforts could include a museum/public events center dedicated to 20th Century neon signs

and food service that recreates the menus of "lost restaurants."

#### CI-1c.

Identify funding mechanisms and partnerships to develop and operate a museum.

## GOAL CI-2

Leverage the unique identity of the corridor to support historic district designation and preservation.

### Action Steps

#### CI-2a.

Establish design guidelines to encourage new construction and incorporate details and design elements from the mid-20th Century.

#### CI-2b.

Pursue designation as a National Historic District and conduct a Multiple Property Documentation of West Colfax's historic motels.

## GOAL CI-3

Recognize and promote the historical resources along the corridor as cultural assets and as a key to the corridor's ongoing vitality.

### Action Steps

#### CI-3a.

Create a cohesive feel and community identity around the historic character of the area. Possibilities include promoting West Colfax's agricultural beginnings with farmer's markets at Lamar Station Plaza and Westland and implement interpretive signage at important locations.

#### CI-3b.

Encourage the existing neighborhood associations to work with historians and preservationists to understand and document their special historic sites.

#### CI-3c.

Establish an annual Lakewood historic symposium as part of Historic Preservation Month in May.

#### CI-3d.

Celebrate important historic buildings and place markers.

#### CI-3e.

Create a 'walk of fame', written histories, and other experiences for residents and visitors.

## GOAL CI-4

Define the authentic characteristics and features that are valuable to honor Colfax's history and character.

### Action Steps

#### CI-4a.

Identify characteristics and activities that support the historic era (the mid-20th Century) most associated with West Colfax Avenue. Develop neighborhood surveys to document styles, building forms, and to gather the history of the built environment.

#### CI-4b.

Work with developers to identify how construction can complement and enhance historic characteristics.

#### CI-4c.

Use West Colfax as the economic and preservation model to develop theme surveys to document groups of at-risk structures.

#### CI-4d.

Support the City and the Lakewood Historic Preservation Commission as it develops and oversees programs that may include a municipal tax credit program that encourages home and business owners to

preserve their historic properties. Utilize tax credits through enterprise zones, or other incentives like low-interest loans to encourage the owners of non-listed and non-eligible buildings to incorporate historic design ideas into their buildings.

## GOAL CI-5

Promote historic preservation as an economic development tool.

### Action Steps

#### CI-5a.

Promote the federal and state income tax programs to encourage rehabilitation of historic structures.

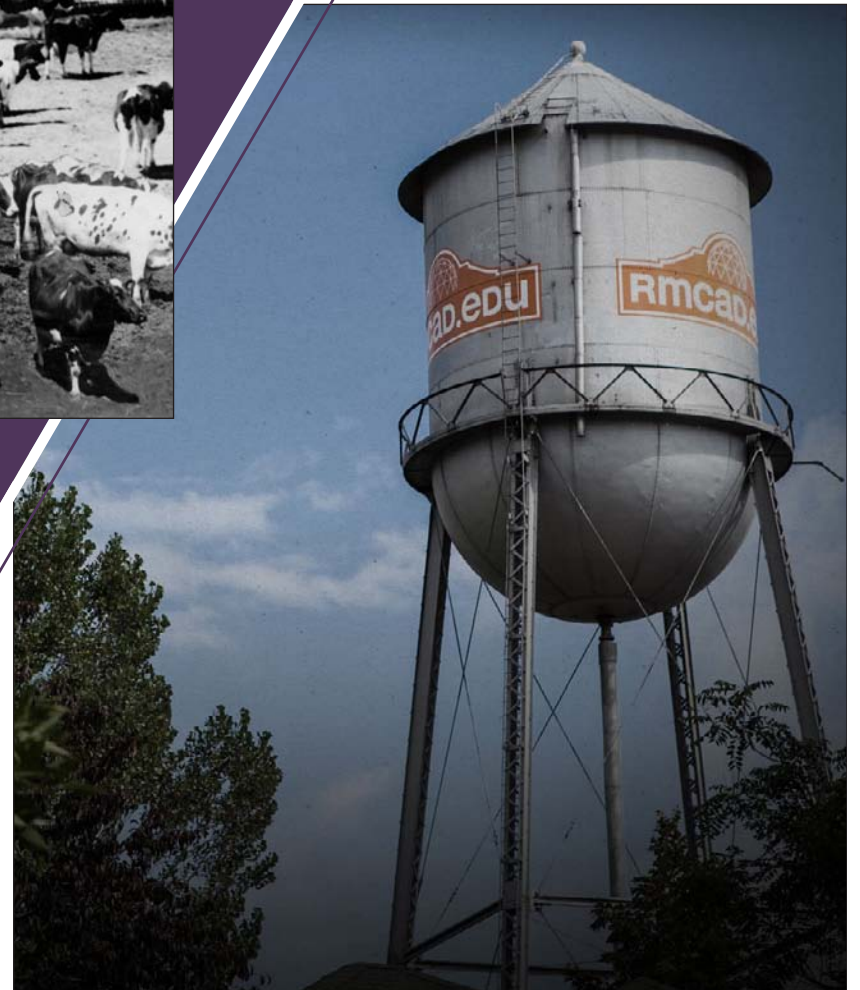


Dino's Restaurant on Colfax since 1960s / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring



JCRS Site Circa 1900  
(Now Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design Campus)

Rocky Mountain College of  
Art + Design Water Tower 2015



# Rockley Music

One of the longest-running businesses on West Colfax.



Rockley Music Mural / Photo provided by Liane Rockley



Rockley Music / Photo provided by Liane Rockley

Rockley music has been family-owned and operated since 1946. After almost 70 years on the West Colfax Corridor, the Rockley family has seen many changes. At one time there were four music-related stores along this stretch of US Highway 40. Yet, these stores somehow managed to avoid overlapping their products with one another.

Melvin and Mildred Rockley first opened Rockley Music in 1946 at the corner of Colfax and Wadsworth by selling everything from washers and dryers to band instruments. In the 1950s, the Rockleys built their current store with the help of some friends, almost like an old barn-raising community event! Everyone pitched in. As the booming record industry took off, they decided to concentrate on their musical instruments and print music.

Over the past seven decades, the Rockley family has continued to stay current, even with all the change in the music industry. They have witnessed the ebb and flow of other businesses along the historic corridor. Through it all, they never wavered in their belief that Colfax Avenue was the place to be!

# Ideas to Think About

What if...

- There was a museum celebrating West Colfax's history and its entrepreneurial heritage?
- There was a Lakewood-West Colfax Walk of Fame?
- There was a new, iconic building along West Colfax inspired by mid-century modern architecture?
- There was a destination celebrating neon signs?
- Supper clubs returned to West Colfax?



Lakewood Grill / Photo Barbara Gal

# CHAPTER 2

## INFRASTRUCTURE

minimize barriers • sidewalk continuity  
efficient city development services  
safety • living opportunities  
flood plain solutions  
development opportunities  
parks • human scaled  
engaged community  
trees

# Infrastructure

Every community relies heavily on its infrastructure for safety, for commerce, and for future design of development and redevelopment. The City of Lakewood was incorporated in 1969 and inherited an existing infrastructure system, especially along the West Colfax corridor. Over the years, various projects have been undertaken to improve the area with many more projects to complete. In the spring of 2015 City Council approved a stormwater utility fee increase that will allow funding for 10 drainage improvement projects, many of which will improve the corridor.

A great example of the impact of such projects is the northeast corner of Wadsworth and Colfax. This area historically flooded after heavy rainstorms. After redeveloping this corner, the flooding has stopped, a water feature is now in place, and many properties have been removed from the flood plain - a win-win for all involved.

Public infrastructure serves as the building blocks essential to support and enhance the physical environment as a place to live, work, and play. Important infrastructure elements that directly support the West Colfax Corridor include streets, sidewalks, stormwater and flood plain systems, green infrastructure such as parks, and public infrastructure including plazas, community facilities and gathering spaces. It is critical

that future infrastructure investments contribute to a well-designed and functional physical environment for people as well as for the economic vibrancy of the Lakewood West Colfax Corridor.

As the vision group committee members agreed: "Nurture the roots, and there will be fruit."

## Gulch Improvements Colfax & Wadsworth

Prior to the Walmart redevelopment, North Dry Gulch was a combination of short segments of open channels, small diameter pipes, and surface flow across parking lots. The surface flood plain through the middle of the property was several feet deep and 350 feet wide in places, making redevelopment of the site difficult.

The new North Dry Gulch channel was constructed to manage the entire flood plain flow of about 700 cubic feet per second. By collecting and redirecting surface drainage, the flood plain was contained within the 70-foot wide channel, leaving developable land north and south of the channel. The 1200-foot long channel spans the site from west to east about a half block north of Colfax. With landscaped side slopes and a pedestrian trail along the north bank, the channel provides a green oasis in this urban setting. (See photo on the next page.)



Dry Gulch Improvements at Colfax & Wadsworth / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring

## GOAL I-1

Implement stormwater and flood plain improvements that support economic development objectives and demonstrate quality and functional design.

### Action Steps

#### I-1a.

Work with the Lakewood Stormwater Utility Master Plan for North Dry Gulch to incorporate economic development objectives and design elements and incrementally develop improvements.

#### I-1b.

Work to incorporate park, open space, and trail opportunities when developing flood plain and stormwater system improvements as well as maximizing opportunities within existing systems.

#### I-1c.

Develop and design systems that provide site amenities while working with the business community to meet property development needs.

## GOAL I-2

Utilize investments in infrastructure to support and enhance placemaking in the corridor.

### Action Steps

#### I-2a.

Continually seek opportunities for community gathering spaces along transportation corridors including, but not limited to, pop-up markets, informal gathering spaces with seating, and better utilization of alleyways and parking areas for commercial and public purposes.

#### I-2b.

Identify and apply for additional funding for infrastructure and placemaking enhancements through grants and other mechanisms.

#### I-2c.

Seek opportunities to share uses, day and night uses, for example,

when creating public uses along transportation corridors.

#### I-2d.

Capitalize on opportunities to activate drainage and detention areas, appropriately recognizing drainage and detention regulations and requirements.

## GOAL I-3

Leverage infrastructure investment with creative application of innovative technologies to meet plan goals.

### Action Steps

#### I-3a.

Research best practices and innovative solutions to optimize experience-enhancing solutions to infrastructure projects.

#### I-3b.

Continually look for opportunities to incorporate technological advances as a part of the corridor and seek out partners to implement these technological improvements. Think big in developing solutions.

#### I-3c.

Consider cutting edge materials and design in developing and implementing infrastructure improvements.



## Mountair Park Community Farm

Mountair Park Community Farm is an urban farming partnership between the City of Lakewood and Sprout City Farms, a nonprofit organization that believes a thriving local food system is the foundation for healthy, resilient communities. An urban farm is defined as a food production site, managed by paid staff with the help of interns, students and volunteers. Food produced at the farm is donated to local food banks and to volunteers who provide labor, distributed through a donation-based farm stand, and sold to local residents through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. In addition to providing fresh, locally grown food to residents in the area, the farm is quickly becoming an important

community gathering space and amenity, and hosts several community festivals each year.



Mountair Park Community Farm Haunted Harvest Event, 2015

# Ideas to Think About

What if...

- Infrastructure improvements created a water feature?
- Flood plain remediation is accelerated?
- Flood plain improvements made all of the area developable?
- Whitlock Park along West Colfax became an outdoor performance venue?
- There were complete sidewalk connections along all of West Colfax?



Vision for Proposed Whitlock Rec Center Improvements at Colfax Frontage

# CHAPTER 3



Lakewood

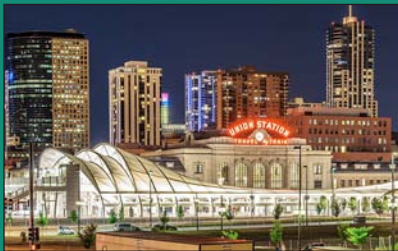
CONNECTIVITY  
fewer cars, more people  
first / last mile  
bike lanes • walkability  
west rail line  
mobility

# Connectivity

## LIGHT RAIL CONNECTING LAKEWOOD TO THE WORLD



Whether cruising in a classic car or riding light rail, West Colfax Avenue is a transportation corridor. Like infrastructure, an efficient, multi-modal transportation system is essential to economic vibrancy. West Colfax Avenue has been an essential east-west transportation artery since it was built.



Denver Union Station



22 Denver International Airport

A transportation vision, in the nearer-term, will identify elements to enhance all transportation modes as smooth-functioning and efficient as is reasonable. In the longer-term, as the vision unfolds into reality, it will combine the modes into a unified scheme that makes transportation an attraction itself in a larger, coherent vision of West Colfax while simultaneously nurturing nodes of prosperity across the corridor.

Transportation connectivity will increasingly accommodate more than just the automobile. Many of our residents, young and old, want to be able to bike or walk to restaurants, bakeries, and coffee shops from their homes and places of work.

From a regional context, West Colfax - with RTD's light rail connections opening in 2016 - will connect throughout the metro area, including Denver International Airport, thus connecting Lakewood to the world.



Lakewood / Wadsworth Station / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring

Lakewood's West Colfax Corridor has been a major transportation corridor for over 100 years.



## Interurban Car No. 25

Car 25 is the last remaining and completely intact electric railway car that once served the Denver area. As an exquisitely restored piece of history, Car No. 25 is listed on both the State Register of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places. The car was built by Denver's own Woeber Carriage Company and placed into service on February 17, 1911 and was one of seven cars that provided passenger service on the Denver & Intermountain Interurban's 13-mile Denver-Lakewood-Golden line until 1950, when rail transit service was abandoned. Beginning in 1988, the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Historical Foundation embarked on a 22 year restoration project with volunteers contributing 24,000 hours toward the project. Car No. 25 is currently stored at the Denver Federal Center. There are plans to build a museum at the Oak Street Station - the future home of Car No. 25.



Last Days of Denver Tramway  
Line 84 through Lakewood, 1950



Interurban Car No. 25

W Line Rail Car, Lamar Station 2014

## GOAL C-1

Identify and explore options to ensure Lakewood's West Colfax is a well-functioning major east-west arterial that is designed with Best Practices to address multi-modality and climate change.

### Action Steps

#### C-1a.

Participate in a sidewalk installation and improvement campaign on West Colfax and 14th Avenue.

#### C-1b.

Identify best practices for safety and barriers to cycling and walking and ensure viability and vitality of West Colfax for multi-modal mobility.

#### C-1c.

Assess locations for bike share/car share nodes or stations along the West corridor.

#### C-1d.

Build infrastructure for electric vehicle plug-in stations at key nodes.

#### C-1e.

Implement a "complete streets."

program to develop West Colfax as a multi-modal arterial.

#### C-1f.

Assess the modification of West Colfax to two through lanes in each direction to allow for on-street parking and/or larger medians.

## GOAL C-2

Create a bicycle and pedestrian experience that makes Lakewood's West Colfax Corridor an attraction.

### Action Steps

#### C-2a.

Identify critical connections and intersections needing improvement for safety, functionality, and aesthetics. (This includes the lighting, signage, striping, and overall experience).

#### C-2b.

Develop and identify resources to implement needs and improvements.

#### C-2c.

Review pedestrian/cycling plans with the perspective of future mobility practices.

#### C-2d.

Assess the feasibility of allowing innovative mobility modes, based on street, traffic, and market assessment.

## GOAL C-3

Assure that parking areas are functional, appropriate in size, and developed aesthetically.

### Action Steps

#### C-3a.

Assess parking availability to identify current and future parking challenges and opportunities.

#### C-3b.

Identify potential sites for longer-term shared parking structures.

#### C-3c.

Survey existing bicycle parking and identify potential sites for future short- and long-term bicycle racks at light rail stations.

## GOAL C-4

Promote public transportation as a convenience, attraction, and amenity within the corridor that provides regional connectivity.

### Action Steps

#### C-4a.

Identify key priorities for artistic signage and innovative wayfinding to increase visibility of multi-modal transportation opportunities.

#### C-4b.

Install wayfinding signage in partnership with RTD, the Business

Improvement District (BID), and the City of Lakewood to make bus and train use more visible.

#### C-4c.

Develop a multi-partner sponsored user-incentive program.

#### C-4d.

Develop priorities for new or

enhanced amenities, features, and services to increase Lakewood's West Colfax bus ridership.

#### C-4e.

Identify and prioritize first- and last-mile connection needs along the West Colfax Corridor.



W Rail Line at Lamar Station



RTD Box Wrap at Lamar Station / Artist Johanna Parker

Light Rail in Lakewood / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring



W Line Bike Path and RTD Box  
Wrap at Mountair Park / Artist  
Johanna Parker

# Ideas to Think About

What if...

- Lakewood's West Colfax Avenue is again the top destination?
- Every bus and rail stop was a fun, artistic experience?
- There was a bike-share system all along the Lakewood West Rail Line and West Colfax?



B-Cycle Bike Share Station



Public Art at Oak Street Station / "Walking Boats" by Joshua Wiemer

# CHAPTER 4

## PLACEMAKING

*state of the art, world class design  
nodes of activity  
performance & gathering places  
revitalize existing buildings  
respectful new buildings  
Wayfinding &  
signage*

# Placemaking

Placemaking should integrate the reinvigoration of existing buildings as well as the design of new buildings along West Colfax. Meaningful and impactful places not only exist within buildings but inhabit the spaces between buildings; the fabric that connects West Colfax should prioritize people and activity.

Lakewood's West Colfax has a unique history and a unique opportunity to simultaneously connect with the past and look to the future. The vibrancy and functionality of the street, the buildings that define the street, and the collections of buildings that create memorable districts must all intentionally leverage design to connect emotionally, physically, and socially to visitors and residents alike.

Artspace Team



Design and physical improvements along the corridor should strive to be authentically connected to Lakewood.

Authenticity is not only honoring the mid-century modern architecture and neon, the DNA of West Colfax, but also the car culture and freedom-loving and entrepreneurial spirit behind the buildings and signs. Authentic design is deeper than imitating shapes and forms and should balance a respect for history with relevant best practices and an ambitious vision of integrated urban design.

Design and physical improvements along the corridor should seek to connect new generations with history in a way that celebrates the genuine personality of the corridor. Good design celebrates the vibrancy of the unique businesses and people that define West Colfax and catalytic improvements rely on a foundation of public and private partnerships that are motivated to improve the corridor.



14th & Lamar Roundabout Sculpture 'Connected' / Artist Christopher Weed / Photo Ben Waldman

Urban design on West Colfax should prioritize the value of human relationships and support how locals and visitors gather to seek fresh experiences, foster friendships, and create life-long memories in an environment that celebrates originality, ingenuity, and resourcefulness.

The West Colfax Vision Group had many ambitions that spoke about iconic, culturally important, and sustainable buildings to attract and capture the imagination of residents and visitors alike. Never underestimate the power of those who love Colfax to make a dream a reality.

## GOAL P-1

Increase human-scale design and walkability along the corridor through physical design.

### Action Steps

#### P-1a.

Implement the 40W placemaking recommendations in the arts district.

#### P-1b.

Identify physical, economic, and regulatory impediments for new businesses to inhabit existing structures.

#### P-1c.

Develop an integrated strategy and resources to encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

#### P-1d.

Identify design themes and elements that contribute positively to the identity and character of the corridor.

#### P-1e.

Develop design guidelines and design review standards.

#### P-1f.

Integrate placemaking goals into the functional classification of the corridor.

#### P-1g.

Reinforce nodes of pedestrian activity through wayfinding and placemaking.

#### P-1h.

Create a noteworthy building or structure on West Colfax.

#### P-1i.

Infuse color and vibrancy into all design projects.

## GOAL P-2

Revitalize existing buildings.

### Action Steps

#### P-2a.

Identify physical, market, and regulatory impediments to adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

#### P-2b.

Enact appropriate incentive and leveraging strategies to encourage revitalization.

#### P-2c.

Articulate design guidelines that are based on identifying appropriate architectural themes that reinforce and retain the character of the corridor.

#### P-2d.

Synthesize tools and guidelines that holistically encourage adaptive reuse in the context of current market forces and creative possibilities for revitalizing historic assets.

## GOAL P-3

Integrate open space and buildings in a cohesive manner that expresses both unity and diversity.

### Action Steps

#### P-3a.

Integrate existing buildings into new development projects to maintain the character of the West Colfax Corridor.

#### P-3b.

Identify locations where assembling multiple properties will result in retention of existing buildings that can be integrated into larger redevelopment efforts.

#### P-3c.

Align economic, historic, and urban design goals to encourage that redevelopment efforts include the reuse of existing buildings.

## GOAL P-4

Support the creation of distinct districts and unique nodes of authenticity and activity.

### Action Steps

#### P-4a.

Integrate individual West Colfax business and neighborhood identities along the entire corridor with new development to create authentic places.

#### P-4b.

Identify authentic districts, sub-areas,

and neighborhoods on the corridor and encourage appropriate development.

#### P-4c.

Coordinate reuse, redevelopment, and new development efforts to reinforce catalytic projects.

#### P-4d.

Encourage new project initiatives along the corridor to integrate with West Rail Line connectivity.

## GOAL P-5

Integrate relevant character into the aesthetic expression of new buildings.

### Action Steps

#### P-5a.

Encourage architectural and landscape design that creates a holistic understanding of how each increment contributes to the entire urban fabric of the corridor.

#### P-5b.

Ensure that economic, infrastructure and urban design priorities are aligned.

#### P-5c.

Identify how authentic adjacent districts, sub-areas, and neighborhoods can inform the design of, and work with, new development.



Artist Lonnie Hanzon / Colfax Mural



W Line Opening Day, 2013



New Sidewalk connecting  
Lamar Station to Colfax Avenue

# Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design

Now the home of the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design, the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society (JCRS) opened its doors in 1904 to treat patients with tuberculosis, the leading cause of death in the United States at that time. Patients came from throughout the country to “chase the cure” and to seek a remedy for the disease. The treatment promoted and used at the time was to maximize patients’ exposure to the local fresh and dry air. Patients were housed in white wooden tent-cottages on the site. Over the next fifty years the JCRS provided all of its services free of charge and 10,000 patients would pass through its doors before it changed its mission to cancer treatment. Thirteen of the original buildings still stand and the site is on the National Register for Historic Places.



# Ideas to Think About

What if...

- There was an iconic destination like the Space Needle here?
- Lakewood's West Colfax was a leader in craft brewing?
- A "people-place" pocket park like a town square or amphitheater existed here?
- Lakewood's West Colfax became a top music venue?
- 40 West converted an historic motel into an arts-centric boutique motor inn?



Colfax Motel Conversion Vision / Rendering and Images Kevin Yoshida

# CHAPTER 5

## VIBRANCY

restaurants / cafes / gastropubs  
ambassadors  
keep it local · events  
arts & culture  
business incubators  
innovators

# Vibrancy

In the 1920s, Denverites would climb into their horse-driven buggies to take a ride in the country or to go to their summer home in the Glens' neighborhood by driving along what would become US Highway 40/Colfax Avenue. As they took that ride, they would need various supplies - whether it was food for the kitchen, seeds to plant their gardens, or flowers to decorate their summer cottages. This was the beginning of economic vibrancy along the corridor. Today, that mix of businesses, employment, and housing, private retail and entertainment, as well as public amenities and services is still critical for any community to thrive. Lakewood's City Council adopted mixed-use zoning in 2009 to allow for residential development along this longest commercial corridor in the US to help balance the mix of commercial and residential development.

In 2005 City Council designated much of Lakewood's West Colfax Corridor as being within Lakewood's Reinvestment Authority (LRA). Since then, the LRA has invested in the community by providing amenities to the West Line and supporting catalytic businesses.

Changes are already occurring with a 1950s era shopping center. Now with new ownership, it is undergoing a major transformation and getting a new name - Lamar Station Plaza. In addition, a former Target site near the Oak Light Rail Station has now redeveloped as Westlink at Oak Station, a beautiful, new multi-family apartment community. One of the most exciting things to happen along Lakewood's West



The Annual Colfax Marathon in Lakewood

Colfax is the creation and ongoing impact of 40 West Arts District, one of only 12 state-certified creative districts in Colorado. Soon, an Artspace development will be built in the corridor. These are just the beginning stages of an economic renaissance along Lakewood's West Colfax Corridor, which will be further enhanced by achieving the goals set forth in this plan.

## Artspace

Artspace is a non-profit developer that transcends its mission to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations, and is a catalyst for positive community change.

Artspace creates live/work residences that maintain affordable housing opportunities for artists. Supportive artist housing can mitigate the impact of the gentrification that can displace the creative residents that once defined and built the value and identity for a community.

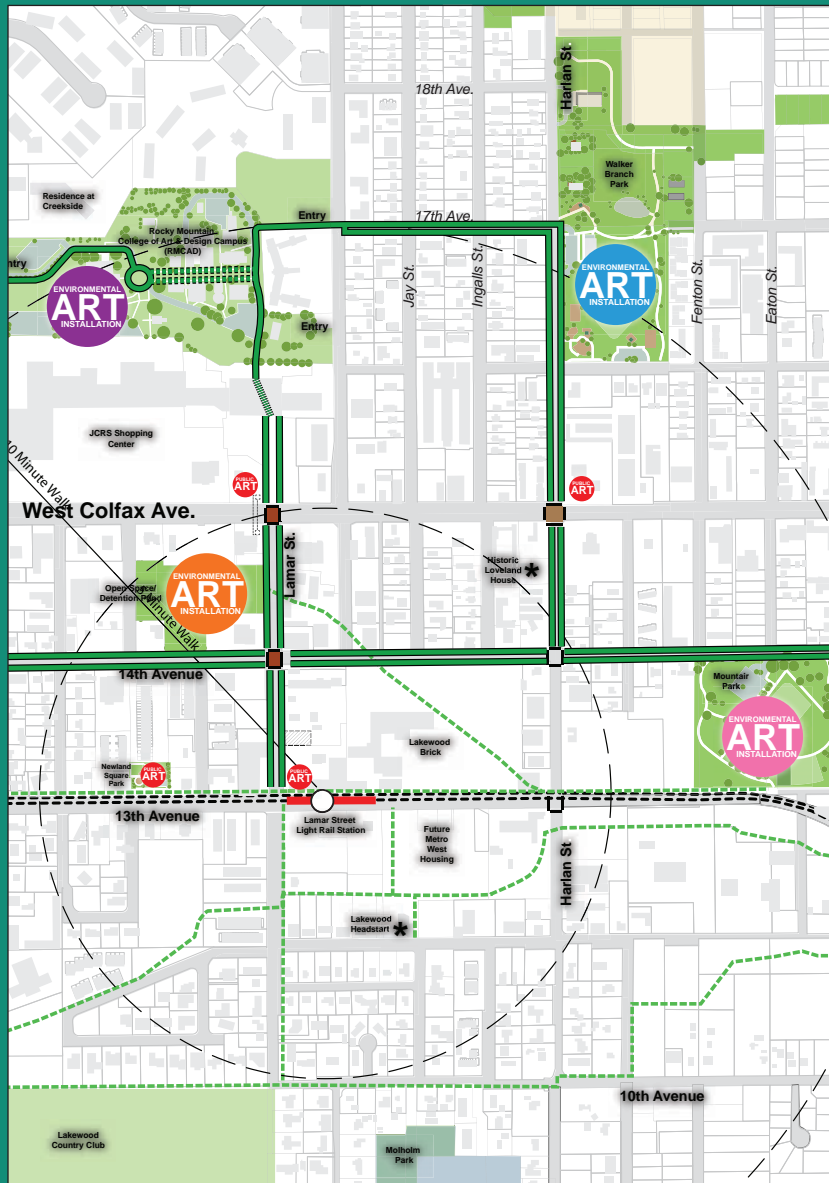
Artspace has a proven positive effect on a community's ability to leverage creativity as an economic asset.

On April 13, 2015, Lakewood City Council unanimously endorsed a partnership with Artspace, leveraging 40 West Arts as a creative district and investing in the city's unique confluence of culture and social responsibility.



Artspace Hiawatha Lofts, Seattle, WA  
Photo Artspace

# 40 West ExplorARTory Loop



The creation of an Arts Loop is a distinguishing component of the Arts District concept that was proposed in the 40 West Arts District Urban Design and Mobility Concepts Plan adopted in 2012. The Loop is envisioned as a continuous and distinctly-colored, multi-use path circling the 40 West Arts District, connecting people to public and environmental art located in parks, open spaces and other installations in the area. Destinations could include: Aviation Park, Walker Branch Park, Mountair Park, the RMCAD Campus, Lamar Station Plaza, Lamar Station and the water detention area between Lamar and Newland Streets. The Arts Loop would feature a combination of permanent public art and seasonal environmental art installations, and is envisioned as a unique experience within Lakewood. The Loop would be a significant art experience in the region featuring a regular rotation of site-specific public environmental art installations.

## GOAL V-1

Create the desired mix of employment and housing by actively seeking to attract those who provide either or both.

### Action Steps

#### V-1a.

Identify gaps in the desired mix of employment and housing and prioritize needed targets in employment and housing.

#### V-1b.

Identify key metrics associated with employment and housing and work with the City to compile and analyze trends.

#### V-1c.

Share key metrics with stakeholders and community groups.

## GOAL V-2

Attract neighborhood-serving businesses, retail, and entertainment that complements and enhances what currently exists.

### Action Steps

#### V-2a.

Identify and prioritize areas of opportunity for public amenities and services.

#### V-2b.

Create pop-up events to showcase desired businesses such as a pop-up supper club.

#### V-2c.

Work collaboratively to activate more entertainment venues and promote the spectrum of entertainment activities in the corridor.

#### V-2d.

Create a task force to set criteria and create additional festivals/activities

that fit the Lakewood's West Colfax brand to bring more vibrancy to the corridor and add to the overall experience.

## GOAL V-3

Create a district that is so unique that people will want to visit, spend time and money here, and live in the area.

### Action Steps

#### V-3a.

Develop public-private partnerships to bring authentic West Colfax-centric experiences to the corridor, (examples may include retro supper club destinations, the old motor inn converted to an arts enclave and boutique motel, a pop-up drive-in theater experience, and a West Colfax Museum and Hall of Fame/Walk of Fame).

#### V-3b.

Develop collaborative strategies to bring world-class attractions and/or landmarks to the corridor such as an observation tower with restaurant, Worldwide Museum of Neon, or an authentic, restored carousel to place in a public space to attract visitors from far and wide.

#### V-3c.

With community partners, develop

activities, festivals, and other annual events that showcase and celebrate the past, present, and future of the corridor.

#### V-3d.

Develop the 40W Arts Loop.

#### V-3e.

Promote the use of historic preservation tax credits to maintain the historic character of the corridor.



Mountair Park Community Farm / Community Activity

# Sustainable Development

Sustainability is the ability to last or continue for a long period of time. Building design, city design, transit design, and food sourcing is influenced by new moral and philosophical paradigms to reduce consumption and improve quality and efficiency.

Sustainable measures and practices that can be enacted today should not be delayed or diluted, rather sustainability must ultimately transcend recycling, transit, and building science. Sustainability is our ability to continually adapt to new opportunities, leverage inventiveness and nurture revolutionary thinking.



Lamar Station Crossing 40W / Artist in Resident Workshop

# Ideas to Think About

What if...

- The Lakewood-Wadsworth Station Plaza always had carts and vendors?
- West Colfax in Lakewood had a broader spectrum of dining options for first dates, family gatherings, etc?
- Lakewood's West Colfax had a business incubator for creative entrepreneurs?
- West Colfax in Lakewood had a fun, buzz-worthy attraction, such as a vintage carousel or Ferris wheel?
- The corridor had a dedicated space for a "Makers' Market?"



Lakewood - Wadsworth Light Rail Station Event / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring



Colfax Business / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring

# CHAPTER 6

CELEBRATE COLFAX

memories • authenticity  
experiences  
uniqueness  
destination  
variety

# Celebrate Colfax

The Lakewood section of historic West Colfax - with its inimitable brand of glitter and grit - has a story to tell that's all its own. Marketing, at its core, is about telling a story and making a connection with people. Simply put, it's about creating memories. Top marketers seek to deliver a memorable "brand experience" to foster loyal customers, and ultimately, cultivate brand advocates. This presents West Colfax with a unique opportunity - to look at its past to shape its future...to tap into its colorful history and harness the extraordinary passion that exists for the storied avenue.

U.S. 40, historic West Colfax - the Gateway to the Rockies - was the place to be in the 40s, 50s, and 60s. The West Colfax story is as vivid as any in the country. It comes with its own lore, its own brand - rich in character and creativity. Along West Colfax, mid-century buildings and multi-generational businesses continue to embody the Colfax culture, and carry over from the 1950s car culture and America's love of the open road. Colfax speaks to the "Americana" in all of us. Its heritage and heart - the neon and neighborhoods, the diners and dance halls, the motels and motorcycles, the galleries and gathering places - that's what keeps it relevant today. As the historic heart of Lakewood, West Colfax is now re-emerging, and the renaissance is underway!

Partners Ron Abo and Kevin Yoshida of the Abo Group, an urban design and sustainable architecture firm, bought the historic Lakewood Lanes building and moved their business to West



"Hear the Train A Humming" Mural at Lamar Light Rail Station by Bobby Magee Lopez / Photo Ken Papaleo, High Country Coloring

Colfax: "The evolution of the corridor is happening right before our eyes," said Yoshida, now a member of the local BID board of directors. "We not only want to be part of it - we want to help spread the word about the opportunities here."

The marketing question is: How do we leverage the nostalgia of the past, the energy of the present, and package it for the future? No small feat! The answer is collaboration. With sustained, integrated efforts among the City of Lakewood, the West Colfax-based organizations, and an active business community - the West Colfax story can and will make its way on air, in print, and online to tell the world about the experiences and opportunities in this historic corridor... about a community gathering to celebrate the glory of the past and the glitter still to come.

## Showcasing the Art & Culture of West Colfax

40 West Arts District celebrates West Colfax with its most anticipated (most attended) art show of the year: The Annual 40W Colfax Exhibition. In addition, a new festival celebrates the art and culture of the corridor, West Colfax MuralFest. The first-ever West Colfax MuralFest (August 2015) was a huge success . . . 2,200 attendees, 30 art booths, 5 food trucks, 3 bands, activities for the whole family - and the unveiling of 7 new murals . . . all in one day! Given the momentum in the district and throughout the West Colfax Corridor, and the support of its partners, including Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design, future MuralFests will be even bigger!





“With new, more flexible zoning, the catalytic impact of light rail, fresh creative energy from 40 West Arts and RMCAD, and the quirky history that makes Colfax cool, West Colfax is poised to be the next big thing in metro area real estate.”

- Bob Murphy, Lakewood Mayor, April 2013

Lakewood Mayor 2008-2015 Bob Murphy / Photo Bill Marino

# Business Organizations



**WCCA** West Colfax Community Association (WCCA), a 501(c)6 nonprofit, is a coalition of citizens, business owners, community leaders, and local organizations working together to foster and sustain an engaged community and the economic vitality of the West Colfax Corridor. WCCA exists to serve the West Colfax Community - its businesses, residents, and partners - by providing reliable community information, a forum for community dialogue, and a unified voice for community advocacy to help support the quality of life and economic vibrancy of the corridor.



**40 West Arts**, a state-certified Creative District in Colorado, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit focused on delivering direct, positive impact to help catalyze the resurgence of the West Colfax Corridor - the historic heart of Lakewood - through the energy of arts and culture and the inspiration of creative enterprises. The 40 West Arts mission is to enrich the community and enhance the creative, cultural, and economic vitality of historic West Colfax by creating community arts spaces and community arts events and by supporting creative enterprises and activities in the district.



**Lakewood-West Colfax Business Improvement District**, formed by petition and special election in 2011, represents the corridor in conversations about business, development, and investment opportunities, coordinates efforts among local organizations with a common vision for West Colfax, advocates for economic development and capital investment in the district, provides a stable entity for grants, intergovernmental agreements, and other funding, delivers direct support and maintenance for local public spaces, and serves as the operational platform for WCCA and 40 West Arts.

## GOAL CC-1

Create and integrate programming to communicate “The Lakewood West Colfax Story,” now and for the future.

### Action Steps

#### CC-1a.

Work collaboratively with Community stakeholders to identify, share, and implement key principles of the Vision Statement.

#### CC-1b.

Establish cohesive, consistent messaging to be used by all stakeholders and provide a toolset for marketing the corridor.

#### CC-1c.

Evaluate timing to congeal the vision into an authentic brand.

#### CC-1d.

Establish and promote the West Colfax brand as part of the overall corridor experience.

#### CC-1e.

Package and promote existing corridor

assets through available communication channels, including media opportunities within and outside of Lakewood.

#### CC-1f.

Create one or more “West Colfax Channels,” leveraging existing and new communication technologies, to share and showcase the experiences available in the West Colfax Corridor.

## GOAL CC-2

Create and support programs that improve the corridor’s image and position it as a destination.

### Action Steps

#### CC-2a.

Evaluate licensing opportunities to monetize the brand to create additional revenue for corridor improvements and promotions.

#### CC-2b.

Integrate communications objectives/tactics with other economic development entities.

#### CC-2c.

Establish regularly scheduled sessions with civic and neighborhood groups.

#### CC-2d.

Update communication priorities, targets, and objectives on a consistent basis.

#### CC-2e.

Develop programs for cleanup and fix-up (i.e. a West Colfax curb appeal initiative).

#### CC-2f.

Create guidelines for design standards and programs to support visioning capability.

#### CC-2g.

Identify funding to support image initiatives.

## GOAL CC-3

Cultivate and develop community pride and engagement so neighbors, retailers, artists, policy leaders, and citizens become ambassadors for Lakewood’s West Colfax Corridor.

### Action Steps

#### CC-3a.

Celebrate incremental successes through community organizations (40 West, Lakewood Arts Council, WCCA, etc.).

#### CC-3b.

Establish a West Colfax Ambassador program.

#### CC-3c.

Develop and support “Buy Local/Created on West Colfax” initiatives.

#### CC-3d.

Establish and support a Vision-Visitor Center in a high-traffic venue.

#### CC-3e.

Develop programs that recognize key

individuals and organizations that contribute to the ongoing momentum of the corridor.

#### CC-3f.

Collaborate to fund and launch a “Colfax Cool” attraction (a monthly revolving retro supper club, dance club, diner revival music, food, entertainment destination).

# Why develop a project on West Colfax in Lakewood?

## The development tools are in place.

Lakewood has created and adopted special plans for West Colfax and each of the light rail stations in the corridor. The Lakewood Zoning Ordinance has been modified to allow for appropriate densities and mixed-use development to occur in this area with administrative review. The entitlements are in place.

## There is strong City and community support from the top on down.

From the Mayor and City Council to the business community to neighborhood residents, there is support and commitment to quality development in the corridor. The City invested over 20 million dollars in the years before and after the West Rail Line opened on improvements including landscaped medians on West Colfax Avenue, a signature bridge at the Lakewood-Wadsworth Station, two major bike bridges and upgrades to the light rail stations in Lakewood including more amenities, sidewalks, and public art.

## Lakewood is committed to make it easy and fast for the development process to happen.

Lakewood City staff is committed to work with you to make sure that your project will happen quickly and efficiently without red tape.

## Community Partners are engaged.

Key community partners include the Lakewood-Colfax Business Improvement District; 40 West Arts District; neighborhood organizations including Two Creeks, Eiberhood, Northeast Lakewood and Morse Park, the West Line Corridor Collaborative partnership between Lakewood and Denver; the Colfax Main Street Coalition grant that addresses brownfield issues; and the Kaiser Permanente Colfax Marathon - Denver's major spring running event that showcases West Colfax.

## West Line Corridor Collaborative

The West Line Corridor Collaborative, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency partnership of public and private agencies coordinating efforts to attract quality investment and support livable communities along the West Line light rail corridor, located within the Cities of Denver, Lakewood and Golden and unincorporated Jefferson County, Colorado. To learn more about the West Line Corridor Collaborative, please visit [WestLineCorridor.org](http://WestLineCorridor.org).



# West Colfax MuralFest



"Manifesting Our Future" by David Ocelotl Garcia / Photo Bill Marino

The West Colfax MuralFest is a vibrant art experience in 40 West Arts District in Lakewood that celebrates creativity and the character of historic West Colfax, initiated in August 2015. This free arts festival features joins artists from across the country creating outdoor art galleries of murals. The first event featured seven murals - all painted during one week - culminating in a one-day celebration of art, music, food, and creative activities for the whole family. The MuralFest showcases regional and local artists and performers in the areas of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Interactive Arts and Media Arts, and includes exhibitions, demonstrations, hands-on activities, art, craft, and food/drink vendors. The first festival was located along West 16th Avenue between Teller and Reed streets, just north of West Colfax Avenue.



"Radio Birds" by Sandy Toland / Photo Bill Marino



"The Bulldog" by Patrick Kane McGregor / Photo Bill Marino

# Ideas to Think About

What if...

- There were Harley motorcycles pulling rickshaws for those disembarking at Lakewood-Wadsworth Station?
- There was a “West Colfax Cool” merchandise shop?
- West Colfax Cruises were the place to be on Colorado summer nights?
- MuralFest became the BEST annual outdoor venue in Metro Denver?
- 40W ExplorARTory Loop rivaled the popularity of New York’s High Line?
- A retro-designed digital sign promoted arts & culture events to passers-by at the Southwest corner of Colfax and Wadsworth?



Maddie Nichols, Two Creeks Neighborhood

# The Lakewood West Colfax Corridor is a great place to do business.



Lakewood Developer Forum at Lamar Station Plaza, 2015

## Embrace the Fax Campaign

The City of Lakewood, in partnership with other community entities, launched the Embrace the Fax marketing campaign across the Denver metro area to recruit developers and business owners to the West Colfax and West Rail Line corridor that are in alignment with the community vision for the area. The campaign objective is to brand this entire area in a cohesive manner that allows the West Colfax / West Rail Line corridor to solidify its identity as a growing and evolving region within the greater Denver metro area.

Embrace the Fax is the umbrella positioning statement for the entire West Corridor in Lakewood. Other partners include the Lakewood-West Colfax Community Association, 40 West Arts, and the Lakewood-West Colfax Business Improvement District, with the intention that all involved are aligned and focused on a common vision. The Embrace the Fax message extends across numerous media, including digital, video, direct response marketing, and events to spread awareness of the key message points. For further information, visit [EmbracetheFax.org](http://EmbracetheFax.org).



Lakewood is a forward-thinking City ready to partner with you.

# Appendix

# Acknowledgements

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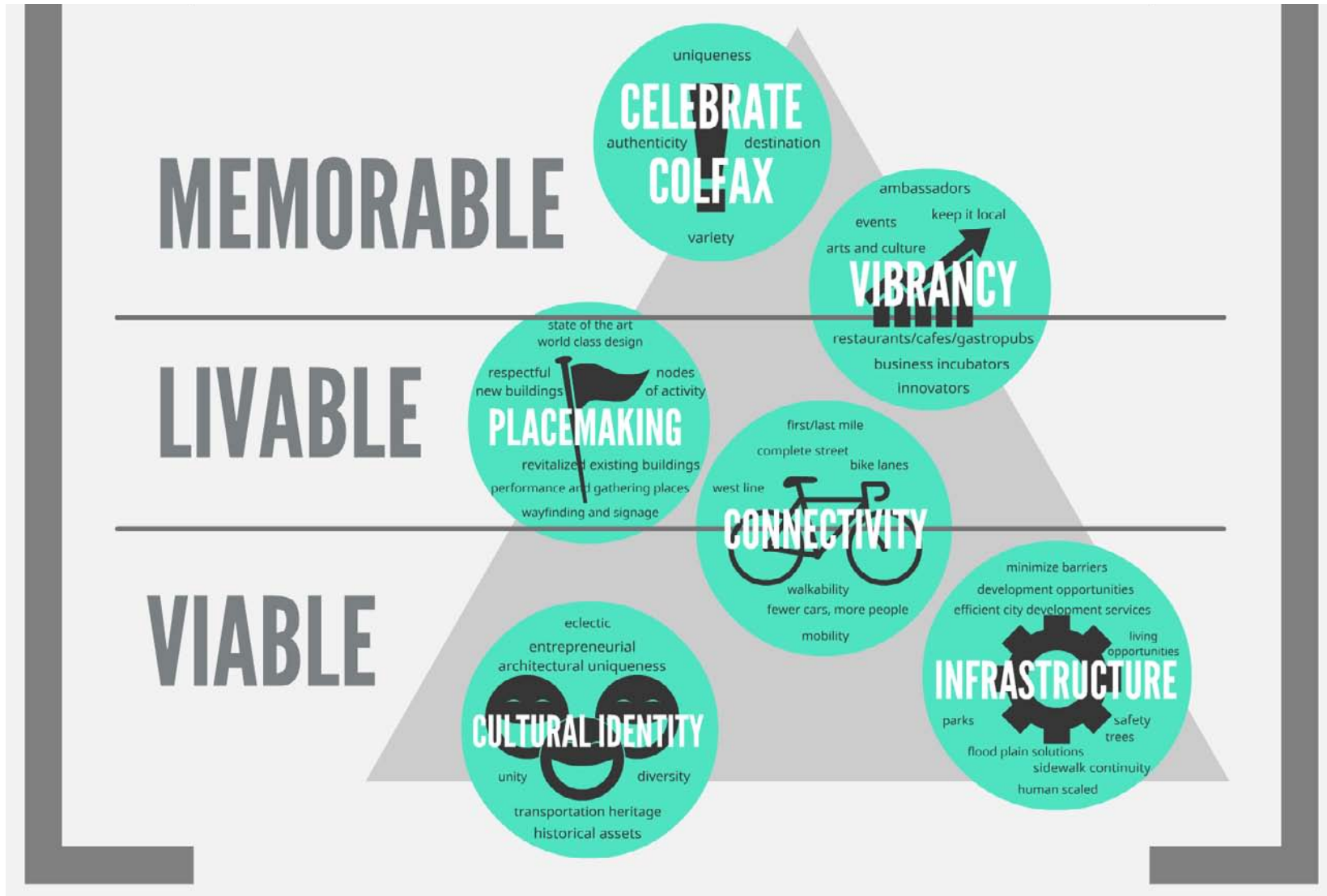
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# West Colfax Vision

## Viable, Liveable & Memorable



In 1943 Abraham Maslow redefined psychology by outlining a hierarchy of needs to describe an individual's motivation to fulfill basic survival needs, evolve to the ability to participate in community and build relationships and ascend to become a synthesized and self-actualizing being.

The Lakewood West Colfax Vision Group transferred this model of human psychology to the West Colfax Corridor. The analogy is useful in organizing how the city, businesses and citizens can:

- Fulfill basic needs like pedestrian safety and address drainage problems.
- Evolve to reinforcing community through investment in old and new structures and building a healthy and diverse economic base.
- Become a unique destination by leveraging and growing the authentically unique cultural identity of Lakewood's West Colfax.

The Vision group's discussions defined six priorities to establish a 2040 vision for the corridor:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| • Cultural Identity<br>(History)                          | • Connectivity<br>(Transportation)                | • Vibrancy<br>(Marketing & Promotions)      |
| • Infrastructure<br>(Physical & organizational readiness) | • Placemaking<br>(Design & Physical Improvements) | • Celebrate Colfax<br>(Economic & Cultural) |

Detailed assessments of the corridor's current state were followed by a synthesis of goals, strategies, and action steps.

The pyramid is not one-directional or static; it is a dynamic and iterative journey. Events that mark momentary achievement of memorability must evolve and be nurtured, along with new ideas, to maintain the vibrant and successful place that this document envisions. Past and current successes, like the public art along the West Rail Line, are achievements in authentically manifesting the uniqueness of the West Colfax Corridor.

They touch the upper tier of the pyramid but do not imply that other basic needs along the corridor are being consistently met. Similarly, future ambitions, like a museum honoring motorcycles or neon signs, represent possible goals defined in the moment but do not necessarily represent the only target at the top of the pyramid. Maslow's greatest value as an analogy and organizational strategy for the West Colfax 2040 Vision is as an underlying structure that organizes goals and strategies that will evolve over time as the corridor matures and achieves authenticity and economic vibrancy.

# 40W Placemaking Project



In 2015, the City of Lakewood, 40 West Arts, and the Lakewood – West Colfax BID developed the 40 West Placemaking Implementation Plan. The intent is to ensure a cohesive visual character and identity for 40 West Arts District. The Plan includes designs and recommended locations for directional and informational signage and other placemaking elements.



# New Business are Opening on Lakewood's West Colfax



Banner Signs, January, 2015



Colorado Art Restoration, May, 2015



Planet Fitness, January, 2015



Wingstop, March, 2015



The EDGE Theatre Grand Opening, March, 2013

# West Colfax Momentum



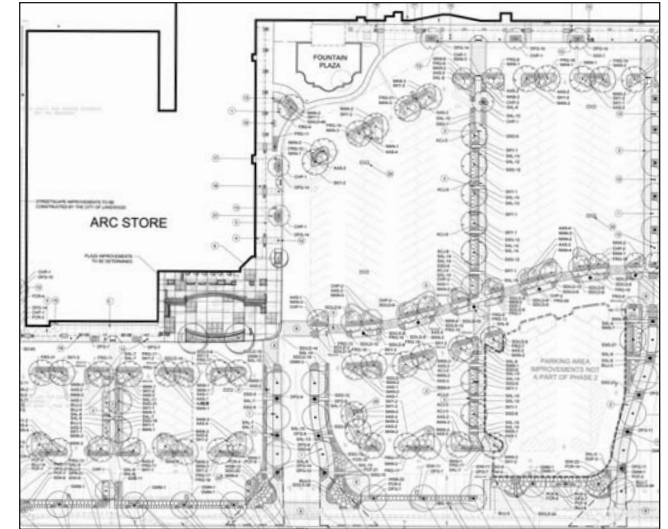
Lakewood Legacy Trees/Artist:LonnieHanzon



Lakewood Legacy Trees Bricks at Base



Fashion Show / RMCAD and 40 West Arts Event



Lamar Station Plaza Site Plan Concept



West Line Flats (near Lamar Station) Elevation Concept



Action Center Mural Dedication



Bettmans Colorado Frame 2015 Grand Opening