

# Lamar Colorado

April 21–26, 2013



# Lamar Colorado

Healthy Places: Designing an Active Colorado

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# About the Urban Land Institute

**THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE** is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has nearly 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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# About ULI Advisory Services

**THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES** program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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# Acknowledgments

**THE PANELISTS WISH TO THANK** the city of Lamar, Colorado, for acting as host to this important panel. The panel also wishes to thank Mayor Roger Stagner and the other members of the city council and the city staff for their cooperation, support, and guidance. The panelists also thank the Prowers County Commission. And the panel would especially like to thank Emily Neischburg from LiveWell Prowers County, whose preparations and attention to detail on briefing documents and on-site coordination made this panel possible.

In addition, the panel would like to thank the Colorado Health Foundation—especially Anne Warhover, Khanh Nguyen, and Hillary Fulton—for sponsoring this series of panels regarding designing healthy communities.

The panel also thanks Progressive Urban Management Associates for helping prepare the communities for the panel's arrival, providing the background briefing materials, and coordinating so closely with ULI and the host cities for this very important work.

Finally, the panel acknowledges and thanks the more than 40 individuals who were interviewed. Representing city and county agencies, the business community, and the citizenry, these stakeholders provided valuable information and perspectives through their passion and understanding of the issues, greatly aiding the panel in its analysis.

## Note to Readers

This publication contains recommendations by the Urban Land Institute Advisory Services panel that convened in Lamar, Colorado, the week of April 21 to 26, 2013. These recommendations constitute a comprehensive report of the Healthy Places: Designing an Active Colorado initiative for the community of Lamar. The Healthy Places initiative was designed to promote policies that incorporate physical activity into land development and land use.

While the Colorado Health Foundation contracted with ULI to conduct the Advisory Services panel, the complete recommendations do not signify key funding opportunities for or commitments by the foundation. The ULI recommendations are intended to serve as an expert guide for use by the community of Lamar as it sets priorities based on local knowledge of needs and opportunities.

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# Background and the Panel's Assignment

**TODAY, COMMUNITIES ACROSS** the United States are facing obesity and chronic disease rates of epic proportions. Emerging research indicates that built environment and community programming interventions can play a vital role in transforming communities to promote public health. In 2012, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) was contacted by the Colorado Health Foundation to provide advice on these public health issues through its healthy places initiative, Healthy Places: Designing an Active Colorado. The foundation contracted with ULI for a series of three Advisory Services panels representing three different community typologies: urban, suburban, and rural.

Through the Advisory Services program, ULI provided land use, transportation, real estate, architectural, and public health experts for these three assignments, which represent the first time ULI advisory panels have concentrated specifically on the connection between health and land use. The Colorado Health Foundation wanted a replicable program, so evaluating the three typologies produces a body of work that can be applied to other communities in Colorado.

The foundation received 26 requests from Colorado communities that wanted to participate in this program. Through a competitive request-for-proposals process, communities were asked to demonstrate their readiness and ability to engage stakeholders in identifying and addressing improvements to their built environments to encourage active living and to take part in the ULI panel program. Three communities were selected: Arvada, Lamar, and the Westwood neighborhood of Denver.

## Major Concepts in Designing Healthy Communities

Neighborhood design can affect public health, but it also affects real estate value. Today, ample evidence supports

the idea that consumer demand for well-designed, walkable, and transit-oriented development has never been higher. Numerous studies show that demand for compact, mixed-use, transit-accessible development far outstrips current supply. In addition, walkable communities are in such high demand that they command premium prices in the marketplace. The price premium for walkable and bikable communities can range from 40 to 100 percent more than communities that require residents to drive everywhere for everything.

*Area map.*





Once part of people's everyday lives, physical activity has been designed out of daily living. Desk jobs have taken the place of manual labor, driving has replaced walking and biking, elevators and escalators have supplanted stair climbing, and televisions and computer games have displaced outdoor recreation, especially among children. The design of today's buildings and neighborhoods often makes physical activity unnatural, difficult, or dangerous, especially for children and the elderly, those with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Rather than telling people to go to the gym, the Colorado Healthy Places Initiative was designed to encourage Colorado communi-

ties to create opportunities for building physical activity into residents' daily routines.

Lamar has a long history of sports and sports-related activities, with a particular focus on baseball, softball, and equestrian activities. However, as in many cities and towns, the walking and exercise associated with day-to-day living in Lamar has been stifled by a variety of physical and psychological barriers.

## Lamar

Lamar is a city of 8,800 residents in eastern Colorado located approximately 150 miles southeast of Denver. As the county seat for Prowers County, it is the hub for governmental, institutional, educational, and commercial uses for a large rural area stretching from Pueblo, Colorado, to the Kansas state line. Lamar—the commercial center of a vast farming and ranching region—is already known for its natural and historic resources: the Arkansas River, its historic downtown, its location on the Santa Fe Trail, its parks and recreational facilities, and its well-regarded community college. Unfortunately, like many small towns in rural America, the city of Lamar has seen a decline in both jobs and residents. It also has high rates of both poverty and obesity. In addition, Lamar is affected by both physical and socioeconomic barriers that inhibit active living and social integration. In particular, Hispanic and lower-income families, who are concentrated in northwest Lamar, lack easy access to parks and recreation facilities.

The city has developed along a standard grid pattern of streets and is bisected north/south by Main Street/US 287/50 and east/west by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad. Commercial and retail activity is concentrated along Main and Olive streets. Main Street/US 287/50 serves as a primary trucking route between Dallas and Denver, and on any given day 1,300 or more trucks travel through downtown Lamar. A truck bypass is proposed east of the city and is under consideration by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the city of Lamar, and Prowers County.

*An aerial view of the city of Lamar, Colorado.*



If not for the truck traffic, the city would seem to be ideally connected by this street grid. However, the sidewalk and trail system is, at best, incomplete or limited.

## The Panel's Assignment

The panel's assignment was to make recommendations for programs and infrastructure investments that will promote walking, biking, and access to open space and outdoor recreation. Neighborhood design can affect public health, but it also can affect economic health. Today, ample evidence supports the idea that communities that are walkable and pedestrian-friendly are good places to live, work, and invest. What's more, access to parks, open space, and outdoor recreation is a key factor in relocation decisions, especially for professionals and small businesses.

## Summary of Recommendations

The panel made several preliminary observations, including 1) recognizing that economic health and community health are linked and 2) understanding the economic and real estate market realities of a community can be a good first step to better anticipate, plan for, and resolve issues related to the junction of public health, the built environment, and public programming. The panel focused on several physical, programmatic, and organizational improvements that can help the city move forward with creating a more livable and healthy place. These recommendations include:

- Setting high standards for community health and new development by applying best practices for:
  - Walking and biking;
  - Recreation spaces; and
  - Access to healthy food;
- Designing buildings and neighborhoods to improve public health and increase real estate value;
- Focusing on a set of citywide strategies including:
  - Activating all parks through use diversification and a series of low-cost programs;



*The ULI Advisory Services panel.*

- Creating a “Lamar Loop” circumferential trail;
  - Prioritizing and completing pedestrian and bicycle routes through the city, linking major destinations;
  - Ensuring adequate lighting, safe crossings, and shade;
  - Turning parks, recreation, and health into an economic development tool;
  - Encouraging nature tourism with birding, hunting, and fishing; and
  - Expanding sports tourism;
- Focusing on physical and programming improvements for four specific areas:
    - The Civic Center;
    - The Northern Neighborhoods;
    - The Sports Hub; and
    - The Willow Creek area;
  - Creating healthy-living programs; and
  - Fashioning a legacy by identifying and promoting neighborhood identity and encouraging neighborhood-level leadership.

The remainder of this report elaborates on these themes and recommendations.

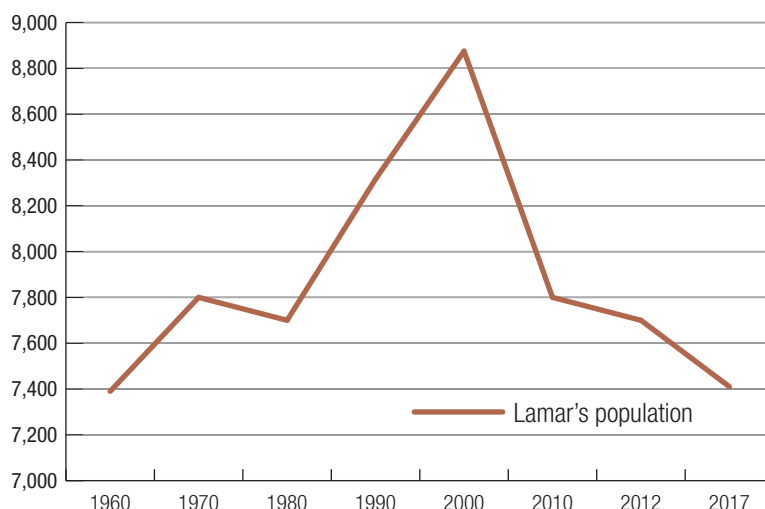
# Economic and Market Overview

**THE PANEL IS CONVINCED** that the economic health and the physical health of a community are fundamentally intertwined. Creating a safe, healthy, and more prosperous Lamar requires decision makers, planners, and the wider community to understand some of the vital socio-economic trends that are affecting it. ULI panels typically assess the real estate market to understand these trends. The Institute believes that successful community planning, land use, and economic development policy can best be defined as public actions that generate a desirable, wide-spread, and sustainable private market reaction.

## Demographic Change: Population

Lamar's population grew from 7,369 in 1960 to 8,869 in year 2000, a growth of 1,500 residents over four decades. By the 2010 census, however, the population had dropped by more than 1,000 to 7,804, and it is projected to continue to decrease to 7,428 by 2017. The drop between 2000 and 2010 coincided with the decline of manufacturing employment locally and with trends for rural regions nationally.

Population of Lamar, 1960–2017



## Employment

If one looks at employment trends from the years of population decline, it appears that people are migrating from Lamar in response to economic change (see the chart on employment on facing page). In 2001, total employment was 7,870, declining to 7,220 by 2011. If one removes sole proprietors and considers only wage and salary employment, 945 jobs were lost. This decrease corresponds closely with the population decline because when the employed person moves, the family follows. It also explains the comment from many interviewed here that young people leave and do not come back because the opportunities available are not attractive to educated young people.

## Income

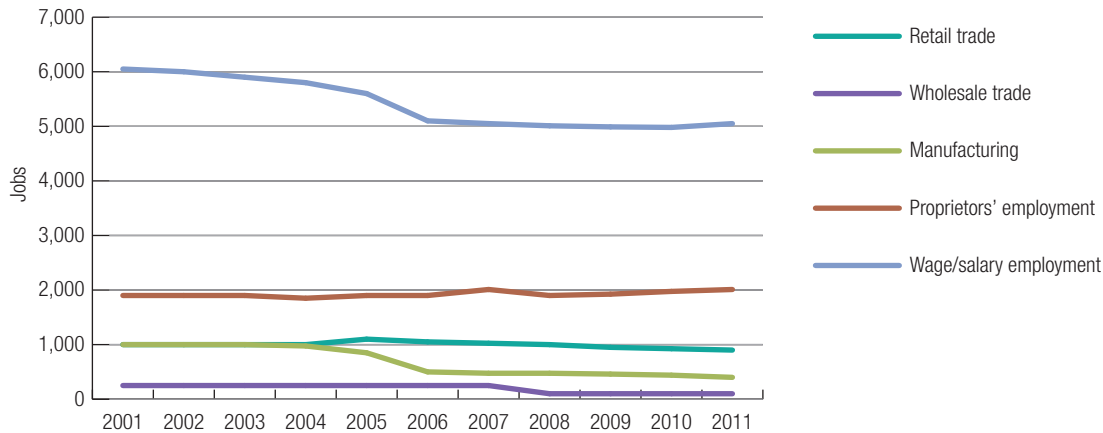
With these employment trends, median income is expected to remain flat between 2012 and 2017, but average income is expected to decline, because of the loss of high-wage jobs. As a result of population loss and decreasing employment in high-wage categories, aggregate income is, in numbers adjusted for inflation, expected to decline from 2012.

A loss in aggregate income will have a direct effect on the vitality of the local business climate, as it has the potential to remove support for approximately 18,000 square feet of retail and service uses.

## Retail

When one looks at current retail demand and supply, Lamar does capture more than its share of spending because it is a hub for the surrounding area that is without services, but many categories are not well captured by the local offerings in shops. The strongest category in sales

## Prowers County Employment, 2000–2011



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

is general merchandise (Walmart) followed by gasoline. Most other categories are surviving on local spending, and further economic decline will hurt small retailers and service providers, forcing more residents to drive to other destinations to satisfy their need for shoes, clothing, sporting goods, books, music, entertainment, and other items such as electronics, appliances, and home furnishings. The largest category of leakage is automobile dealers, with approximately \$6.6 million being spent outside the region. In all, local leakage of retail and selected services comes to approximately \$10.8 million annually, of which \$4.2 million is in nonautomotive categories. With a decline in aggregate income, the loss to local retail will increase unless changes are made.

## Other Economic Trends

A local trend that is not economic, but which has a profound economic effect, is the drought that is affecting both farming and ranching. These are primary local industries. A primary industry is one in which products are made that bring money to the local economy from outside the area. Primary industries have high income and job multipliers—every job in a primary industry helps drive jobs and income in other sectors, such as retail and services, that are secondary. When primary industries decline, the multiplier works in reverse, reducing economic activity in secondary economic sectors. The loss in manufacturing combined

with the decline in agricultural and cattle production jobs and exports indicates that further losses can be expected in secondary sectors including health care, retail, real estate and finance, and a variety of other services.

Lamar is subject to a series of unfortunate trends that are being experienced in a number of small towns and cities. As part of this study, the ULI team toured the city and it is evident from observation that there is significant deferred maintenance on neighborhood streets. Sidewalks remain unrepaired or nonexistent due to poverty or a lack of code enforcement. There is a need for maintenance and rehabilitation of housing stock that low-income residents cannot afford. Furthermore, many commercial buildings may be approaching functional obsolescence or need significant work to meet modern business needs. At the same time, the city's capacity for bonding to fund improvements is limited.

Obesity and income are correlated. If none of the economic challenges is addressed, the plight of low-income residents will worsen. Facing a perfect storm of a deteriorating physical environment, poor access to affordable healthy food, and streets that discourage any travel other than by automobile, low-income residents will continue to be at risk for chronic health problems. Those with skills can migrate to better environments with better opportunities, but those most at risk are those with the least ability to relocate.



## Change in Prowers County Employment by Industry, 2001–2006

	2001	2006	2011	Change from 2001	Change from 2006
Farm employment	873	722	752	-121	30
Nonfarm employment	6,997	6,381	6,468	-529	87
Private nonfarm employment	5,383	4,808	4,961	-422	153
Forestry, fishing, and related	163	168	217	54	49
Mining	118	118	212	94	94
Utilities	39	37	55	16	18
Construction	292	267	324	32	57
Manufacturing	961	475	363	-598	-112
Wholesale trade	258	208	130	-128	-78
Retail trade	1,046	1,033	910	-136	-123
Transportation and warehousing	210	171	211	1	40
Information	109	67	65	-44	-2
Finance and insurance	354	328	447	93	119
Real estate and rental and leasing	134	169	164	30	-5
Professional, scientific, and technical	173	183	n.r.	n.a.	n.a.
Management of companies	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.a.	n.a.
Administrative and waste services	n.r.	n.r.	352	n.a.	n.a.
Educational services	n.r.	19	22	n.a.	3
Health care and social assistance	n.r.	465	461	n.a.	-4
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	55	45	48	-7	3
Accommodation and food services	482	460	443	-39	-17
Other services	435	425	350	-85	-75
Government	1,614	1,573	1,507	-107	-66

n.r.: not reported. n.a.: not available.

In order to meet the challenges of the future, Lamar needs to pursue a strategy that will increase its ability to attract new business and new residents. It needs a new vision for economic growth that can address trends that offer new opportunities for economic success.

## Rethinking Economic Development

Economic development is often seen as job creation, but businesses do not share this belief. Businesses locate to create profit, not jobs. A working definition of economic development for stressed economies is the creation of community conditions that foster business productivity and growth. Some factors, such as proximity to suppliers,

users, and resources, are outside of city control. For many job categories, these factors have less significance in an age when communications can bridge distance. The factors that are within the control of local actors are available infrastructure and space, education partners for future training, and provision of community attributes to attract and retain a qualified labor force.

The two largest demographic groups for the future in the United States are retiring baby boomers and the group called the millennials. The reason a city may want these retirees is that they bring outside income to support retail and services as they are spending retirement funds not dependent on local conditions. Millennials are the future

workforce, and the track record of young people leaving Lamar for better opportunities shows a need for improvement in attracting and retaining this population.

Positioning a community to meet the needs of the two groups can be achieved by the same measures because the preferences are the same. At the same time, there are many businesses that were once termed industrial that no longer need industrial parks because their work is primarily performed in small spaces, and much of it on computers.

Lamar has many of the attributes that can attract business and residents. Identity and authenticity are here but need to be reinforced. At the same time, Lamar has severe deficits in neighborhood infrastructure, the quality of streets for walking and biking, the ability to reach retail and services by means other than automobile, and the quality of existing housing. Streets and building frontages appear worn, broken, and unattractive. To first-time observers, Lamar does not immediately appear the vibrant community that it is. If it does not change its focus, Lamar will have difficulty competing with all of the other small cities chasing future residents and businesses that are themselves searching for the right kind of community.

Revitalizing in the areas discussed has a direct impact on the health of residents. An attractive, walkable environment encourages more physical activity. Economic development that meets the needs of the future workforce will help attract new types of business and new residents. A result will be new local opportunities. This will make rising incomes possible and ease the plight of lower-income residents by improving wage and salary employment and offering an improved quality of life. Improving the physical environment to address the issues listed can raise the productivity and health of all residents and lower the cost of doing business.

# Best Practices in Designing a Safe, Healthy, Active Community

**HISTORY INDICATES THAT CHANGES** to the built environment can have a tremendous impact on the health of a populace. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many cities faced severe epidemics of infectious disease, including tuberculosis, cholera, and yellow fever. These epidemics were effectively mitigated through a variety of changes in public infrastructure and design.

Today, communities across the country are facing obesity and chronic disease rates of epic proportions. Emerging research indicates that, once again, built-environment interventions can play a role in transforming communities to promote public health. Moreover, healthy communities are proving to be much more competitive in attracting jobs and new residents. This chapter provides background on today's health concerns, from both national and local perspectives. It also outlines a series of best practice guidelines for shaping a built environment that supports community health.

## Understanding Today's Obesity and Chronic Illness Epidemic

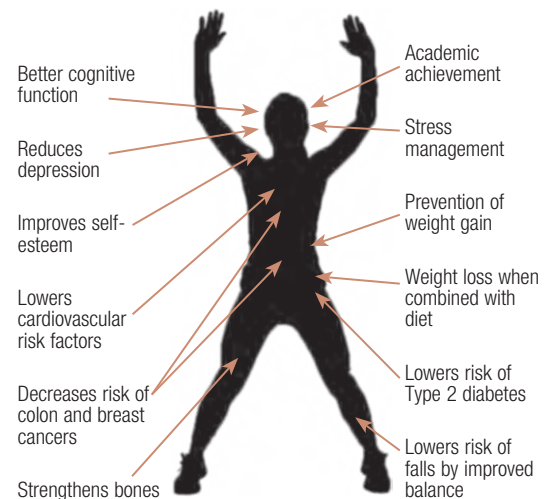
People who are overweight or obese are at higher risk for many chronic illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and some forms of cancer. Today, approximately two-thirds of U.S. adults and one-third of U.S. youth are overweight or obese, with rates expected to continue to increase dramatically. Since 1980, obesity rates have doubled among U.S. adults and tripled among U.S. children. The costs of this epidemic are enormous. In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that the medical costs attributable to obesity were approximately \$147 billion per year. If these trends continue, by 2030 86 percent of adults will be overweight or obese and total attributable health care costs will be \$860 billion to \$956 billion per year.

Although Colorado has long been considered a very healthy state, it is not immune to this epidemic. Colorado is experiencing even higher obesity rates in its children. In 2004, 28.4 percent of the children in Colorado were overweight or obese; by 2011, that number had climbed to 31.4 percent. Childhood obesity rates are greater for Colorado's ethnic and minority children; for example, 33 percent of Latino children were overweight or obese between 2008 and 2010. These data are important for Lamar, where approximately one-third of the population is under the age of 18.

## Benefits of Physical Activity

Physical activity is a critical part of weight control and chronic disease prevention, but research shows that fewer than half of U.S. adults and youth report meeting recommended levels of physical activity. The U.S. surgeon general calls for adults to have at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity) every week. Children should have at

### Benefits of Physical Activity



least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. However, in Colorado, only 49 percent of Colorado children ages 5 to 14 get 60 minutes of physical activity each day (2011 Community Health Survey) and only 29 percent of Colorado adolescents get 60 minutes of physical activity each day (2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey). Clearly, Colorado's children are in need of more physical activity.

The benefits of physical activity extend far beyond weight management, including:

- lower risk for cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and colon and breast cancers;
- stress reduction and improved mental health;
- improved academic performance in children;
- stronger bones;
- improved balance; and
- increased life expectancy.

## Best Practices for Lamar

Rather than reinventing the wheel, Lamar can learn from myriad best practices in designing and programming healthy communities. The ideas discussed in this section address a variety of community health issues and suggest built-environment initiatives that maximize opportunities for active transportation, recreation, and access to healthy food. These guidelines represent a selection of best practices from around the country; they have been adapted from a variety of resources, including the New York City Active Design Guidelines, National Association of City Transportation Officials publications, and academic papers, among others. The panel has made several specific recommendations based on these guidelines for the Lamar study site.

For the built environment, the panel has identified best practices in three focus areas:

- Walking and biking;
- Recreation spaces; and
- Access to healthy food.

## A Definition of Best Practices

*Best practices* are defined as methods or techniques that have consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means and which are used as a benchmark. A best practice describes a set of defined methods, processes, systems, or practices used by organizations to meet performance and efficiency standards within their industry. Best practices are guidelines that are used to obtain the most efficient and effective way of completing a task, using repeatable and proven procedures.

The panel believes these three areas offer Lamar its best practical chance to see measurable results.

## Walking and Biking

Lamar has lost its foundation for encouraging walking and biking in the community. The panel was told many times: “Everyone drives in Lamar.” Yet, it is blessed with a very usable street grid network that would be the envy of any city around the country trying to establish a pedestrian/bike initiative. The linkages among open space, parks, and sports facilities need to be leveraged. Also, from a civil engineering perspective, the city must be willing to modify road design to accommodate walkers and bikers. This can be accomplished through a “complete streets” approach.

### **Guideline: Prioritize walking and biking as safe, viable, and enjoyable modes of transportation and recreation throughout the community.**

- *Recommendation:* Create numerous, well-marked pedestrian and bike connections to the existing trail systems. This will allow more residents to have safe and easy access to a critical recreation and transportation resource.
- *Recommendation:* Focus sidewalk paving and construction efforts on connections to major activity centers such as sports facilities, schools, city parks, and the historic downtown. This will be particularly important to encourage safe, comfortable walking and biking opportunities that respond to the needs of Lamar's youth and families.



- *Recommendation:* Determine whether specific measures such as leash law enforcement and fence design can be used to address the issue and/or perception of vicious dogs along pedestrian and biking routes.
- *Recommendation:* Address wayfinding needs, and develop a system of signage for pedestrians and cyclists. Newcomers to the community as well as existing residents may be unaware of community amenities or confused about directions and routes. This situation can be mitigated with the development of improved wayfinding signage for pathways and trails and the location of key destinations and points of interest. Residents could be engaged in the design of the signage to reflect the character or history of their neighborhood. The city is also interested in providing bicycle maps that would rate the pathways or bike trails graphically as to length and difficulty.
- *Recommendation:* Undertake measures to complete the pedestrian and bicycle network as soon as possible. Implement a test case for striping of a bike/pedestrian lane in one or two specific locations.



*Sidewalks in many of Lamar's neighborhoods are either nonexistent or in desperate need of repair.*

### **Guideline: Strive for excellence in sidewalk design.**

Pedestrians are more likely to use sidewalks with high-quality design and amenities, including appropriate width, lighting, trees, buffers from moving vehicles (for example, in the form of trees or on-street parking), street furniture, and public art. Dynamic uses such as street cafés can also create visual interest that encourages pedestrian activity. In addition, more pedestrian activity will result in more eyes on the street, which can contribute to community safety and encourage more community interaction.

- *Recommendation:* Implement design strategies to maximize pedestrians' use of sidewalks and make walking a safe and enjoyable activity. High standards for sidewalks should be particularly emphasized for new development sites and for road construction projects that connect neighborhoods to schools, parks, and major activity centers.
- *Recommendation:* Develop a place-making public art program for civic spaces and along pathways to increase use of pathways. In civic spaces, artwork must be of professional caliber. Along pathways, an opportunity exists to feature more whimsical and amateur art that is created in local studios and that can be rotated from time to time. This creates points of interest in the community to get people out and about and energizes the local arts community.
- *Recommendation:* Create neighborhood gateway markers using appropriately scaled signage or public art. Many communities use this technique to help strengthen neighborhood identity; for example, Chicago's Chinatown has a Chinese arch, Greek Town has Corinthian columns, and the Pullman neighborhood has murals of railroad cars. Such an initiative could help build neighborhood networks and instill a sense of neighborhood pride. Installation of gateway markers should coincide with intersection improvements to maximize pedestrian safety.

**Guideline: Calm traffic to maximize safety of all road users.**

Traffic-calming tools provide visual indication to cars of multiple road users and encourage drivers to travel at safer speeds. Such interventions may include installing landscaped medians, pedestrian refuge islands, and curb extensions. A variety of intersection treatments can be used to enhance the design and visibility of pedestrian crossings. Ultimately, traffic calming can help ensure that Lamar is home to a network of “complete streets” that are safe and enjoyable for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

- *Recommendation:* Conduct a needs assessment, and implement traffic-calming and pedestrian improvements at major intersections. Priority should be given to crossings that connect pedestrians to major community activity centers, such as the Main Street at Park Street crossing.

**Guideline: Improve bicycle infrastructure and amenities.**

To encourage bicycling, Lamar must reach out to residents who are not already avid riders. To make them comfortable, the city needs to think beyond quantitative measures, such as miles of bike lanes, and include qualitative considerations, such as the different types of users (older people, children) as well as different purposes (recreational use, commuting, shopping, bike messengers). Lamar needs to offer choices for all types of riders. Bike facilities do not always mean additional space or pavement; they often have more to do with traffic management and organizing the various users of roads and sidewalks—measures that can be far more cost-effective than widening the pavement section.

- *Recommendation:* Implement design strategies to maximize visibility of bikeways and bike crossings at intersections. The National Association of City Transportation Officials offers an excellent guide for designing safer, highly visible bicycle facilities. Particular attention should be given to providing safe, well-marked bike paths within new development sites.

- *Recommendation:* Expand bicycle parking in Lamar. Ample bicycle parking should be provided at major destinations, transit stations, schools, and commercial strips. Encourage and incentivize existing property owners to provide bike parking and storage.
- *Recommendation:* Plan and complete the Lamar Loop trail.

**Guideline: Refine the mix of land uses—people walk and bike more often when they have attractive destinations, such as shops, schools, community centers, parks, and transit. Especially consider this guideline for new developments.**

- *Recommendation:* Regularly catalog and review commercial tenants for commercial space within the study area. Determine what is in abundance and what is missing. Determine what incentives can be used to adjust the tenant mix.
- *Recommendation:* Put an electric car-charging station somewhere in downtown Lamar. This will increase the “linger factor.” Electric car owners stay longer and spend more in neighborhoods where they linger while waiting for cars to charge.
- *Recommendation:* Consider pop-up businesses for vacant stores provided at reduced rent to draw people to commercial areas.
- *Recommendation:* Consider pop-up exhibits to temporarily provide interesting visual space at vacant stores.

## Recreation Spaces

Proximity to parks and other recreational facilities is consistently associated in recent research with higher levels of physical activity and healthier weight status among youth and adults. Recreation spaces encourage regular physical activity, serve as community gathering spaces, and often contribute to a sense of community pride and identity. This is especially true for parks in the northeast quadrant of the city.



During the panel's visit, members of the community prepared posters describing their ideas for a healthy community.

**Guideline: Ensure walkable and bikable access to recreational facilities for all community members.**

- *Recommendation:* Evaluate accessibility gaps (such as distance, costs, and cultural barriers). Identify methods to overcome these gaps and maximize use of the facility by all residents, especially in northeast Lamar.
- *Recommendation:* Identify a bikable walking corridor using existing streets and sidewalks from central downtown to Escondido Park.
- *Recommendation:* Consider additional parks and open space for the area between Escondido Park and Bicentennial Park that provide a visual and psychological connection between the northeast quadrant and downtown.

**Guideline: Design parks and recreational spaces for a variety of interests, cultures, and age groups.**

Parks and recreational spaces should accommodate the needs of residents of all interests, ages, and abilities, including active play spaces for children, athletic courts and fields for sports, and quiet, restful spaces for passive enjoyment. They should also complement the community's cultural preferences.

- *Recommendation:* Provide adult fitness equipment to complement existing recreation facilities. Adult exercise equipment and walking tracks can be located near children's playgrounds and offer an opportunity for parents

and guardians to exercise while they are supervising their children. Fitness trails (also known as par course facilities) can be integrated into the existing trail system, to inspire different types of exercise among trail users. Such facilities may help support the physical activity needs of low-to-moderate-income residents who are deterred from recreation facilities that require a fee to participate.

**Guideline: Provide amenities at parks and recreation facilities to encourage longer stays, including lighting, benches, shade, water fountains, and restrooms where possible.**

- *Recommendation:* Assess opportunities in Lamar to provide enhancements that will maximize park use. There are some indications that certain park facilities in Lamar would be better used by neighborhood residents if additional amenities were provided. For example, lighting would enhance the sense of safety and encourage play and physical activity later into the evening. Additional trees or shade structures would allow for more picnicking opportunities and park use by residents of all ages. Temporary, portable restrooms could be used to support special community events.
- *Recommendation:* Research, design, and implement highly amenitized public and private outdoor spaces that cater to the electronic needs of modern citizens, including abundant electrical outlets for charging electronics and the deployment of free wireless broadband (Wi-Fi, WiMax) to encourage longer stays and public gathering. Bicentennial Park or Willow Creek Park could act as pilots for such improvements. If people know they can charge their tablet or laptop or access the internet in a particular location, they are more likely to travel to this location and spend time there.

**Guideline: Strive for design excellence in creating play spaces for children.**

Research has linked time spent outdoors with moderate to vigorous activity in children. School yards and play facilities that incorporate colorful ground markings and murals, as well as natural terrain and landscaping, can stimulate more active play than barren play spaces. Colorful ground mark-





*School yards and play facilities that incorporate colorful ground markings and murals, as well as natural terrain and landscaping, can stimulate more active play than barren play spaces can.*

ings can serve as a low-cost way to enliven a school yard and encourage more active, innovative play.

- **Recommendation:** Assess opportunities for improvements to school yards and play spaces in Lamar. Certain play spaces, such as the Northside Park, Escondido Park, and the area around the proposed community garden near the HOPE Center, may be ripe for design interventions to encourage more active play. The design process could incorporate ideas from students and community members. Such public engagement can encourage a community's sense of ownership of the site and consequently lead to more frequent use.

## Access to Healthy Foods

Access to healthy food is a particular issue for the north-side neighborhoods. The community should build upon the success of the HOPE Center school conversion and the concept of a community garden to enhance access to healthy foods for all of Lamar's residents.

### **Guideline: Encourage access to fresh, healthy foods for all members of the community.**

- **Recommendation:** Create a farmers market associated with the Community Garden.
- **Recommendation:** Consider an aquaponic grow house that can be operated in conjunction with the Community Garden.



*The panel visits the local fresh food market in Lamar. Easy access to fresh food can have a positive impact on public health.*

# Programs for a Healthy Lamar

**A HEALTHY LAMAR NEEDS** more than just a physical plan. Successful implementation requires a wide range of programs that help people become familiar with the facilities and—of greater importance—help them incorporate regular activity into their daily lives. Improvements to the built environment require substantial capital investments and take many years to implement. Programming, however, can be implemented relatively quickly and inexpensively and produce results much sooner. Programming can also be designed to make better use of existing facilities and infrastructure.

LiveWell Prowers County has had and can continue to have a great impact with programs and events throughout the year designed to nurture a strong community culture based on an active, healthy lifestyle. Events that are fun and social will stimulate participation, and can become the entry points for residents to try new activities.

In addition, programs help residents develop supportive relationships with others with similar interests, which will increase the likelihood they stick with the activity.

A wide range of activities and events is required to cater to people of diverse ages, abilities, and interests. Special care should be taken to ensure that events and activities appeal to newcomers and novices. Adding demanding, high-level events such as marathons or 100-mile bike rides will be less effective as they cater to people who are already committed to health. The city should be willing to experiment with trial events to test which events resonate with the residents in the study area. Trial events should be designed to reach out to new groups of residents and expose them to the recreation facilities, trails, and service providers in the community. A survey of the community should be undertaken to identify the types of activities that residents desire and to identify underserved groups such as teenagers.

Implementing a comprehensive and effective LiveWell program is time-consuming and requires leadership. While numerous private and public programs and funds exist, and more are emerging each year, the limited resources available locally mandate a strategy that focuses on small steps that produce maximal results.

## Existing Programs

LiveWell Prowers County has established several of these programs in the past few years, including:

- 5-2-1-0 (5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily, 2 hours or less of screen time, 1 hour of more physical activity, and 0 sugar-sweetened beverages);
- Exercise voucher program to address the financial challenges faced by many Lamar residents;
- Recreation library to increase access to recreation equipment;
- Get Lean Lamar program, which coaches people on healthy lifestyles;
- Work-site wellness program;
- “Walkability audit” (already conducted by the local schoolchildren); and
- Pedal-to-Plains bike ride.

The community is known as the regional hub for amateur sports. Most important, LiveWell Prowers County has established a culture of empowering “champions” to inspire and even coach other residents to become involved.



## Program Opportunities

With its existing programs, Lamar has created momentum to implement a variety of additional programs to improve the health of its residents, including informal events (pot-luck dinners, block parties), community gardens, safe/fun school routes, wayfinding, walking groups, and the like. These and more are described in the next section.

## Programming Success Stories

Programs offer an opportunity to promote health without significant investment in infrastructure. The panel thought it would be helpful to research success stories from other communities. The panel offers the following as just some examples of this “soft infrastructure”:

- Lynwood, Washington—Promoting physical activity through safe routes to schools;
  - O’Fallon, Missouri—Improving nutrition through school vending machines and lunch programs;
  - Davenport, Iowa—Promoting physical activity through parks and trails;
  - Chicago—Promoting physical activity through safe parks zones;
  - Bogotá, Colombia—Creating car-free times;
  - Boise, Idaho—Challenging all residents to walk 150 miles for the city’s 150th anniversary;
  - Arvada, Colorado—Promoting the CATCH Healthy Habits program connecting seniors and kids; and
  - Takoma Park, Maryland—Recruiting parents to serve as “walking school buses” to escort children to school.
- Greenville County, South Carolina—Improving nutrition through farmers markets and community gardens;
  - Greenville County, South Carolina—Improving physical activity through complete streets;

# Specific Site Recommendations

**AS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY, LAMAR** is a city with many strengths from which to build. The first step is to recognize these assets, and figure out what opportunities they create. There will inevitably be challenges to overcome, which will make it essential to pick strategies that will turn these opportunities into realities.

## Assets

Located at a major transportation crossroads, Lamar is also close to natural and historical attractions. The city has a charming historic downtown and a surprisingly robust set of recreational facilities for a town of its size. It is home to important anchor institutions such as a community college, a hospital, and the High Plains Health Center. It has a culture that values organized sports, and a remarkable history of raising gifted professional athletes. There is a surprisingly large number of festivals, rodeos, races, and other public events, and a growing number of engaged residents who are already doing remarkable work on behalf of their community.

## Opportunities

Lamar has a chance to brand itself as a city of athletics and fitness, and make this a critical element of its economic development strategy. In doing so, it would also become a model for rural communities across America. By capitalizing on its Main Street and improving the walkability of its neighborhoods, Lamar can help people integrate physical activity into everyday life. By making more productive use of its existing parks, and adding judiciously to the parks that it already has, the municipality can draw people into more recreational activities. And last of all, but perhaps most important, Lamar has a chance to connect all of its parks, schools, shopping places, and civic institutions into a coordinated network of walkable destinations.

## Challenges

The local climate—characterized by hot sun; strong, dusty winds; droughts; and cold spells—makes outdoor recreation challenging. As a result, it is perhaps not surprising that Lamar has a culture of driving rather than walking. This is worsened by the lack of sidewalks, streetlights, and other infrastructure to make walking safe and comfortable.

Poor sidewalk conditions are exacerbated by barking dogs, which generate significant annoyance, fear, and occasional injury. Many of the town's existing parks are underused, lack contemporary facilities, or are in areas that are perceived (correctly or incorrectly) to be unsafe. Also, language and cultural barriers are a constant challenge to forming a unified and healthy community.

The environment inside of homes has a profound effect on people's health, particularly given the amount of time many children spend indoors. It has been reported that many older homes have friable asbestos, and a significant number of homes appear to be in genuine disrepair. These conditions can lead to physical and cognitive development issues that will affect the health of the very young and very old. Last of all, the proposed bypass may well solve the problem of trucks downtown, but it also has the potential to cannibalize downtown businesses and keep visitors out of Lamar altogether.

## Citywide Strategies

Although the panel quickly gravitated toward specific recommendations for four focus neighborhoods, parks, and facilities, a number of citywide strategies are being considered by the city, LiveWell, and the county as well. These recommendations should be considered in addition to and in conjunction with individual recommendations mentioned later in this chapter.



### Activate Existing Parks

The city needs to activate its existing parks with more informal events, such as potluck dinners, neighborhood block parties, performances by local musicians, and other low-cost activities. These events not only build community, but also establish a culture where people are accustomed to using their parks and public spaces. The city also needs to diversify the number of activities possible in each park. Putting a walking trail or a playground next to a sports field will help parents and siblings exercise while an athletic event is going on. It will also extend the usefulness of the park outside of designated athletic seasons.

Recreational facilities need to be adapted to reflect the realities of the climate. This means planning for nighttime activities in the summer, indoor activities in the winter, and shade and water wherever possible.

### A Parks-and-Trails Master Plan

Instead of focusing on each individual park, school, store, or civic institution in isolation, the city needs to think instead about how to bring them all together into one walkable, interconnected system that is greater than the sum of its parts. The panel has suggested a draft scenario to review and adapt as the city sees fit. In this plan, the panel has tried to bring together many of Lamar's major institutions through a network of pedestrian corridors, trails, and other linkages. This is certainly not a plan to execute overnight; rather, it is a direction that the city can modify, refine, and steadily move toward over time.

The panel recommends that the city embody this coordinated vision into a parks-and-trails master plan, which should include a phasing strategy for implementing highest-value projects first. It is essential that this plan integrate with any ongoing plans for street repairs, crosswalks,

stormwater management, or other physical improvements in the city's capital budget. Almost any capital expenditure (such as road repairs or extensions of sewer mains) can be an opportunity to create new sidewalks or trails.

### Incorporate New Strategies into New Development

When new developments are proposed, such as they have been on the south side of town, their plans should be reviewed for walkability, access to parks, and interconnection with the surrounding town. It should be explained to developers what the city is looking for and they should be asked to provide their fair share of these community improvements. Not every item will be financially feasible, but most professional developers and builders are used to working with local governments to find a solution that works for all parties.

When new park opportunities arise, such as Valco Ponds, the city should focus on how they connect to and support that broader system.

### Tourism and Economic Development

The panel suggests using this focus on parks and recreation as an economic development and tourism tool.

Other people's dollars can be brought into Lamar by encouraging ecotourism that focuses on the outdoors, such as birding, hunting, and fishing. Also, an expanded role for sports tourism should be developed that builds on Lamar's fair, rodeo, and baseball tournaments, and expands to include more bike tours, bike races, and marathons. The panel suggests that the city consider holding public events literally in the streets, with bikers and walkers enjoying food and festivities along temporarily closed roads—a kind of event known as a "ciclovía."

*The planning, construction, and programming of the Lamar Loop will result in a shared trail system providing recreational activity for families, students, equestrians, and visitors.*



Walking to school along the Fort Bent Canal



Race event on Willow Creek

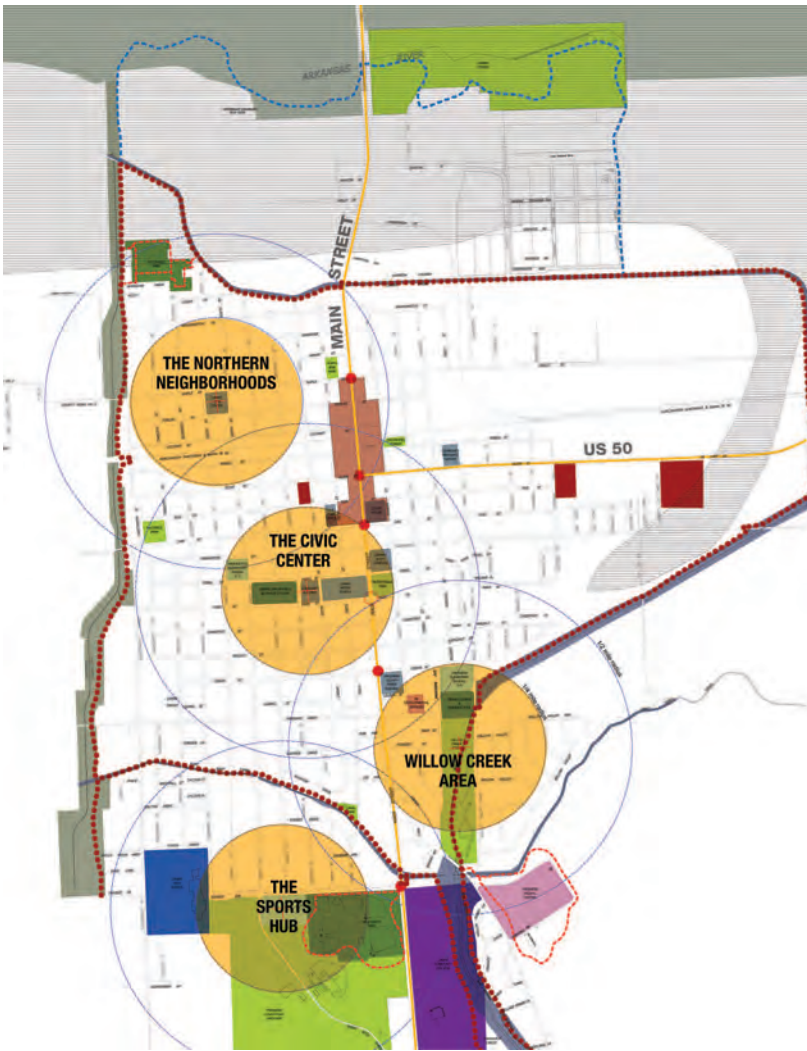


Bird-watching along the Lamar Canal



Multiuse trail along the Green Belt





*The four focus areas for the panel's visit include the Civic Center, the Northern Neighborhoods, the Sports Hub, and the Willow Creek area.*

If Lamar chooses to build a bypass, it would behoove the city to make sure that it brings more value to town than it takes away. The panel recommends a two-lane road that preserves rural character and includes recreational and equestrian trails. Just as important, businesses must be discouraged from relocating to the edge of town by putting in place a combination of ordinances, land development agreements, and other mechanisms to prevent sprawling development at the fringes of town. Lastly, attractive gateways into town should be created on all sides (complete with robust signage saying things like "Historic Lamar This Way" or "Food, Bathrooms, and Authentic Western Culture This Way" or "Trucks Only") so travelers will know Lamar is a vibrant, interesting, high-quality destination to explore.

### Neighborhood Engagement

The panelists cannot help but note that several neighborhoods lack strong community associations, and many seem to even lack a clear name. Lamar must build these civic institutions, because they will form an invaluable

asset in getting people to leave the shelter of their homes and participate in a wider world of public exercise and recreation. This process can happen gradually, but it must happen. Neighbors must find time to organize community dinners and other informal events where they get to know one another. These volunteers can then start a conversation about community needs, planting the seed of what will become a community association.

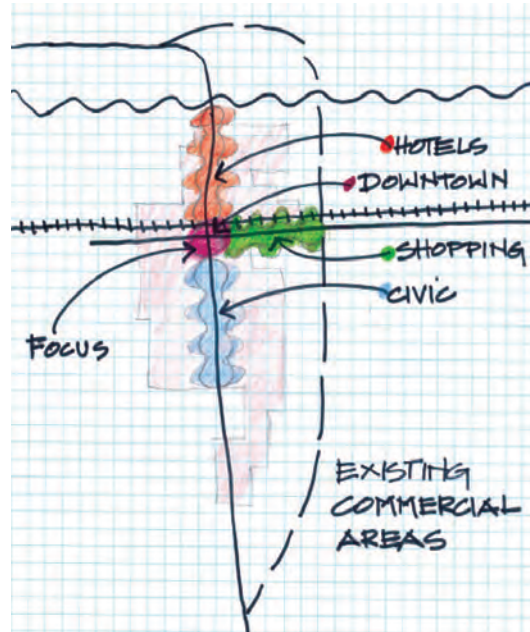
The community association must then help name its neighborhood, because a neighborhood without a name will never have a voice. In turn, the city of Lamar must recognize these community associations as representatives of their neighborhood, and organize periodic meetings where the community association can talk face to face with elected officials, the police department, the parks department, and other municipal staff. This will establish regular, transparent, and honest lines of communication between all parties, to the benefit of everyone.

## Four Focus Areas

Looking more closely at Lamar, the panelists see four major nodes of activity in town. These are clusters of institutions—schools, parks, and other assets—that are within five to ten minutes' walking distance of one another, and enveloped by residential neighborhoods. For the sake of convenience, the panelists have named these nodes "the Civic Center," "the Northern Neighborhoods," "the Sports Hub," and "the Willow Creek area." In each of these four nodes, the panel has identified a unique set of assets, each of which brings a set of opportunities, challenges, and strategies.

### The Civic Center

The Civic Center is a cluster of activity focused around the Community Building. This area includes a major part of Main Street (including city hall, the library, and the Lamar Theater). It also includes a remarkable corridor of educational and recreational amenities (including Bicentennial Park, Lamar Middle School, the Community Building, Savage Stadium, the Wrestling Practice Building, Washington Elementary, and McKorkle Park). This area is home to the



Far left: The Civic Center focus area includes portions of Main Street.

Left: Previous city concepts identified opportunities and improvements created by the bypass.

Thriftway, a major shopping destination for families in the area. Many homes are within one-quarter mile (a five-minute walk) of businesses within the neighborhood or on Main Street. These are all important destinations in town, with robust physical fitness opportunities.

With so much activity focused in this one area, and with so many people living within a few minutes' walk, there is a tremendous opportunity to help people integrate walking into their daily routine. The panel believes that Bicentennial Park is a significantly underused asset, and has the potential to serve as a major civic square for the town, housing public events and activities in the heart of town.

While many children go to school here, not all have safe walking routes to school. And many parents would be understandably nervous about having their children walking unattended to school, particularly with many barking dogs along the way. Also, even the small cost of using the Community Building is more than many people can afford. The underuse of Main Street is attributable in large part to the loud, fast-driving truck traffic, which makes walking unpleasant, reduces the number of parking spaces in front of downtown businesses, discourages visitors from slowing down to look for a place to stop, and makes it hard to hold events at Bicentennial Park.

If the city assumes control over Main Street, it should be inexpensively redesigned to calm traffic and provide angled parking, which encourages more customers to shop downtown. But even if this does not happen, it is possible to

inexpensively create an enhanced sense of place to show the possibilities of a more walkable and inviting downtown. For example, the city should pick a block on one side of Main Street and focus community attention for one full day on how that block could someday be. Vacant storefronts should be filled with temporary pop-up businesses, or with art installations in the windows. Also, outfitting Bicentennial Park with Wi-Fi/WiMax and electrical outlets will help attract visitors and generally help people to imagine downtown as a vital place that they would want to walk to.

The schools should organize "walking school buses," led by volunteer parents who would escort children to school. Even if this only started out as a monthly activity, it might evolve into a weekly or even a daily event. (This could also be complemented by something as simple as volunteer crossing guards near the school.)

Similarly, the Community Building should organize walking groups. People already come to walk the indoor hallways of the building, so it should not be hard to extend this tradition to outdoor walking—particularly in the spring and the fall. These groups could be led by volunteers, avoiding the need for a major staff commitment. Going with a group would help older or less physically fit walkers (as well as women and children) feel more confident and safe when walking outside. And because one would not have to enter the facility itself to participate, these walking groups could be free (as opposed to walking inside, which costs money).

Walking groups and walking buses should follow designated pedestrian routes—streets that are identified as ideal walking places, and which were slowly and incrementally improved to make this experience better. Although the panel suggests how these streets could be redesigned to accommodate both cars and pedestrians, it is also easy to make a number of inexpensive improvements that collectively enhance the pedestrian experience. This could include a combination of:

- Simple striping of bike and pedestrian lanes in the existing streets;
- Targeted tree plantings and beautification efforts along these routes;
- Targeted building code and sidewalk enforcement;
- Targeted pet training and animal control efforts; and
- Wayfinding signage.

Emphasis should be placed on strong, attractive corners. The corner where two sidewalks come together is often an ideal place for decorative landscaping, a rock garden, or community-built public art. Not only does this help to distinguish the block as a special and cared-for place, it also makes the sometimes-daunting task of neighborhood beautification much simpler. Starting from the corners provides a framework for getting started, does not require the participation of any particular landowner, and allows progress to be shown.

Finally, the parks department could consider whether the daily fee for access to the Community Center could feasibly be reduced to a token payment of just one dollar. This is not mandatory, but it would reduce the psychological barrier that many people feel, while still having them contribute to the maintenance of such an excellent public amenity. The combined effect would be to make pedestrians feel welcome and valued.

### **The Northern Neighborhoods**

The Northern Neighborhoods are a cluster of activity focused around the HOPE Center, the newly established

Lamar Community Garden, and the city's Tree Nursery. It also includes Escondido Park, the Lamar Canal, and Northside Park. To the west is the Lamar Green Belt. This is also the closest neighborhood to the proposed recreational facilities at Valco Ponds. The many immigrant families living in the neighborhood come from a rich cultural tradition that respects public plazas and gatherings. Many homes are within one-quarter mile (a five-minute walk) of the Thriftway or other businesses along Main Street.

Parents in the Northern Neighborhoods are eager—if not desperate—for more outdoor activities to do with their children. The soccer fields at Escondido Park are already well used by youth soccer programs and adult players alike. The Lamar Canal provides a potentially beautiful route for a walking trail, and it connects perfectly with the Green Belt at Escondido Park. Though currently undefined and underused, the Tree Nursery is a very large parcel with excellent shade trees—a rare and valuable thing in this hot and sunny city.

Even well-used parks like Escondido lack the infrastructure to reach their full potential. Despite the fact that summer heat causes many people to wait until evening to play soccer, the fields lack lighting, forcing games to end prematurely. Escondido and Northside Park both have playground equipment, but both would merit upgrades if funding were available. The potential pedestrian routes along the canal and the greenbelt are dry, dusty, and uncomfortable.

North of the HOPE Center lie a number of very long north-south blocks. The length of these blocks makes pedestrian flow difficult, forcing people to walk uncomfortably long distances. Families lack safe and comfortable routes to get to the Thriftway, schools, and other institutions to the south. In addition to facing the widely shared problems of poor sidewalk conditions, inadequate lighting, and barking dogs, residents here are physically isolated by the railroad tracks. More than just a major logistical challenge and a serious safety hazard, the tracks are an important psychological barrier that causes residents in the north to feel isolated, segregated, and detached from the broader city in which they work, live, and pay taxes.



To address these concerns and opportunities, Lamar must create designated pedestrian routes (such as along Sixth Street, which crosses the railroad tracks) and focus its energies along them. Whether this means totally redesigning the streets to incorporate walkers and bikers, or making gradual incremental improvements to them, it will provide great relief to people who are eager to walk safely and comfortably around their neighborhood.

While playground equipment may be expensive and hard to come by, simple improvements like electric lights at Escondido Park ought to be high priorities. This simple step will dramatically improve the usefulness of the park in the summertime, and can be coupled with other inexpensive efforts like a walking trail around the park. Also, the fields at Escondido are in poor shape in comparison to the fields in other parts of town, and deserve a level of care and maintenance that reflects how often they are used. The panel has suggested improvements and enhancements to Escondido Park including new fields, lights, and other amenities.

Underused parks like Northside Park are ideal locations for informal potlucks, dances, and outdoor movies. The community must begin to organize these events, and form committees of volunteers to make them happen. This simple act—helping neighbors to gather together—can transform a community. Neighbors who can organize a dinner are also able to organize against crime, trash, and other community problems. It will also establish a sense of ownership of public spaces, and encourage people to get out of their houses and use them.

The Tree Nursery is a significant asset, and there are many potential uses for it. It could provide shady walking trails; it could become a dog park; it could even become a traditional Mexican plaza that forms the civic core of the neighborhood. One can imagine what would happen if people began gathering there in the evenings to stroll and chat, enjoying delicious food from locally owned food trucks. There should be no hesitation to dream big about this kind of forgotten space. If the community takes



*The panel has suggested improvements and enhancements to Escondido Park, including new fields, lights, and other amenities.*



*The panel envisions the Tree Nursery and the Community Garden being used as a traditional Mexican plaza that forms the civic core of the neighborhood. One can imagine what would happen if people began gathering there in the evening to stroll and chat, enjoying delicious food from locally owned food trucks. A Community Garden or even a greenhouse supplying fresh food to the local neighborhood could be a complementary element to the plaza.*

less water, such as aquaponics (where both plants and fish are grown in an indoor greenhouse). The panel encourages Lamar to reach out to Agricultural Extension, Colorado Aquaponics ([www.coloradoaquaponics.com](http://www.coloradoaquaponics.com)), Denver's GrowHaus ([www.thegrowhaus.com](http://www.thegrowhaus.com)), and other organizations for technical support if this is something that the town wants to explore. Eventually, this could even become an area of study and expertise for the community college.

### The Sports Hub

The Sports Hub is a cluster of activity centered around the sports fields on the south side of town. An impressive baseball complex has contributed to the success in players' being placed in university and major league teams, as well as hosting tournaments. The Sand & Sage Fairgrounds supports the sport of rodeo, which has regional draw. These high-quality facilities are immediately adjacent to the high school, the community college, and the daycare/Head Start program. They are also adjacent to a very nice residential neighborhood.

Lamar is encouraged to leverage its sports complex as an economic development engine, and take even greater advantage of the sports complex to support the daycare. The panel suggests connecting the sports complex to academic programs at the community college. The sports complex can be used to partially solve the problem of what teenagers can do with unstructured time. The town of Lamar might also consider using the sports complex to make the adjacent neighborhood more attractive and maintain property values. And finally, the panelists behoove the town to encourage active living for residents of all ages.

Resources are obviously limited, and additional facilities would cost money and require maintenance. To date, Lamar has not been able to fund completion of the remaining two baseball fields. Electric rates in town are comparatively high, which would be an additional cost to power nighttime lighting. Facilities are outdoors and have seasonal use. Facilities at the schools, complex, and community college are often congested.

The panel feels that Lamar should continue to attract baseball tournaments, particularly ones that encourage

emotional ownership of it, and turns it into something they need, it can become a place of great value.

The Community Garden is a wonderful project that is moving forward successfully. The panelists cannot help but notice, though, that traditional gardening is a major challenge in this climate. If the garden proves to be too difficult to maintain, Lamar should not give up. There are other models that may work better in this climate and use



*The panel encourages the city to leverage its sports complex as an economic development engine. Completion of the field complex will greatly enhance the community's ability to market it for baseball and softball tournaments.*

parents to accompany their children and spend the night in town. The parks department should determine whether finishing the final two baseball fields would qualify Lamar to host more or better tournaments, and analyze whether this investment would pay for itself in a reasonable time-frame. Furthermore, the Sand & Sage Fairgrounds should be linked to the Lamar Community College Horse Training Program. The panelists have been told that nearby property owners might be willing to allow a public equestrian trail on their land. If so, this would provide a much-needed amenity that will also differentiate Lamar for being known as a horse-friendly city. It would also provide further support to the community college's equestrian program.

As with all of the parks, there should be a broader mix of recreational uses at the ball fields than there is at present, so that families can do more than watch their children play ball. For example, a walking trail, a playground, or exercise equipment would provide fitness options at the precise place where people are already outside. Just as important, these facilities would expand the usefulness of the ball field site when baseball is not in season; provide amenities within easy walking distance of the neighborhood; and provide something active for high school students to do immediately adjacent to the school itself. This last point is even more valuable if outdoor fitness equipment is provided.

The city should work with the daycare and Head Start program to have teachers and children imagine how they would like to use the sports complex and fairgrounds. The panelists suggest identifying a small but meaningful number of things that can be immediately implemented, perhaps with parents providing volunteer labor. This will be a powerful and transformative experience for the children, and will create a meaningful educational resource for the teachers.

### Willow Creek Area

The Willow Creek area is nestled in a residential neighborhood adjacent to the community college. Willow Creek Park is so popular that it is often referred to as simply "the park" by residents. It is also a source of great history and



community pride, as evinced by the historic Pike Tower. The swimming pool is one of only a few places where the entire town comes together. The trail along Willow Creek is a tremendous natural amenity, with delightful birding and wildlife watching. The community college is an important educational facility located adjacent to this park.

Willow Creek Park can serve as a "crown jewel" of Lamar, attracting new residents and making the town more appealing to businesses. The Willow Creek Trail is literally like an oasis in the desert, and this symbolism can be used to represent the rebirth of Lamar. The swimming pool and the park are truly uniting features, bringing together Lamar citizens of different backgrounds and income levels. The same could be true of where the Skate Park used to be. With proper pedestrian linkages, this area could connect seamlessly to the Wellness Center at the community college, as well as across Main Street to the ball fields and fairgrounds.

Despite the fact that many people use Memorial Drive as part of a walking loop, there is no safe pedestrian path for them on this busy street. There are incomplete pedestrian routes around the park, poor connections between the east and west sides of the creek, poor connections to the Wellness Center, and extremely poor connections across Main Street. The lush, wildlife-filled creek becomes a narrow drainage ditch as it goes north through the park. The

Skate Park, which once gave teenagers something to do, has been removed.

The swimming pool is open only during the summer, due to weather issues and the challenge of finding lifeguards during the school year. The floodplain requirements put forth by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may require a new levy, which could significantly damage the quality of the park.

The panel recommends that the city create and implement a circulation plan for the Willow Creek area that identifies how to help walkers and joggers get around the perimeter of the park; make a loop along Memorial Drive; connect to the west side of the creek; get to the Wellness Center; and connect across Main Street to the ball fields. The trail should be extended to the south to reach the golf course.

Also, the park needs to be activated with more activities, including outdoor plays, concerts, potlucks, and other activities. The improvements to the park should consider adding outdoor exercise equipment.

If FEMA forces Lamar to install a new levy, the design should not be dominated by engineers whose motivation and expertise are unrelated to parks. The panel suggests making sure the park is designed for people first by pushing back against FEMA, asking questions, and demanding a design that makes the park better than it was.



Regardless of the FEMA decision, the panelists believe that the creek should be regarded within the park to make it shallower and wider. They also suggest allowing wetlands to reestablish themselves, encouraging beavers to build dams, and supporting the renaturalization of this space with additional landscaping. This has the potential to become an amazing spot for bird and wildlife watching, just like the trail.

In general, when installing stormwater facilities, the city of Lamar should think creatively about how to make them into landscape features that make the park and trail more attractive. Many good examples of this can be found across the country. Stormwater facilities do not have to look just like trenches of rock.

There remains an overwhelming desire in the city for a year-round indoor pool, either by enclosing the current pool or by building a new one. If the city still has the bonding capacity to make this a reality, it should put this question to the voters again. It is not a cheap or simple decision, and many practical questions about staffing the pool remain to be resolved. But the demand is so widespread that it at least should be honored by another vote.

Demand is also very strong for another skate park. The city should apply for grant funding for design and construction from the Tony Hawk Foundation, American Ramp Company, the Rob Dyrdek Foundation, NoWhere 2 Ride, Fuel Up to Play 60 Program, and Liberty Mutual. High school students should be encouraged to help prepare the applications, which will engage them in the process and give them valuable writing skills.

*Willow Creek Park can serve as a "crown jewel" of Lamar, attracting new residents and making the town more appealing to businesses. The Willow Creek Trail is literally like an oasis in the desert, and this symbolism can be used to represent the rebirth of Lamar.*

# Organizational Structure and Implementation

**THE ULI PANEL RECOMMENDS** that the Lamar Healthy Places Initiative have the mission of improving the health of residents, families, neighborhoods, and the community. To accomplish this mission, the initiative will seek to implement programs and projects that are intended to improve the overall health of the community through a variety of approaches, including investment in the built environment of Lamar, education of the public, and advocacy for ways of bringing the importance of lifestyles to health to the attention of the community.

## Protocols for Participation in the LiveWell Prowers County Community Coalition

As a result of six years of experience with various program interventions, and as a result of the building of a community of interested parties, the Healthy Places Initiative has built a solid base of support. This support is evident in the substantial number of organizations that have come together to form the LiveWell Prowers County Community Coalition.

As the ULI panel has considered the various options for the creation of an institution that will implement the Healthy Places Initiative in the future, it recommends that the initiative retain the existing structure of a collaborative. This approach will relieve the initiative of the large tasks of considering and developing a variety of structural alternatives, such as incorporation, bylaw drafting, forming a governing board, and establishing a financial management system. Consequently, the panel recommends that the initiative retain the existing collaborative structure but establish some internal protocols while doing so, so that members of the coalition are clear about the rules of participation.

The panel further recommends that there be a clear understanding among the coalition membership that such participation requires the members to take on tasks agreed upon by the coalition and the individual member. The panel recommends that the coalition seek to have the widest possible membership, and that the only barrier to membership be an unwillingness to commit either time or resources toward the Healthy Places Initiative.

The panel recommends that the coalition make special provision for participation by youth so that there is a constant source of energy and ideas from that segment of the community. The panel also recommends that there be periodic but not necessarily frequent meetings of the coalition, primarily for the purposes of communication, discussion of issues, information and learning sharing, and major decisions about strategies. On a day-to-day basis, the affairs of the coalition could be referred to a smaller and rotating set of members.

While the decisions regarding the allocation of government funds will continue to be made by the appropriate governmental authorities, the panel recommends that the forum created by the coalition devote considerable attention to the effort of brokering priorities among all the competing coalition members. The panel does not envision the coalition serving as an arbiter among resource seekers; rather, the members can serve as a sounding board to ensure that various programs and projects have been amply thought through and that applicants are presenting realistic assessments of the costs and benefits associated with various proposals.

The panel recommends that the coalition identify nontraditional partners like the city's first responders and police. As an example, the drug problem in Lamar can be defined not only as a crime problem but also as a public health



problem; this offers the possibility of law enforcement and the health community working together to reduce the cost of drug use to the community. The first responders will often respond to residents whose lifestyle choices result in medical emergencies.

Another nontraditional partner could be the city's religious institutions. It is well established that there is reciprocity between the emotional condition of a person or a family and physical health. The panel recommends that the coalition continue to be staffed at an efficient level to permit the majority of the funds raised by the coalition to be applied to program and project activities.

## Identify Champions

One of the great benefits of having the coalition will be the identification of what the Lamar application has called "champions." The panel recommends that the identification of such champions be a top priority of the coalition, and that they could be both individuals and organizations; the initiative can have the benefit of providing an opportunity or a forum for participation by a wide variety of members of the community who are seeking a way to make a contribution to the betterment of Lamar.

## Resources

The panel recommends that the coalition think strategically as much as possible; i.e., that all of its projects and programs be considered in the context of long-term planning. There are many resources—especially those of foundations, the state government, and the federal government—that can be obtained if the community can place them in the context of a strategic plan and if the community can be financially patient to allow for the long timelines associated with private and public application and approval processes.

The panel also recommends that the community always be prepared to advance some funds, however small, to show its commitment to the projects and programs.

Examples can include funds from the Colorado Health Foundation for the purposes of enhancing the environ-

ment, enhancements to environmental remediation from transportation funds from the state and federal sources, and economic development funds available to environmental and health projects that have a development outcome.

## Financial Management

As an unincorporated entity, the coalition will have minimal ability to manage grants—both receiving and distributing. A variety of alternatives exist to address this situation, but the panel believes that the current relationship between the coalition and the High Plains Community Health Center is an excellent solution to the matter of financial management and control. The panel recommends that this relationship continue, but that it be governed by an explicit memorandum of understanding that clearly spells out the relationship and the procedures that will govern the relationship.

## Evaluation of the Effort

As a part of responsible program management, it will be important to develop an explicit evaluation protocol so that coalition members, funders (both public and private), and the larger community can know how effective the various projects and programs are.

The panel recommends that such a protocol be developed early in the process, with the evaluation including the following: a measure of inputs (money, people's time, etc.); outputs (measures of activity such as the number of participants, square feet of parks and playgrounds, and linear measures of items such as trails); and outcomes (measures such as population growth or stabilization, crime statistics, economic output/gross domestic product of Lamar).

This evaluation protocol would be worked out among the major stakeholders such as the funders, government, and the fiscal agent, and would be transparent to the members of the Lamar community.

## Role of Progressive Urban Management Associates

As the initiative gathers momentum, the role of the Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) will become increasingly important. The panel recommends that the following roles be considered:

- Working with consulting firm JSI, PUMA can provide invaluable technical assistance in formulating the evaluation program and in helping to gather the data required to provide evaluation. The particular value added by PUMA to the evaluation would be to expand the evaluation criteria to variables beyond health measures. It could also help create the communication materials that the coalition will use to communicate with the community.
- PUMA can provide assistance in the preparation of proposals for funding; and its services can include helping the professionals in Lamar enhance their proposal writing skills.
- PUMA can help by advising Lamar professionals on how to advocate for its interests with the business community, foundations, and agencies of government at the state and federal levels.

## Models for Implementation

From the information presented by the panel, it is clear that Lamar and its residents have reached a critical point with respect to the future of their community. The data indicate that the city has stalled and that if things do not change, it faces the prospect of serious decline in the future. In this context, it is clear that the community faces an “all hands on deck” moment that requires the talents and participation of as many people and agencies as possible. It is clear that the Healthy Places Initiative can make a major contribution to the future overall success of the city and the region.

The panel has identified several initiatives as offering the potential for early-stage successes in which the com-

munity can join in celebration; these initiatives have also been identified as alternatives that can be accomplished with relatively small investments of funds. The panel offers these projects as models that show how they offer opportunities for the entire community to be engaged in the Healthy Places Initiative. These initiatives are as follows:

- Establishing safe routes to schools—including “walking school buses”—and pedestrian-friendly routes on city streets. This project would require the participation of the mayor’s office, the office of the superintendent of schools, various municipal agencies (to provide the proper preparation of the routes on city streets), and various nongovernmental agencies (like Voices Unidas, Watch D.O.G.S., radio station KWAY to help with communication, etc.) to mobilize and train parent volunteers.
- Activating existing facilities. This project would require leadership and participation on the part of the city parks and recreation department, various individual neighborhood champions (to provide ideas and volunteers), the Lamar Chamber of Commerce (for business participation as needed), and the police department (to provide security as needed). Activating facilities could also include programs like health fairs and information events in which the county could participate.
- Adopting and implementing the parks-and-trails master plan. Clearly, the process of master planning, to be effective, should draw on the participation of as wide a variety of community partners as possible. Leadership for a community-wide master-planning process could come from the political leadership of the community, and it could be staffed by existing personnel; but the mobilization of the community participants would need to come from all the partners in the Healthy Places Initiative.

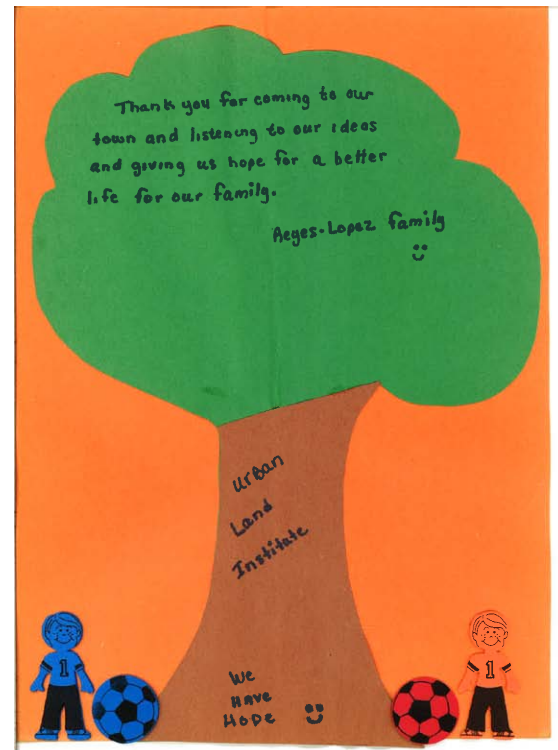
As can be seen from the foregoing panel recommendations, the Healthy Places Initiative offers the potential for a reimagining of the city of Lamar and the mobilization of the entire community in an all-out effort to plan a new future for the city.

# Conclusion

**THE PANEL BELIEVES** that the Colorado Healthy Places Initiative offers Lamar the opportunity to change its trajectory: to improve the health of its citizens, but also to transform its image and improve its economy.

Today, the United States contains more than 25,000 incorporated communities—all of which are competing for a relatively small number of plants, factories, and distributions centers. The old model of business recruitment no longer works in a world where capital is footloose. Nowadays, communities that cannot differentiate themselves from others will have no competitive advantage. What's more, employers and employees nowadays are interested in a healthy lifestyle. Amenities such as parks and green space have become critical to attracting and retaining highly educated workers such as doctors, nurses, and technologists.

Lamar needs to set itself apart from all the other towns in the Great Plains. How does the city do this? It does this by creating a plan that builds on and enhances its unique set of assets. The panel believes that by investing in active living, outdoor recreation, and amateur sports (e.g., baseball, soccer, swimming, biking, rodeo, hunting, fishing, and equestrian activities), Lamar can transform its image, strengthen its economy, and create a healthier, more vibrant community. In addition to being the commercial center of a vast farming and ranching region, Lamar has the assets and opportunity to become a "High Plains hub of amateur sports and active living."



*We Have Hope, a poster prepared by the Reyes-Lopez family, was presented to the ULI panelists at their final presentation.*

# About the Panel

## Edward McMahon

*Panel Chair*  
*Washington, D.C.*

Ed McMahon holds the Charles Fraser Chair on Sustainable Development at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. He is an attorney, a community planner, a lecturer, and an author. As the senior fellow for sustainable development, McMahon leads ULI's worldwide efforts to conduct research and educational activities on environmentally sensitive development policies and practices.

Before joining the Institute in 2004, McMahon spent 14 years as the vice president and director of land use planning for the Conservation Fund in Arlington County, Virginia. He is also the cofounder and former president of Scenic America, a national nonprofit organization devoted to protecting America's scenic landscapes.

McMahon is the author or coauthor of 15 books and more than 200 articles. His books include the following: *Developing Sustainable Planned Communities*, *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*, *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*, and *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania*. He also writes regularly for *Urban Land* magazine, *Planning Commissioners Journal*, and other periodicals. Over the past 20 years, McMahon has drafted numerous local land use plans and ordinances. He has organized successful efforts to acquire and protect urban parkland, wilderness areas, and other conservation properties.

McMahon serves on several boards and commissions, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Maryland, the Governors Institute for Community Design, and the Orton Family Foundation.

McMahon has an MA in urban studies from the University of Alabama and a JD from Georgetown University Law School, where he taught law and public policy from 1976 to 1985.

## Laura Burnett

*San Diego, California*

For nearly 30 years, Laura Burnett has worked as a landscape architect in the planning and design of communities, parks, campuses, transit-oriented facilities, and regional open space networks where infrastructure, buildings, and landscape work as a coordinated whole. She brings to her projects a strong commitment to the principles of sustainability and the cultural, functional, and aesthetic interface of human activity and natural systems.

Burnett represents ULI in the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Public Health Stakeholders Group. She is leading an initiative for Green Rights-of-Way (GROW) that will transform six streets in downtown San Diego to form a network of open space, adding four miles of trails and more than ten acres of land to grow trees, shade cafés and neighborhood recreation, and collect, clean, and reuse stormwater to cultivate community health.

Burnett has professional degrees from Colorado State University and Harvard Graduate School of Design.

## Tom Cox

*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

From 1979 to 1989, Tom Cox was the executive director of the North Side Civic Development Council, which, under his leadership, became the community development corporation (CDC) for 15 neighborhoods (pop. 60,000)

on the North Side of Pittsburgh. During his tenure, the organization developed for-sale housing, an incubator, and industrial and commercial buildings, and also managed a seed/venture capital fund. The organization was identified by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) as one of the ten best CDCs in the United States during the decade of the 1980s.

In 1989, Cox became the first executive director of the Neighborhood Progress Corporation, an intermediary organization created by the major civic organizations and philanthropies in Cleveland, Ohio. He oversaw the management of an annual \$3 million grants program to provide operating support to Cleveland's CDCs. During this time, he created a \$15 million development loan fund, a housing development corporation, and the first wholly owned subsidiary of the South Shore Bank of Chicago.

In 1994, Cox became deputy mayor and chief of staff to Mayor Tom Murphy, with major responsibilities for neighborhood and economic development, budget management, and was, in effect, the chief operating officer of the city. During the 12 years of the Murphy administration, the city payroll was reduced by 800 (out of an initial complement of 5,000). Some city services were privatized (payroll being the most significant).

As manager of the capital budget process, Cox made various city investment programs like paving and vehicle purchase routine. New computer systems were purchased for budget management and to help the police bureau institute state-of-the-art personnel evaluation systems and crime mapping systems in order to implement better police resource deployment practices. Every playground in the city (some 150) was repaired or replaced, which included the installation of child safety surfaces.

Cox oversaw the securing of pro-bono services by the McKinsey consulting firm in order to reengineer the police bureau and the public housing authority.

As a consequence of his responsibility for neighborhood and economic development, Cox served as chairman of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (the city's urban

renewal operating agency) for 12 years. He oversaw the design and implementation of numerous projects including the creation of a \$60 million revolving development fund, two sports facilities, the convention center, a new headquarters for Alcoa, new office buildings for Mellon and PNC banks, downtown housing, numerous neighborhood housing and commercial projects, and two new intown developments.

Cox was a visiting scholar at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, city of Wuhan, People's Republic of China, for the academic year 2009–2010. He is a graduate of Yale University (BA in philosophy, 1961) and the Union Theological Seminary (master's in divinity, 1964). He is an ordained Episcopal priest.

## Brian T. Guenzel

*Arlington, Texas*

Brian Guenzel is the director of the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) at the University of Texas at Arlington in the School of Urban and Public Affairs. The IUS serves Texas communities statewide and provides training and research opportunities for the next generation of planners, administrators, and academics.

Prior to this position, Guenzel worked as the planning official for the city of Burleson, Texas, and was responsible for directing the city's long-range planning efforts and code amendments, and for managing the planning division operations. His special interests in planning are the challenges of balancing the preservation of historic buildings with economic growth (or the lack thereof) and planning for healthy communities with an emphasis on reducing chronic diseases.

Before his career in planning, Guenzel worked in public health with a focus on health policy research. He worked as a consultant to Robert Wood Johnson Health & Society Scholars at the University of California at Berkeley, served as the principal research associate and manager for the Center for Philosophy, Health & Policy Sciences, and contributed to fieldwork conducted by the University of Texas

School of Public Health faculty in the east end of Houston and in Socorro, Texas.

Guenzel has a master's degree in city and regional planning from the University of Texas at Arlington and a BS degree in social sciences from the University of Houston at Clear Lake.

## Michael Horst

*Washington, D.C.*

Mike Horst is senior vice president for the ULI Robert C. Larson Leadership Initiative at the Urban Land Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. He also is a founding sponsor and member of the advisory board of the initiative. In addition, he was the senior resident fellow for leadership.

Prior to these assignments, he oversaw ULI's District Council Program for a decade, providing leadership, vision, and strategic planning for the 51 North American district councils. The district councils are the "delivery system" for ULI's policy and practice agenda, providing an opportunity for the Institute's 29,000-plus members to be leaders in the communities in which they live and work.

Since beginning his career in 1970, Horst has also been a real estate consultant, an educator, and a developer. His consulting career included senior positions with Economics Research Associates, PBR, EDAW, and International Tourism and Resort Advisors. His clients included organizations such as the Walt Disney Company and the St. Joe Company and not-for-profit groups like the Rocky Mountain Institute and Habitat for Humanity. He has created and taught multidisciplinary classes at Harvard as well as at the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses of the University of California, and was an adjunct (full) professor at the University of Southern California. He was also cofounder of Shenoa Retreat and Learning Center, an ecoresort in northern California demonstrating ecologic, economic, and community sustainability and innovative building and

financing technologies such as straw bale construction and the Land Stewardship program.

Throughout his career, Horst has been an active participant as a full member of the Urban Land Institute, serving as cofounder of the Sustainable Development Council and as vice chair of the Program Committee. He is also a Governor (Developer level) of the ULI Foundation.

Horst has a BA degree in economics from the University of California at Santa Barbara (1967) and an MBA from Stanford University (1969), and was a Loeb Fellow at the Harvard Design School (1982). He serves on the Alumni Council of the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Loeb Fellowship Alumni Council.

## Andrew Irvine

*Denver, Colorado*

Andrew Irvine is a principal with RNL Design in Denver. RNL is a full-service architecture and landscape architecture firm with offices Denver, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and Abu Dhabi. RNL is dedicated to sustainability, design excellence, and innovation in everything—architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, planning, and urban design. RNL embraces the "Design for One Earth" philosophy.

Prior to his current position, Irvine was a senior landscape architect at EDAW, with a broad range of project experience throughout the United States and Australia. He has specialized skills in site planning, master planning, and urban design guidelines. His range of projects includes major infrastructure, urban renewal, public domain, and traditional park design. Irvine has worked on numerous planning projects that include significant experience with transportation and waterfront development. He also has completed projects that have incorporated comprehensive open space networks and ecological restoration areas into planned communities.

Irvine has served on four of the Urban Land Institute's national Advisory Services panels. He has degrees in landscape architecture and environmental design.



## Brad Rogers

*Queenstown, Maryland*

Brad Rogers has 15 years of experience managing complex urban real estate transactions and harnessing the power of markets to achieve public policy goals.

An attorney with a master's degree in environmental management, Rogers has broad experience across the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. In these different roles, he has participated in a wide range of real estate transactions involving private and institutional purchasers, elaborate multiparty public/private partnerships, multiple funding sources, challenging site conditions, active community participation, and complex regulatory environments. Rogers also has a well-developed background in the study of architecture and planning.

As both a board member and a staff member of nonprofit organizations, Rogers has worked to change state laws and local ordinances to generate smart growth, urban economic development, and sustainable design. In the private sector, he has worked on everything from large HOPE VI affordable housing developments to small residential infill projects.

Rogers founded and managed a family of social enterprise firms focusing on green building and urban redevelopment in Baltimore. These included the largest and most successful green construction firm in the region (which he recently sold to a large competitor) as well as a development firm and a real estate brokerage focused on sustainability. This allowed him to participate in the design and construction of many of the most innovative green projects in Maryland, including the first LEED—New Construction Gold building in Baltimore; the first near-zero-net-energy building in Maryland; and the first sustainable, universally accessible, and affordable residential development in the country.

In his current position at the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Rogers is managing the acquisition, financing, design, and eventual renovation of a 23,000-square-foot complex of abandoned historic buildings into the Eastern

Shore Conservation Center, a green mixed-use campus providing offices and apartments for regional nonprofit organizations. He is also executing a variety of complex real estate transactions (involving brownfield contamination, public/private partnerships, stacked financing, and a host of other challenging issues) to create new parks, trails, and pedestrian networks. These include the first major urban park in Cambridge, Maryland, and a proposed 63-mile interstate Rail Trail.

Rogers holds degrees from Haverford College, Duke Law School, and Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment. He is a regular lecturer, panelist, and author.

## Ed Starkie

*Portland, Oregon*

Ed Starkie has 27 years' experience in working with urban projects from conception and feasibility analysis to financing and development strategies. A particular career focus of his has been the economic structure of vital urban places, and of downtowns and neighborhoods that are pedestrian- and transit-oriented environments. Recent work has received the California Preservation Foundation Award and the California Governor's Award for Historic Preservation, a Charter Award from the Congress for the New Urbanism, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Smart Growth Award, a Driehaus Form-Based Code Award, and American Planning Association awards from Texas, Virginia, and Missouri.

Starkie is a financial adviser for private and public development who brings a unique, pragmatic approach that results in projects that are feasible and profitable and that contribute to community livability. He has also served on the faculty of the University of Oregon's Urban Architecture Program and the Portland State University Urban Planning and Architecture programs.

Starkie has a master of science degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a bachelor of landscape architecture from the University of Oregon.



# A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report



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