



WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD DENVER, COLORADO

May 5 – 10, 2013

SPONSORS + CONSULTANT TEAM



The Colorado
Health Foundation™



Councilman Paul D. López
City & County of Denver District 3



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 a membership organization with nearly 30,000 members, in 100 countries on 6 continents representing the spectrum of real estate development, land use planning, and financial disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.
- What the Urban Land Institute does:
 - Conducts Research
 - Provides a forum for sharing of best practices
 - Organizes and conducts meetings
 - Directs outreach programs
 - Conduct Advisory Services Panels



THE PANEL'S ASSIGNMENT

1

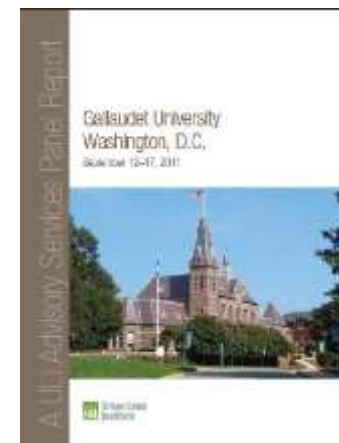
As part of the Colorado Healthy Places Initiative the ULI Panel was ask to consider how Westwood could foster a built environment that would make it easier to walk, bike, play and engage in daily activities that encourage movement and connection.

2

The panel was also asked to recommend specific infrastructure investments that promote walking, biking, and access to open space and recreational facilities

ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM

- Since 1947
- 15 - 20 panels a year on a variety of land use subjects
- Provides independent, objective candid advice on important land use and real estate issues
- Process
 - Review background materials
 - Receive a sponsor presentation & tour
 - Conduct stakeholder interviews
 - Consider data, frame issues and write recommendations
 - Make presentation
 - Produce a final report



PANEL MEMBERS

Chair

Ed McMahon

Urban Land Institute
Washington, DC

Panelists

Kamuron Gurol

City of Sammamish
Sammamish, Washington

Debbie Lou

Active Living Research
San Diego, California

James Moore

HDR, Inc.
Tampa, Florida

Ralph Nuñez

Design Team Plus, LLC
Birmingham, Michigan

James Rojas

Latino Urban Forum
Los Angeles, California

David Scheuer

The Retrovest Companies
Burlington, Vermont

Elizabeth Shreeve

SWA Group
Sausalito, California

ULI Staff

Caroline Dietrich

Annie Finkenbinder Best

Kathryn Craig



WESTWOOD: The Study Area



KEYSTONES TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

- Activity
- Healthy foods
- Safety and Security
- Sense of Community



HEALTHY PLACES ARE WALKABLE PLACES

- Walkable communities are good places to live, work and invest
- Parks and recreation are good for people and business



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity, once part of our everyday life, has been engineered out of daily routines.



WALKING CAN SOMETIMES BE DANGEROUS OR DIFFICULT



WESTWOOD HAS CHALLENGES

- It lacks adequate parkland and green space
- It has few places where teens and residents can gather for public events or celebrations
- It has a lack of public transportation
- It has many unpaved alleys and illegal dumping
- It has narrow or non-existent sidewalks
- It has auto-oriented street design



WESTWOOD HAS ASSETS

- It has hard working people
- It has a strong belief in education and learning
- It has a distinctive multi-cultural identity and history
- It has a diverse group of non-profits working for neighborhood improvement
- It values family and children
- It has a talented and dedicated councilman



WESTWOOD NEEDS FOCUS: Physical + Programmatic

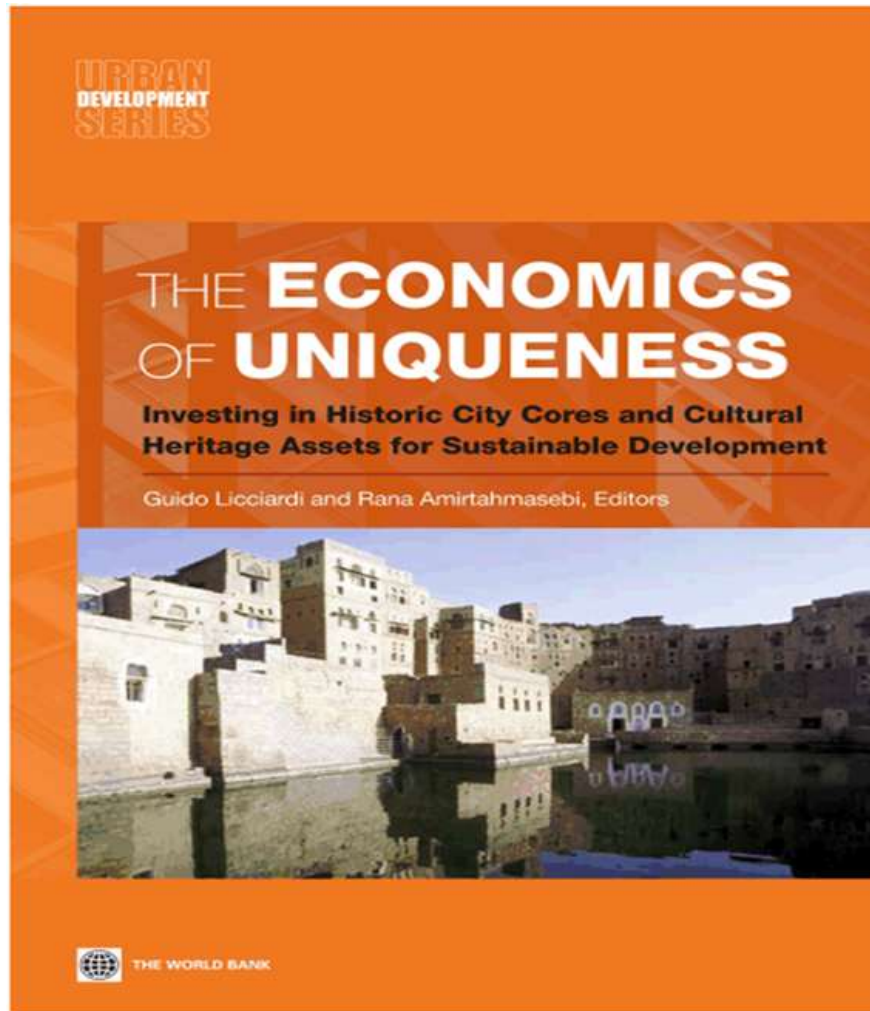
Physical



Programmatic



WESTWOOD NEEDS TO DISTINGUISH ITSELF



- If you can't differentiate yourself you will have no competitive advantage
- Sameness is a minus, not a plus in the world today

BIG IDEAS

- 1** Create a unique identity – Latino Cultural District
- 2** Create a Main Street – Transform Morrison Road
- 3** Create a plaza at the heart of the neighborhood
- 4** Create neighborhood connections using open space and greenways

CREATE A UNIQUE IDENTITY



CREATE A STREET FOR PEOPLE

Cars



People



GIVE THE COMMUNITY A HEART



CREATE GREEN SPACE CONNECTIONS



OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

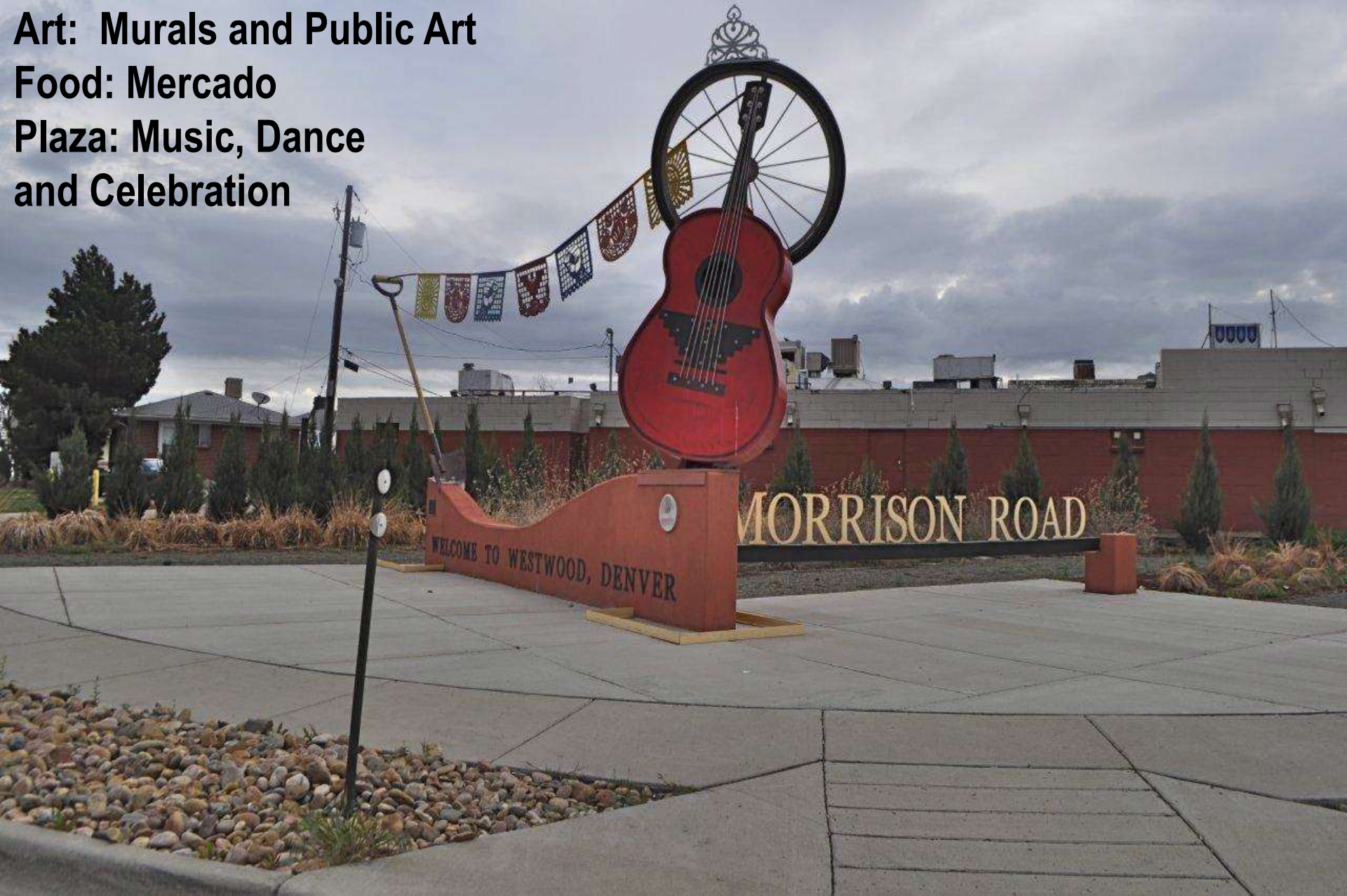
- 1** Latino Heritage and Culture
- 2** Planning and Design Strategies
- 3** Programmatic and Healthy Living Strategies
- 4** Policy and Financial Strategies

Latino Cultural District: Creation of Community Identity through Arte y Cultura

Art: Murals and Public Art

Food: Mercado

**Plaza: Music, Dance
and Celebration**



4101

4101

MUFFLER SHOP

REPAIRS
WARRANTY 1 YEAR
MEX. & U.S. CAR & TRUCKS
CUMMINS 440 & 500
1960-1970
1970-1980
1980-1990
1990-2000

AVISO
CUMMINS 440 & 500
1960-1970
1970-1980
1980-1990
1990-2000

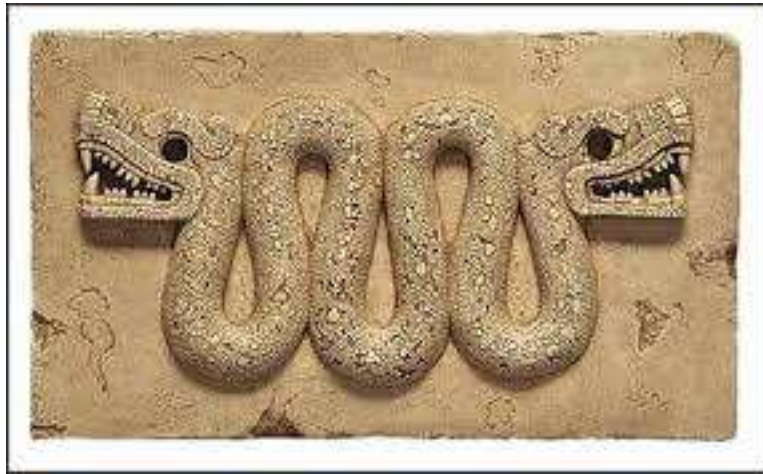


TELEPHONE TELEPHONE



PUBLIC ART





FOOD



BIENVENIDOS AL MERCADITO



**TODOS
LOS
DIAS**

Meristichia

Conjunto

NORTEÑO

CAFETERIA JOYERIAS
DULCERIA Abre a las 12:00
TEL: 3343 4000 • 3343 4111 • SALINAS

DULCENIA del 1920

Beauty Salons

BOTANICAS

GROCERIE
Carnicer

Carnicería



01/19/2013









SAN ANTONIO



MUSIC



DANCE



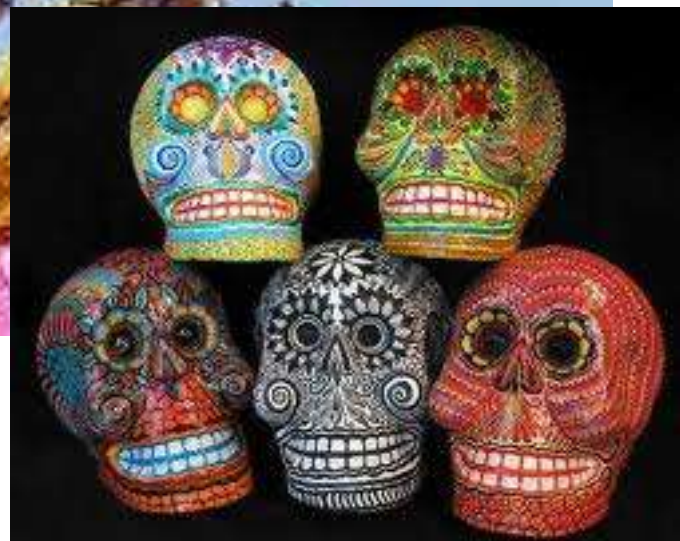
DANCE



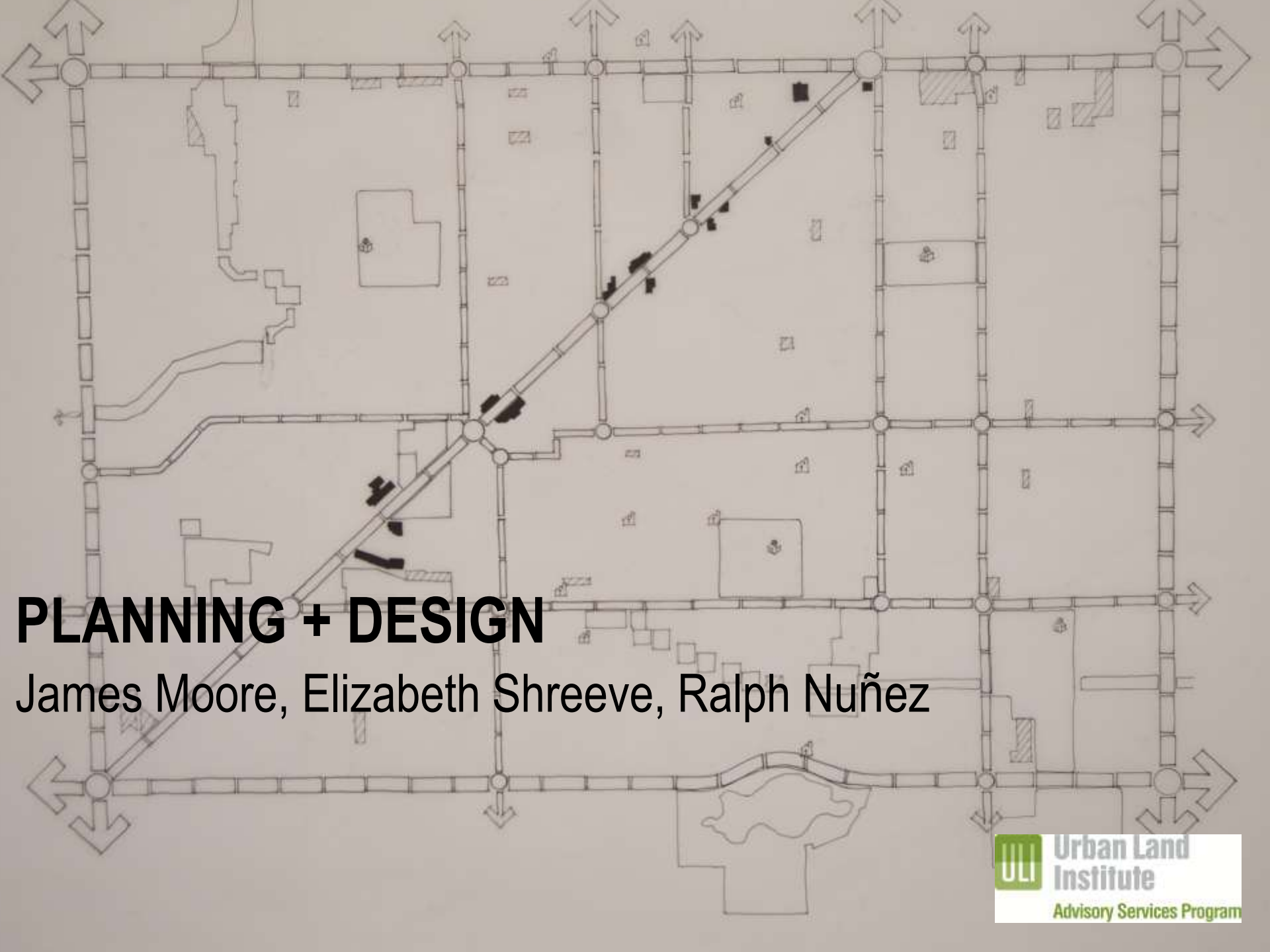
DANCE











PLANNING + DESIGN

James Moore, Elizabeth Shreeve, Ralph Nuñez

LOCATION

The Westwood neighborhood sits only a few miles from downtown Denver, the heart of the metro region. Morrison Road was the first route into the city from the south, and there are visible reminders of the connection between the neighborhood and the city center.



PARKS

The Westwood neighborhood includes only a nominal amount of formal public open space, including Westwood Park (above) and the recently started Cuatro Vientos Park (below). There are many opportunities, however, to create a range of formal civic and recreational spaces within the neighborhood.



PARKS

Weir Gulch (above) runs through the northwestern corner of the neighborhood and represents a unique opportunity to add to the functional open space within the neighborhood, as has been done in adjacent neighborhoods (bottom).



WALKABILITY

Along many streets in the neighborhood, sidewalks are extremely narrow and are often in need of maintenance. Even in situations where a part of the sidewalk has been upgraded to meet current standards, adjacent parts are under-sized, making it uncomfortable to walk safely in many areas of the community.



ALLEYS

Some Alleys in the neighborhood are unpaved and exhibit a generally disheveled physical character which makes them less desirable as a place to walk or bike.



ALLEYS

Many alleys are paved and function not only for walking and biking but also as a vibrant form of communal space.

Programs have been established to allow residents to decorate the alleys, further enhancing their appearance and creating a greater sense of communal ownership.



WALLS

The external appearance and physical presence of many buildings could be enhanced by repainting the facades or using them as a base for public murals.



WALLS

Several buildings in the neighborhood include colorful and unique wall murals. These enhance the sense of identity for both the buildings and the neighborhood.



WALLS

Murals can be used to enhance any vertical surface including fences. These help enhance the overall neighborhood character and serve as an opportunity to create a unique and vibrant identity as well as to tell stories, display history, and convey relevant messages to residents and visitors.



COLOR

Many cultures have traditions of painting their buildings with vibrant and eye-catching colors. There are examples of this in the Westwood neighborhood and such practices should be encouraged as a way of enhancing the identity of both the individual establishment and the community as a whole.



SCALE

Along certain parts of Morrison Road, the street section is relatively well-defined with multi-story buildings adjacent to the sidewalks and across from one another making a clearly defined urban space. Along most of the corridor, however, buildings are smaller and set back from the street, often at an angle, creating a less desirable condition.



CIVIC SPACES

The Westwood neighborhood contains a number of formal spaces where residents and community members can gather for a range of social situations. Both public and quasi-public civic spaces should be encouraged throughout the neighborhood.



COMMERCIAL USES

While the Westwood neighborhood is underserved by neighborhood scale commercial uses, there are several sections along Morrison Road in which groups of viable shops, stores and restaurants have established themselves. These should be supported and additional such entities encouraged.



COMMERCIAL USES

The Westwood neighborhood contains a wide variety of active automotive uses. Viable commercial enterprises should be maintained, and encouraged to match the design standards that are starting to emerge along the length of the Morrison Drive corridor.

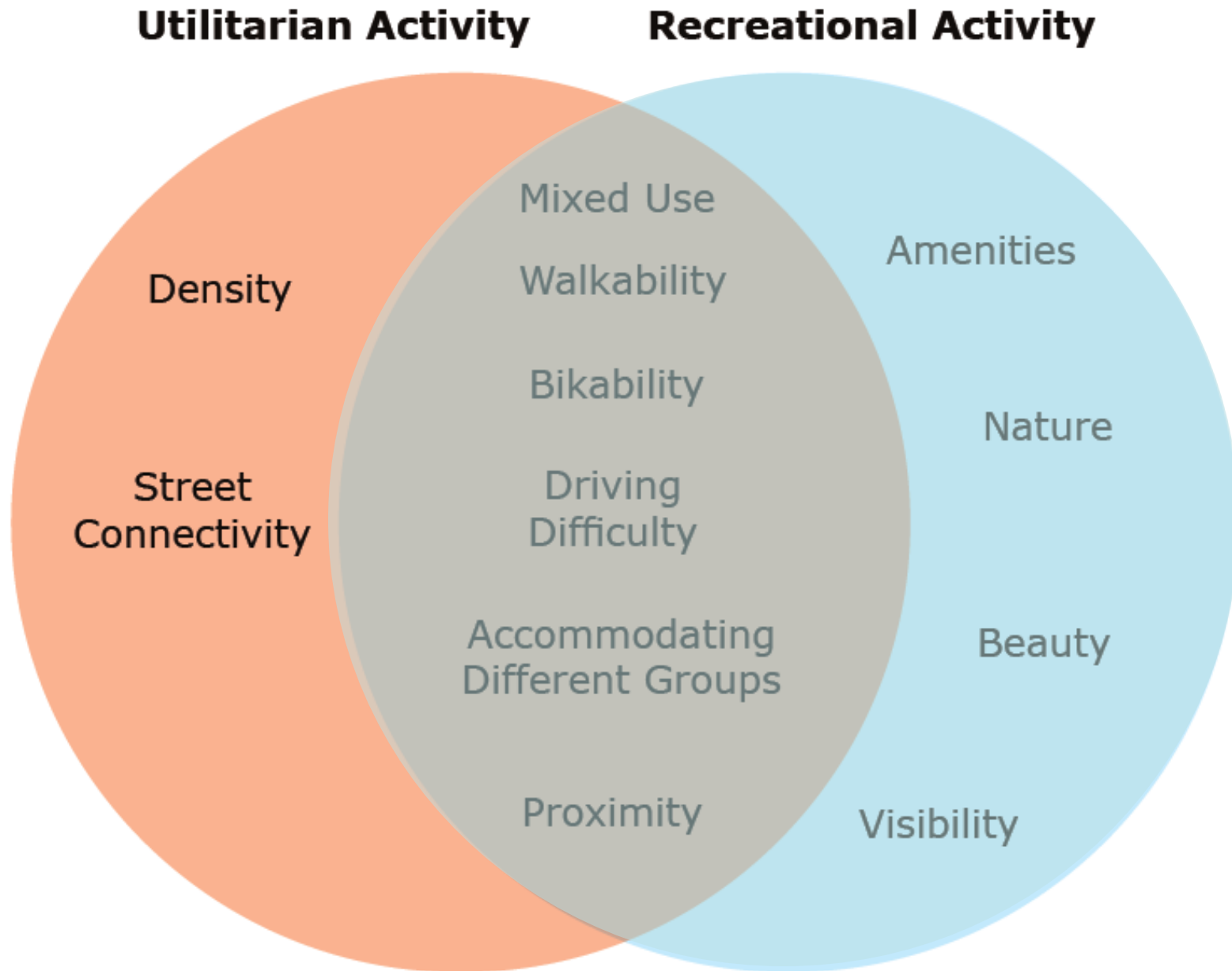


REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

While the vast majority of the neighborhood is built out with viable buildings and uses, there are a number of key sites that are ideally poised for redevelopment.



HEALTHY DESIGN



“MAIN STREET” with Gathering Areas

- Transform Morrison Road from “*Divider*” to “*Connector*”
- Community spine activated with shopping, restaurants, services, businesses, urban housing
- Core area between Kentucky and Virginia; central node at Exposition
- Safe pedestrian crossings/traffic controls, traffic calming (stops or signals at Virginia and Exposition; possible stop at Perry)



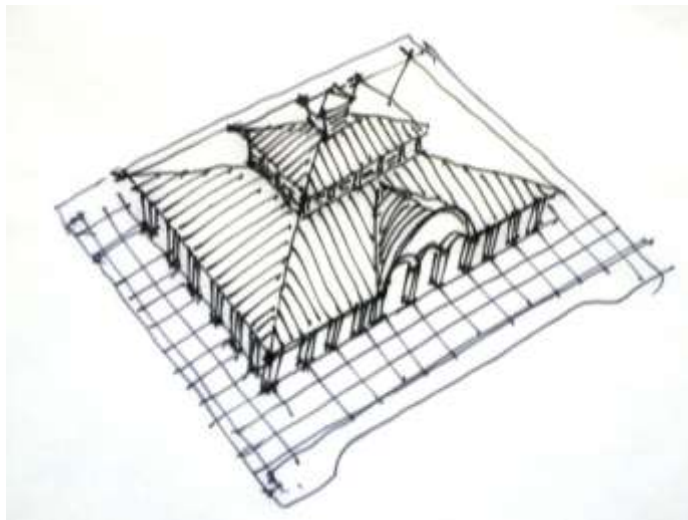
“MAIN STREET” Design

- Narrower vehicular width
- Wider sidewalks with tree wells and lighting
- Continuous street trees, widened sidewalks, lighting
- Buildings oriented to street
- Use intersections to make places for art, murals, music, performances

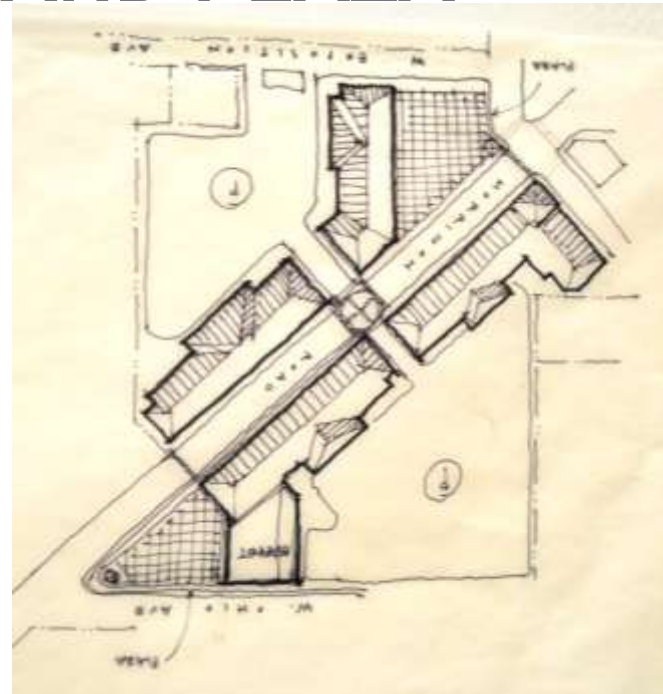
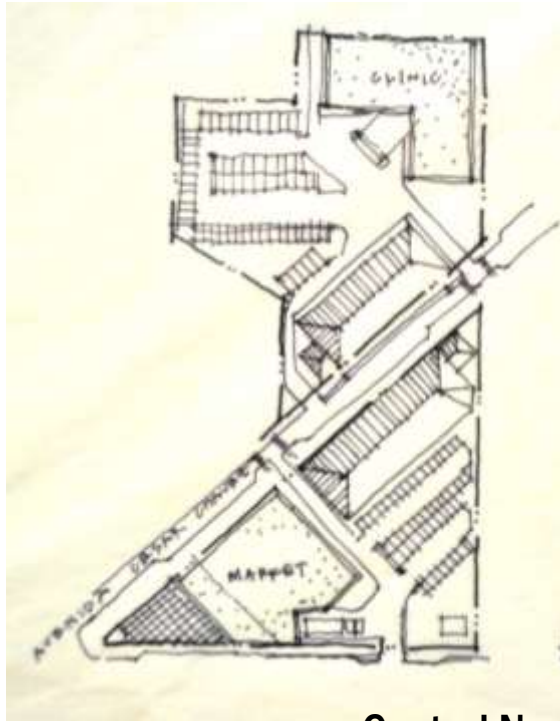


CENTRAL NODE

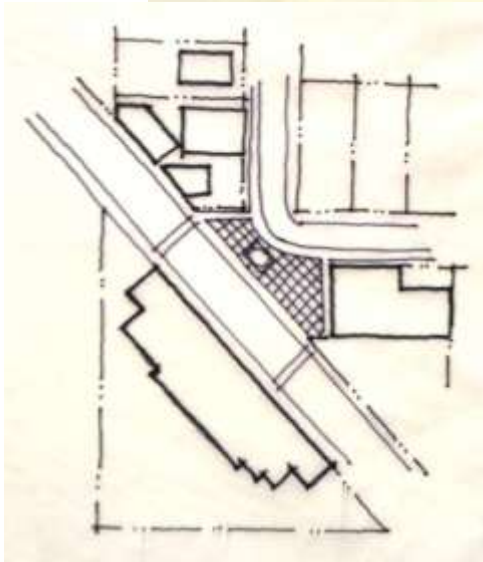
- Concentration of destinations and uses at Morrison/Exposition
- Traffic control for safe crossings
- Mercado, plaza, grocery, clinic, homes over retail
- Street closures for major events



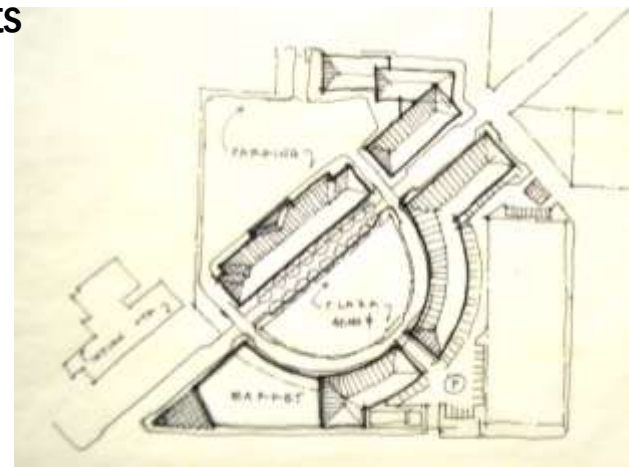
CONCEPTS FOR CORE AND PLAZA



Central Node Concepts

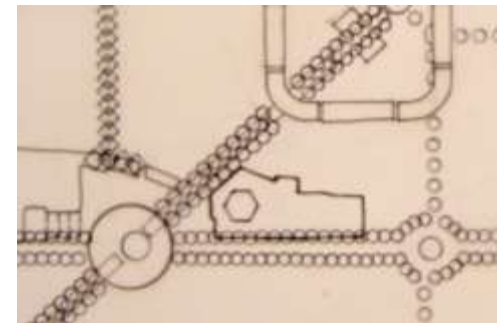
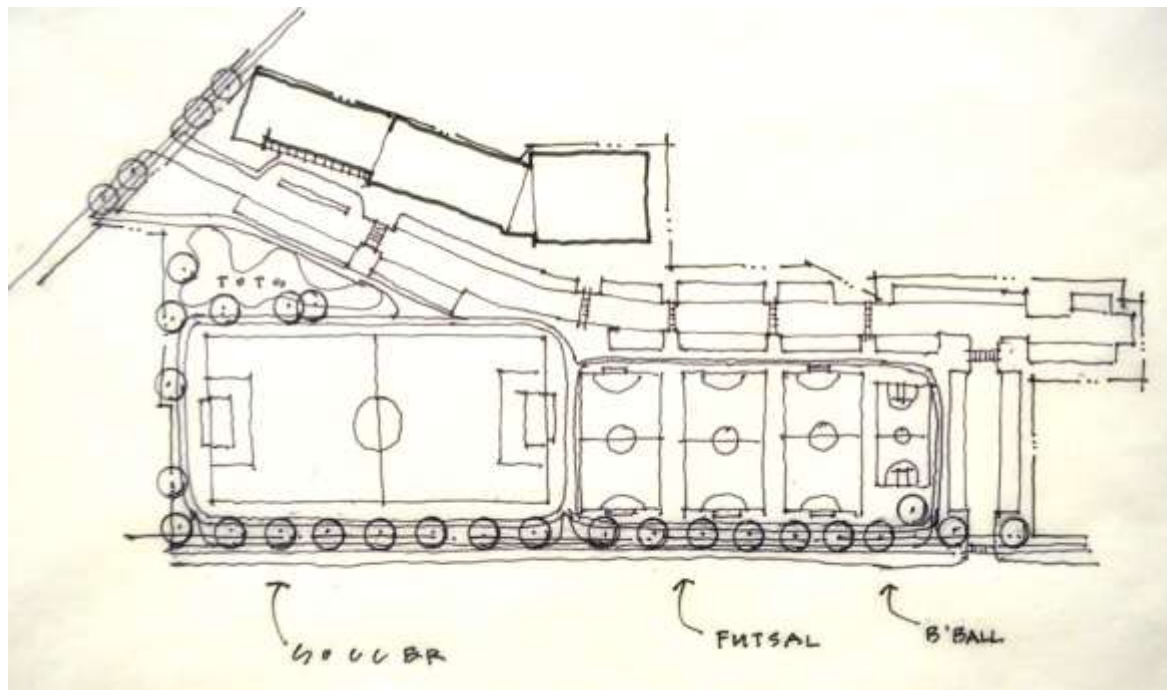


W. Custer Intersection
Concept



RECREATION/WELLNESS CENTER + PARK

- Approximately 5.4 acres at Morrison/Kentucky
- Indoor facilities (Futsal/indoor soccer, basketball, classrooms, clinic, kitchen, events)
- Outdoor multi-purpose fields, play ground/splash pad, parking, trails, seating
- Re-purpose existing buildings on Morrison and/or build new buildings



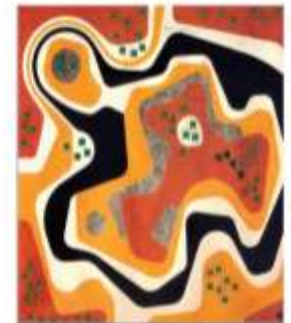
GATEWAYS AND HUBS

Community Gateways

- Major entry features at Alameda and Mississippi
- Design for community identity – color, verticality, design

Westwood Food Hub

- Located at Morrison/ Virginia
- Traffic control for safe crossing
- Community food gardens, kitchens, education, resources



PARKS + RECREATION FACILITIES

City Standard: 10 acres of parkland/1,000 residents

Westwood Today: 1.2 acres of parkland/1,000 residents
= 10% of City standard



Park/Open Space	Approx. Size (acres)	Acres/ 1,000 residents
Westwood Park	5.1	
Knox Court Park	0.3	
New Park (Alameda/Newton)	1.5	
Weir Gulch	11.1	1.2
Subtotal	18.0	
Utility Easements	6.2	
Total Parks + Gulch + Easement	24.2	1.6

PARKS + RECREATION FACILITIES



PARKS + RECREATION FACILITIES

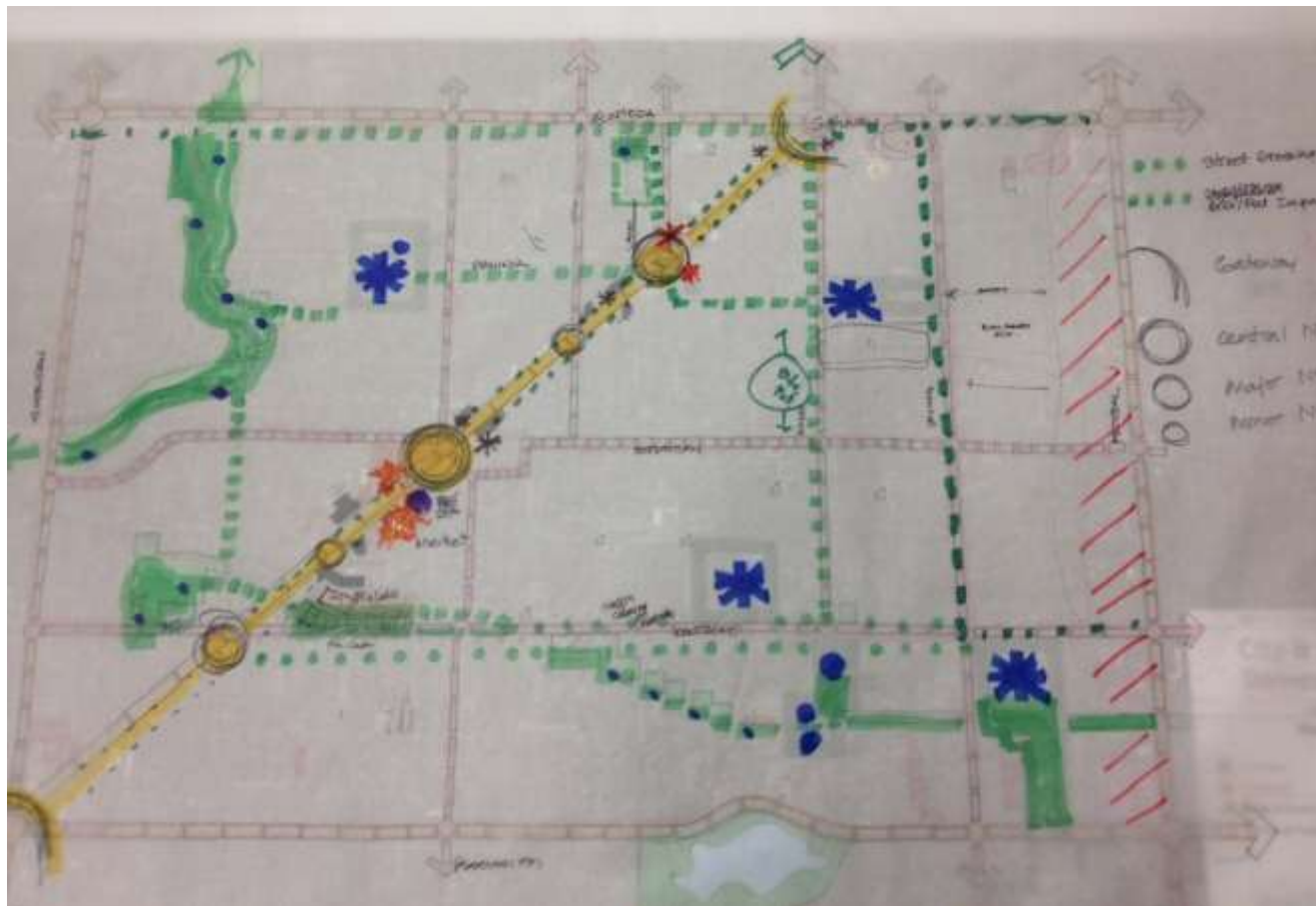


WESTWOOD FEATURES



HEALTHY COMMUNITY CONCEPT

- Parks, street upgrades, bikeways, alleys for community-wide connections
- Focus on Morrison, Virginia, Knox, Kentucky, Wolff

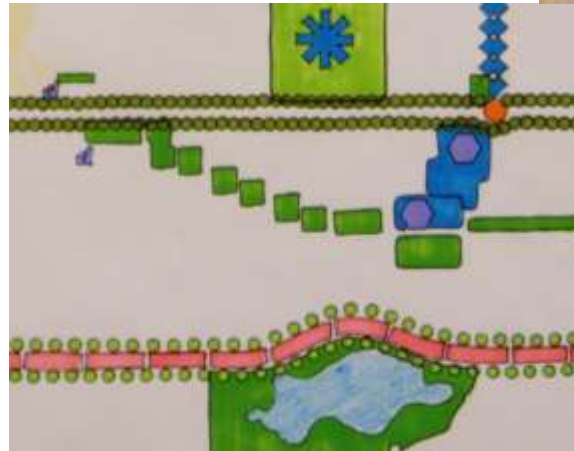
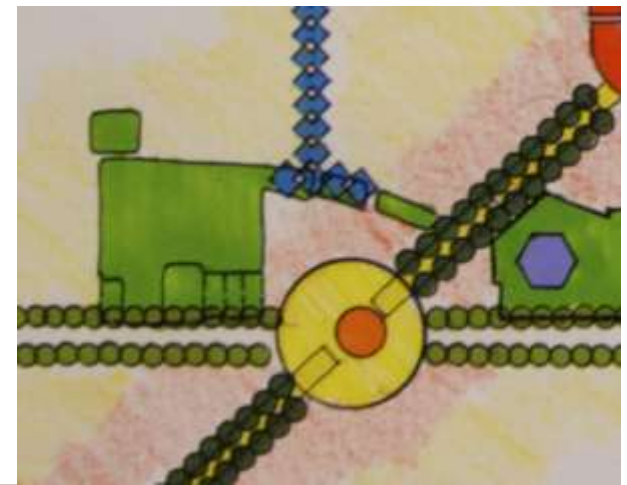


HEALTHY COMMUNITY PLAN



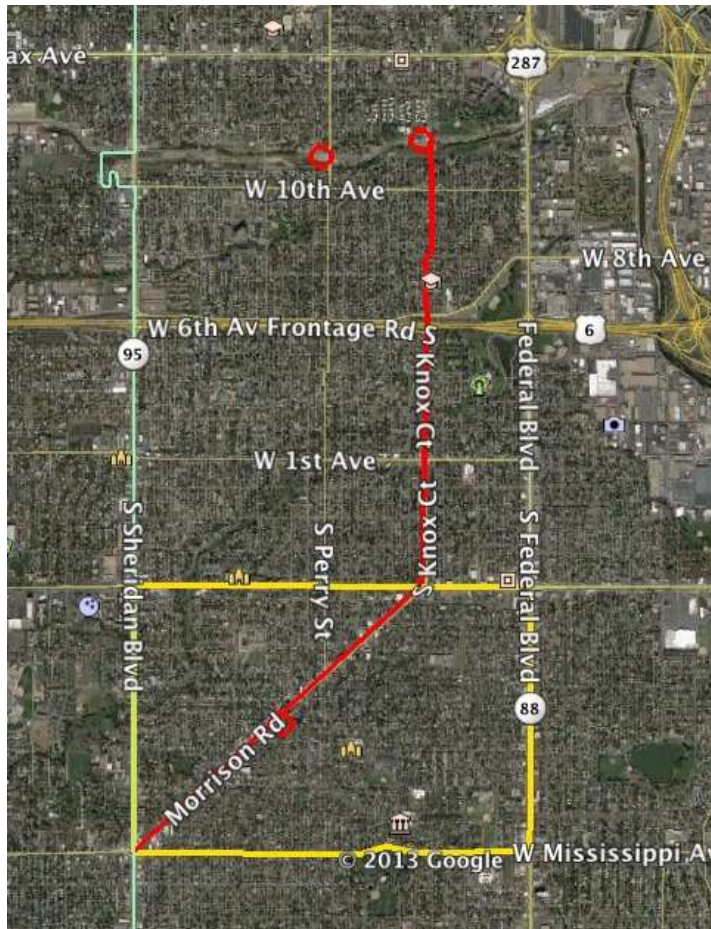
PARK PROPOSALS

- Westwood Park – expand and improve lighting, trails, equipment, visibility along the street
- Weir Gulch – expand/improve in coordination with City's urban drainage infrastructure
- Upgrade utility easement parcels with recreation activities (gardens, totlots)

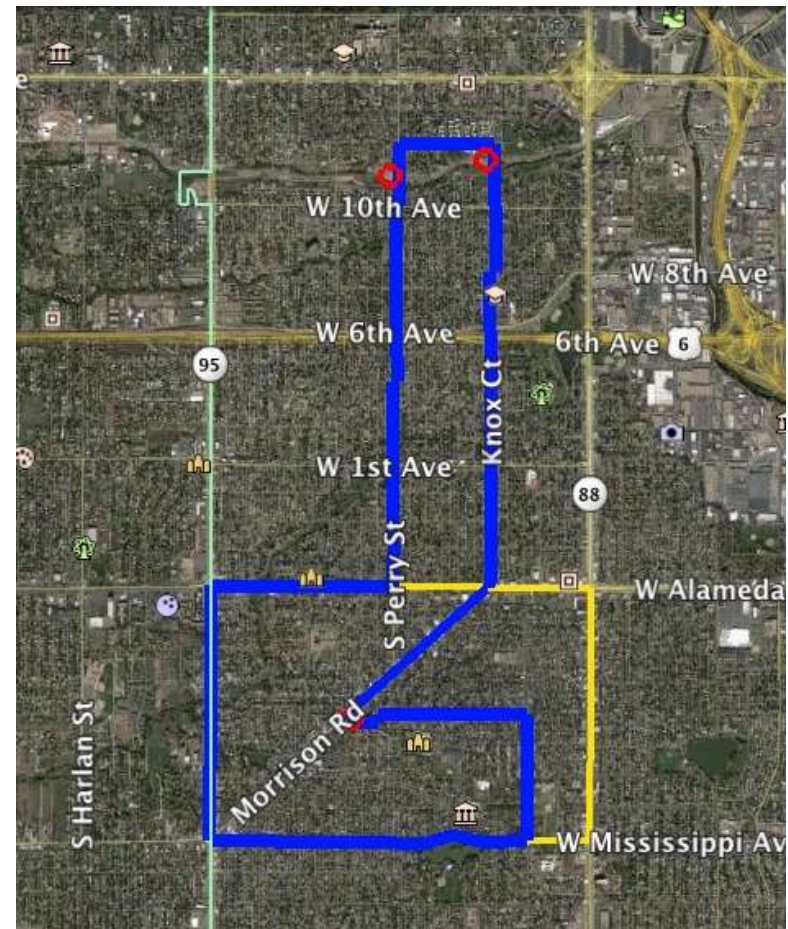


ACCESS TO TRANSIT

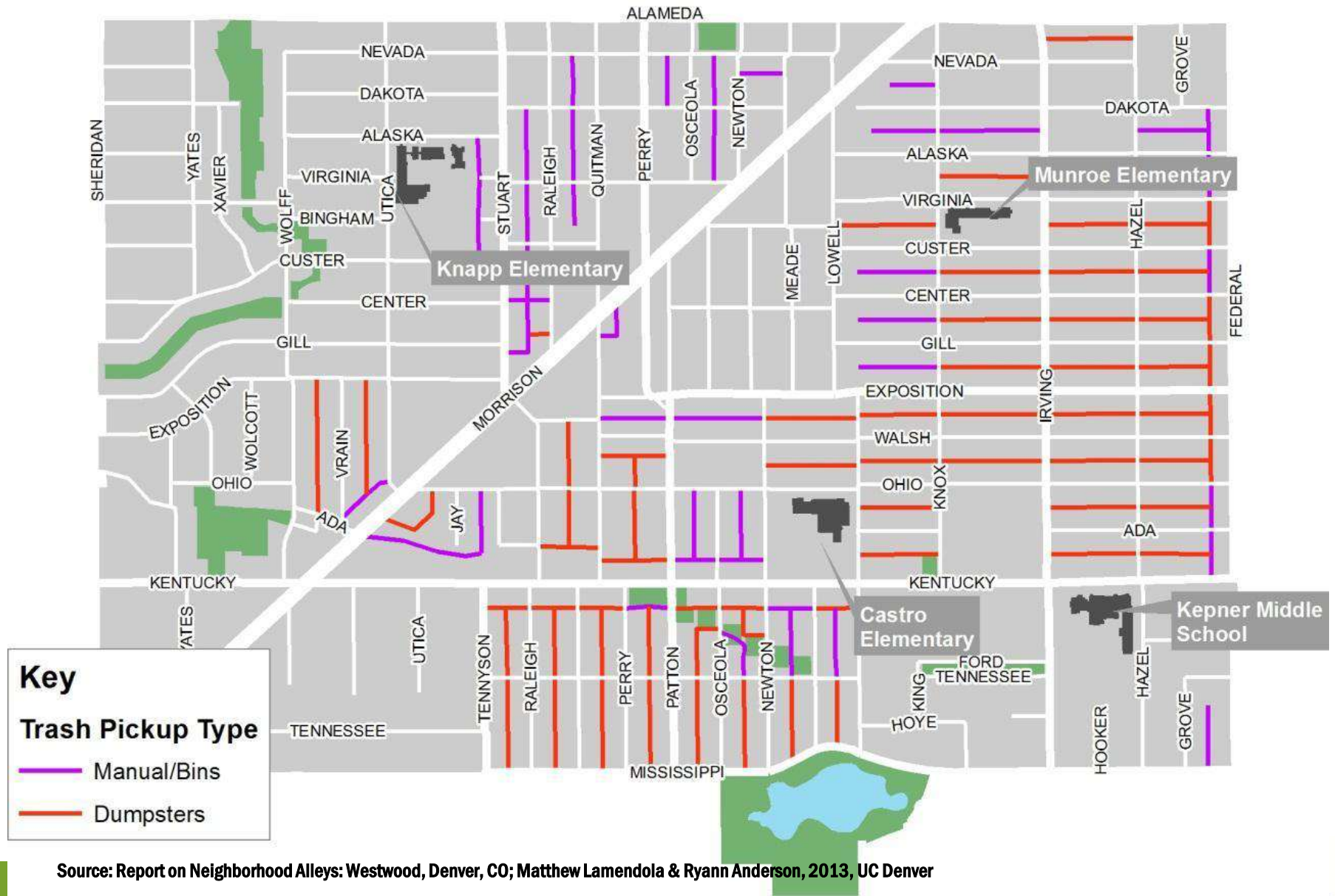
Light rail located 3.2 miles from Mississippi/Morrison – too far!



“Circulator” shuttle system – 9 mile loop serving most major points



ALLEYS



Source: Report on Neighborhood Alleys: Westwood, Denver, CO; Matthew Lamendola & Ryann Anderson, 2013, UC Denver

ALLEY IMPROVEMENT PILOT PROJECT

- Expedite conversion to barrel pickup
- Close off alleys for safe play, art, neighborhood connections
- Focus on east area initially



URBAN AGRICULTURE

- Expand on current backyard, school and urban farm programs
- Develop a “Westwood Food Hub” along Morrison Road for teaching, resources, kitchen
- Establish a weekly farmers market for sale of produce and canned goods



PROGRAMMATIC + HEALTHY LIVING STRATEGIES

Debbie Lou



Urban Land
Institute

Advisory Services Program

PROMOTING ACTIVE LIVING + HEALTHY EATING

- Westwood has strengths and resources that can create a healthier neighborhood
- Co-benefits of healthier neighborhoods: safety, economic development, community building
- Biggest challenge: To prioritize and focus on activities most likely to succeed

Recommendations

1. Hire a community coordinator
2. Train youth advocates



COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

Recommendation

Fund a Community Coordinator Who Will Develop a Comprehensive View of Existing and Potential Resources and Assets

Coordinator Will

- Map community locations for programs/events/activities
- Inventory existing resources, programs, organizations, groups
- Research grant opportunities and other funding sources
- Focus on priority list of key programs and events to promote health and wellbeing
- Connect advocates and other Westwood leaders and champions



YOUTH ADVOCATES

Recommendation:

- Westwood is a very young neighborhood
- Potential for creating a dynamic and passionate cadre of youth leaders
- Advocates will promote environmental, attitude, and behavior change to increase physical activity and healthy eating

Model– Saludable Omaha



BECOME PART OF A LARGER MOVEMENT OF ACTIVE LIVING AND HEALTHY EATING

Nation- wide initiatives focusing on physical activity and access to healthy foods

- Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Campaign



CO-BENEFITS OF ACTIVE LIVING + HEALTHY EATING

Health is a social justice issue!!

- Physical & Mental Health (reduce stress; prevent diabetes and heart disease)
- Active and Fit Kids Are More Focused and Perform Better in School
- Promotes Self-Reliance, Civic Pride, and Economic Development
- Creates Safer & More Vibrant Environments (deters graffiti and vandalism)



Urban Land
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Advisory Services Program

SCHOOLS

Children need to be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day, and schools can provide a significant portion of this

- Westwood schools are doing the best they can to promote health
- Like many other schools across the country, Westwood schools overall are facing tough challenges
 - Overcapacity
 - Lack of time, staff, and resources
 - Some schools experience specific challenges, including some parents bring fast food to school; some vandalized gardens; sometimes school meals are not culturally responsive



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS AT SCHOOL

Recommendation: Programs
to increase physical
activity during school day

Example: Instant
Recess®



LEVERAGING + IMPROVING EXISTING SPACE

- Develop “joint use” agreements
- Maximize awareness and use of these existing facilities
- Learning Landscapes



WALKING + BIKING TO SCHOOL

- Walking School Bus
- Bike Trains



LEVERAGE EXISTING FACILITIES + PROGRAMS

Westwood youth desperately need and want fun, active, and meaningful activities

- Boys and Girls Clubs
- SWIC
- Indian Center
- Mural projects
- Gardens



CICLOVIAS

- Temporary street closure for lively, festive, colorful, active event centered around biking (or walking, dancing)
- Promotes community pride, sense of place, social connections
- Denver's own "ciclovia" is Viva Streets



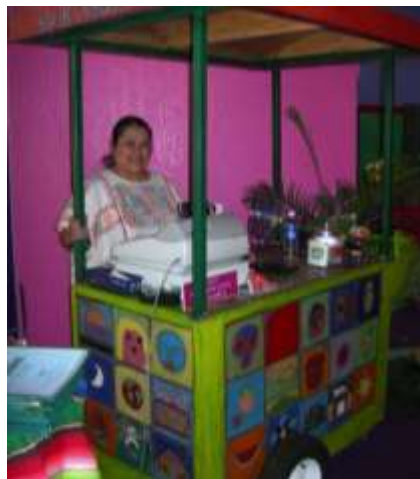
OTHER COMMUNITY-WIDE EVENTS

- Community safety/neighborhood watch
- Bike/Ped Safety education (e.g. Bike Rodeos)
- Play Street



OTHER PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING:

- Community (and school-based) gardens
- Co-ops in which residents can sell produce grown at home
- Green food carts (palederos that sell fresh produce)
- Mobile markets
- Shuttle service to markets (e.g. Circulator)
- Ability to use SNAP at farmer's markets.





POLICY + FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

Kamuron Gurol, David Scheuer

POLICY + FINANCIAL CHANGES

- 1** Transform Morrison Road into a true Main Street for Westwood
- 2** Planning and Zoning
- 3** Communication and Enforcement

MORRISON ROAD TODAY

- Designed for cars not people
- Serves commuter needs
- “Walk Score” of 48



MAIN STREET – AVENIDA CESAR CHAVEZ

- *A healthy street*
- Walkable and safe
- Reduced speeds
- Signals, roundabouts, and other techniques
- Wide sidewalks and pedestrian amenities





MAIN STREET - PAVEMENT MATERIALS + MARKINGS



MAIN STREET – VIBRANT AND LIVELY

- Formal and informal gatherings
- Evening strolls
- “Pop up” businesses



LATINO CULTURAL DISTRICT - STREET SIGNAGE

- Maintain and enhance cultural fabric
- Grow local business
- Improve walkability and health
- Culturally reflective, way-finding and visual interest



STREET ART THAT REFLECTS LOCAL CULTURE



PLANNING AND ZONING

- Good planning work has been done
 - Blueprint Denver
 - Denver Livability Partnership
 - Morrison Road Study
 - District Development Plan



Lots of previous plans...
now focus on implementation

PLANNING AND ZONING

- E-MX-3 zoning
 - Alternatives?
- Ensure Latino District uses are favored
- Disallow or discourage incompatible uses
 - Drive thru business
 - Auto-oriented
 - Relocation/collocation
 - Dispensaries



PLANNING AND ZONING

- Development standards review
 - Height, bulk, lot coverage, etc.
 - Incentives for desirable amenities like plazas, art
- Pro-forma analysis to ensure market acceptance
- Design Guidelines for the Westwood Latino Cultural District
 - Commercial uses and signage
 - Reflect Mexican and Colorado heritage, images and color

PLANNING AND ZONING

- Parking standards
- Storm-water and LID
- Small scale agriculture and value-added products
- ADUs especially in alleyways

City-initiated General Development Plan

- Master plan an assembled site
- Tailor standards
- Community input
- Adopted administratively
- Strong signal to facilitate new development

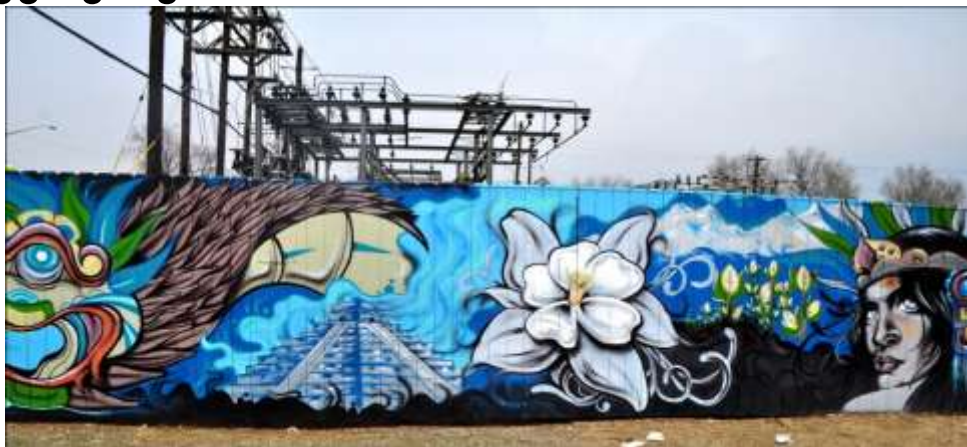


COMMUNICATION AND ENFORCEMENT: Safety, Trash, and Graffiti



Graffiti Prevention and Removal

- Improve coordination among police, the Department of Public Works, and the Parks and Recreation department to remove tagging
- Repeated tagging sights could be a canvas for new murals painted by local artists



COMMUNICATION AND ENFORCEMENT: Safety, Trash, and Graffiti

- **Improvements to Waste Management Collection and Efficiency**
 - Solid waste is collected using several methods
 - Alley dumpsters invite illegal dumping, tagging, and create a fire hazard
 - Designate Westwood as a priority area for full deployment of bin-type trash receptacles



FROM THIS...



TO THIS.



“FOCUS”

CONCENTRATION OF RESOURCES

- Westwood will require a disciplined community focus and investment strategy
- These investments should be focused in the Morrison Road corridor – a distance of about one mile



THE STRATEGY IS BASED ON TWO PRINCIPLES

- Community redevelopment should start at the neighborhood's already-recognized core
 - Each stage of investment occur in a manner that will encourage subsequent phases
- **The way to rebuild Westwood is from the epicenter outward**



OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- Three opportunity areas have been identified:
 - **Area #1:** Morrison Road Core Area
 - **Area #2:** Recreation and Wellness Center and Park, W. Kentucky Ave.
 - **Area #3:** Expansion of Westwood Park



LAND USE SUMMARY

- **15.5 acres total**
 - **8.5 acres** for a public plaza, commercial and residential development
 - **7 acres** for additional park space



RESOURCES

- A collaboration of appropriate city agencies
- Public/private partnerships
- Non-profit sector
- The New Markets Tax Credit program
- Business Improvement District (BID)
- Local development coordinator
- Other outside resources



CONCLUSION – BIG IDEAS

- 1** Create a unique identity – Latino Cultural District
- 2** Create a Main Street – Transform Morrison Road
- 3** Create a plaza at the heart of the neighborhood
- 4** Create neighborhood connections using open space and greenways

THANK YOU/QUESTIONS