

*The Economics of Land Use*



## ***MEMORANDUM***

To: Gold Line Corridor Working Group; Denver Regional Council of Governments

From: Economic & Planning Systems, Arland Land Use Economics, OV Consulting

Subject: Gold Line Corridor Market Readiness Study Stakeholder Outreach Summary

Date: January 16, 2015

This memorandum provides a summary of the outreach efforts completed by the consultant team for the Gold Line Corridor Market Readiness Study. The summary is organized by topic area and includes a summary of interviews concerning the following:

- Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Economic Development
- Business Owners
- Child Care
- Senior Services
- Community Gathering Places
- Health Care Access
- Higher Education and Job Training
- Social Safety Net Services
- Traditional Grocery Providers
- Community-Based Food Access

The summary provided is meant to highlight the major findings from the interviews and is not a detailed set of notes from each meeting. Comments and opinions provided are not attributed to particular persons unless specifically noted and requested by the interviewee.

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## Transit Oriented Development

### Summary of Outreach

The consultant team interviewed a number of stakeholders along the Corridor with interests in transit oriented development (TOD). The types of stakeholders interviewed included land owners, developers, real estate brokers, and urban renewal authorities. The interviews were used to inventory proposed TOD projects, gauge the market strength for TOD along the corridor, identified barriers to development, and identify potential tools or strategies that could foster additional TOD once the line opens.

### Major Takeaways

- 1) The access to downtown and the region provided by the Gold Line will drive demand for residential uses in station areas. The Gold Line is making higher density development more feasible in the station areas, which traditionally have had no market for these types of uses. The station areas allow developers to capture a premium on land and rents. At the same time, the Gold Corridor is viewed as an “affordable” option for those wanting to live in a downtown environment but cannot afford downtown rents/prices. For-sale condominiums were mentioned as a long-term potential for some sites but the current construction defects laws were cited as the reason condos are not feasible.
- 2) While housing in the most viable TOD use along the corridor, it is important to ensure that projects are not built in isolation and on stand-alone sites. As well, the amenities that allow for TOD to be successful (i.e., services and retail) are essential to project success.
- 3) Development within the unincorporated portions of the corridor is more difficult due to the lack of financing tools and options available to municipalities.
- 4) Office development was seen as not a current viable use. However, there is a strong professional and technical services employment base and an attractive resident workforce in the greater western Denver area. These types of jobs can work within TOD settings, but it can be difficult to determine what building forms will allow for flex spaces that are also TOD.
- 5) Financing tools and options are needed to help TOD due to the added amenities necessary and the infrastructure that supports higher density. All tools and mechanisms are appreciated but tools that can provide upfront cash/assistance to make projects pencil are most useful and impactful.

### Outreach List

- Esther Kettering, Cassidy Turley Colorado
- Chuck Perry, Perry Rose/ARIA Development
- Packet Lowry, Jones La Lasalle
- Win King, King Commercial Real Estate
- John Renne, TOD Group
- Rich Schierburg, Peregrine Group
- Fred Baker, Ojala and Company/United Properties
- Tina Lashbrook, Trammell Crow
- Janet Steinkamp, Red Rocks Community College
- Nate Carlson, The Wolff Company
- Maureen Phair, Arvada Urban Renewal Authority
- Clark Walker, Arvada Urban Renewal Authority
- Bill Mosher, Trammell Crow

- Economic Development

### **Summary of Outreach**

The consultant team met with all of the economic development departments and organizations active along the Gold Corridor. The focus of these entities and related TOD employment opportunities varied greatly along the corridor. The interviews were used to identify the strengths of the Gold Corridor businesses and future opportunities for the corridor that are both transit and non-transit oriented.

### **Major Takeaways**

- 1) There was a strong preference from many of the interviewees to preserve the existing industrial uses and land within some of the more employment oriented station areas for primary employment opportunities. The existing employers along the corridor are viewed as significant assets and should be prioritized over potential development opportunities in most cases. The preference to retain the existing industrial and land uses often contrasts with the future land use plans in station areas.
- 2) The market for traditional office space is largely non-existent and limited to smaller scale, boutique-type office opportunities. The opportunity for office space development only exists in two or three station areas.

### **Outreach List**

- Jeff Romine, Denver OED (interviewed as part of East Line Market Readiness Study and Regional Economic Strategy)
- Barry Gore, Adams County EDC (interviewed as part of Regional Economic Strategy)
- Kristin Sullivan, Adams County (participated in project kick-off meeting)
- Ryan Stachelski, Arvada Economic Development Association
- Daniel Ryley, Arvada Economic Development Association
- Steve Art, Wheat Ridge Economic Development
- Kevin McCaskey, Jefferson County EDC

## **Business Owners**

### **Summary of Outreach**

The consultant team initially proposed to hold one or two business forums and invite a large number of businesses to come to the forums. While developing the potential target list of employers to talk to, it became apparent there was not a sufficient enough number of employers to invite to large open house. The consultant team decided to perform a target outreach effort to businesses identified by the Arvada Economic Development Association and Wheat Ridge Economic Development. Therefore the consultant team held one-on-one phone interviews with the business owners. A handful of businesses owners also attended the Ridge Road Catalytic Project open house and were interviewed informally by the consultant team at this meeting. The majority of businesses reached were industrial in nature and located in the Gold Strike, Arvada Ridge, and Ward Road station areas. The consultant team also spoke with a representative of Historic Olde Town Arvada and attempted to solicit feedback and interest from Olde Town businesses owners through this representative. These efforts did not result in any additional interviews.

### **Major Takeaways**

- 1) The majority of businesses interviewed said they chose their locations based on the affordability of land and easy access to the interstate system. Most of the businesses have land available for future expansion and plan to do so in the future. The majority of businesses owned the buildings they are located in, and the majority were small with 10 to 20 employees. The Gold Corridor is attractive to businesses due to the reasons mostly commonly cited by these employers with access and affordability being the top reasons.
- 2) A number of respondents mentioned the lack of hotels in the Arvada area and would like to see one developed along the Gold Line in order to attract new business and to cater to potential clients coming to the area on business.
- 3) Several of the businesses cited a lack of amenities, such as restaurants or retail, near their business. These amenities would help make these areas more attractive to new businesses and could also increase the TOD nature of the areas.

### **Outreach List**

- Bill Dillaman, Rocky Mountain Bottle Company
- Leo Eisert, Priority Plastic
- Gene Baumgartner, Wanco
- Robert Wilson, ICC
- Josh Van Riper, Odyssey Beerwerks
- Randy Hirsch, Dairy Engineering
- Karen Miller, Paws & Play and Historic Olde Town Arvada
- Richard Valdez, RMC Consulting

## **Child Care**

### **Summary of Outreach**

Child care is often cited as a desirable service for station areas because it makes logistical sense for many families. The consultant team discussed the provision of child care and preschool services with community service providers, non-profit organizations involved in the child care issue, and real estate developers. The team also discussed the issue of preschool services in West Denver with the Denver Public Schools.

### **Major Takeaways**

- 1) The provision of affordable child care is a major community-wide issue that is not isolated to TOD stations. While lower income households may be eligible for assistance from the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), there are few incentives for child care facilities to serve these households since the reimbursement rate is lower than what providers can charge full-tuition paying families. As a result, there is a tremendous need and these households are underserved.
- 2) Access to affordable child care is a major barrier to households wishing to obtain and maintain sufficient employment to move out of public housing.
- 3) There is potentially a need for a financing intermediary between child care providers and real estate developers to help provide more affordable child care options at station areas.

### **Outreach List**

- Chuck Perry, Managing Partner, Perry-Rose Companies
- Jennifer Newcomer, Director of Research, Piton Foundation
- Brian Eschbacher, Director of Planning and Enrollment Services, Denver Public Schools
- Ismael Guerrero, Executive Director, Denver Housing Authority
- Lynne Picard, Senior Resident and Community Services Manager, Denver Housing Authority
- Scott Shields, Chief Executive Officer, Family Tree
- Alberto Torres, Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Catholic Charities
- Brian Eschbacher, Director, Planning & Enrollment Services, Denver Public Schools

## Senior Services

### Summary of Outreach

The needs of the aging population are not unique to the Gold Corridor; however there are specific gaps in service that exist for seniors in the region. The consultant team discussed these needs with senior service providers, advocates, and senior residents. There are a number of senior services and senior housing facilities throughout the corridor, although interviews indicate a need for greater coordination between these resources. In addition, with the growing senior population and the desire of many boomers to age in place, there is a growing need for services that accommodate this trend.

### Major Takeaways

- 1) Interviews with stakeholders indicated that the primary needs for seniors are greater access to healthy food to meet nutritional needs and safe, affordable access to transportation. There is a need for greater resources for meal delivery programs, as well as strategies for ensuring seniors have adequate access to transportation in order to access healthy food resources and additional services.
- 2) Despite a number of senior services present throughout the corridor, interviews with both seniors and advocates indicate a need to better coordinate existing resources and help to connect seniors to these resources.
- 3) Affordable senior housing continues to be a concern throughout the region. This need will increase as the aging population increases, particularly in Jefferson County.

### Outreach List

- Shannon Gimbel, Ombudsman Program Manager, DRCOG
- Brad Calvert, Metro Vision Manager, DRCOG
- Ashley Kaade, Planner II: Stakeholder Engagement, DRCOG
- Jefferson County Council on Aging
- Alberto Torres, Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Catholic Charities
- Vincent Baldassaro – Community Activist living near the Sheridan Station

## Community Gathering Places

### Summary of Outreach

A commonly cited desire on the part of communities during planning processes has been a desire for community gathering places. To some extent, schools, parks and recreation facilities serve that purpose, as do community centers. The consultant team reached out to public schools along the corridor, school administrators, Parks and Recreation facilities, and community leaders.

### Major Takeaways

While there is a wide range of community center activities along the corridor, there is none in the current station areas. As the corridor system matures, there may be opportunities for some of these services to locate in the station areas, although careful planning about service provision would be necessary as these types of services tend to require subsidization. Another critical component would be to ensure transit accessibility from the station to the facility or destination. Opportunities include:

- 1) The current recreation facility in the Sunnyside neighborhood of Denver, near the 41st and Fox station, is not large enough to provide adequate space for community classes, meetings, and other gatherings. This station area could be a potential location for future community gathering types of activities. The local Denver Public Schools also provide meeting and gathering spots available to community residents.
- 2) The City of Arvada is currently looking for an East Arvada location for a recreation center. Residents in the Columbine neighborhood near Olde Town feel underserved. The City is planning to undertake a Parks and Recreation master planning process in 2015. The primary challenge to additional smaller neighborhood recreation facility is financial feasibility.
- 3) The Hyland Hills PRD has been acquiring land over the past ten years to develop a regional destination park. The west entrance to the park will likely be on 58th Avenue, thus offering relatively easy connection to the Gold Strike station.

### Outreach List

- Erica Heller, Healthy Living Program, P.U.M.A.
- Rose Chavez, Healthy Places Coordinator, City of Arvada
- Jessica Prosser, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Arvada
- Barbara Barth, Columbine neighborhood activist, Olde Town Arvada
- Brian Eschbacher, Director of Planning and Enrollment Services, Denver Public Schools
- Gordon Reusink, Director, Department of Parks, Golf and Hospitality, City of Arvada
- Mike Miles, Director, APEX
- Lawrence Elementary School, Arvada
- Peter Lozano, Director, Aztlan and Globeville Recreation Centers
- Geoffrey Gardella, Community Activity living near Olde Town Station

## Health Care Access

### Summary of Outreach

The consultant team reached out to the major medical facilities and educational institutions along the Gold Line Corridor. The corridor has a number of health care service providers interested in expanding access to services and in partnering. The corridor also has a variety of urgent care providers as well as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), safety net health care providers that receive federal grants and qualify for enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid to serve the under or uninsured. Red Rocks Community College is a major health educational institution along the Gold Line in Arvada in the process of renovating and expanding into a health careers campus. Other potential long-term medical care additions to the Gold Line Corridor include a clinic at the Aria development, in affiliation with Regis University, and Red Rocks Community College.

### Major Takeaways

- 1) Along the Gold Line Corridor, an average of 21 percent of the population is uninsured, which is a primary barrier to health care access including regular primary care and preventive care strategies. Although the FQHC serving Gold Line corridor residents report having the capacity to meet the current demand, there appears to be a need to expand outreach and education efforts to create greater awareness of and access to existing clinics and services. Station areas potentially provide an opportunity to display information to connect residents to nearby health care resources.
- 2) Conversations with health care stakeholders indicate that there is a need for greater coordination and alignment of resources, particularly across jurisdictional boundaries, for consolidation of existing plans and assessments, and for a corridor-wide health care needs assessment.
- 3) Walgreens and King Soopers are also offering walk-in clinic services for vaccines, physical and wellness visits, health care screening and testing, treatment for some non-emergency illnesses and injuries.

### Outreach List

- Pamela Craig, Vice President Community Services Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN)
- John Reid, Vice President of Fund Development, Metro Community Provider Network
- Janet Steinkamp, Associate Vice President, Red Rocks Community College
- Troy Long, Physician, Kaiser Permanente
- Kraig Schmidt, Medical Office Director, Kaiser Permanente
- Jim Bergman, Real Estate Acquisition Manager, Kaiser Permanente
- Thomas Currigan, Senior Director of Stakeholder Relations, Kaiser Permanente
- Molly Hanson, Health Policy Analyst, Jefferson County Public Health

## Higher Education and Job Training

### Summary of Outreach

The consultant team reached out to the two higher educational institutions along the corridor, Regis University and Red Rocks Community College, as well as organizations and agencies that provide job training support and resources. Although technically not on the corridor, the team also reached out to the Auraria Higher Education Center as it has a broad reach, and because the Regency student housing facility is located near the 41st and Fox station. The corridor has few job training resources; however there is interest from all of the higher education institutions and job training facilities to connect with potential employers throughout the corridor. Regis and Red Rocks are heavily focused on the health professions and are interested in utilizing the rail corridor and increased connectivity as an opportunity to meet health care needs of underserved residents. Youth unemployment was cited as an issue along the corridor, as is ensuring greater access for youth to transit to access employment opportunities.

### Major Takeaways

- 1) The presence of two higher education institutions directly on the corridor, as well as close proximity to Auraria Higher Education Campus downtown, provides a tremendous opportunity to create greater job training opportunities and connect job training with employers, particularly in the health professions. All of the higher education institutions would like greater connectivity to transit.
- 2) Incorporating job training support and resources into affordable housing developments, along with co-locating these services with additional community services, would greatly benefit residents along the corridor. Denver Housing Authority has a very successful model for assisting public housing residents with obtaining and maintaining employment.
- 3) There is a need to create greater awareness of existing job training resources, such as the Adams County Center for Career and Community Enrichment, as well as providing additional resources for youth employment.

### Outreach List

- Janet Steinkamp, Associate Vice President, Red Rocks Community College
- Erika Hollis and Michael Redmond, Regis University
- Barbara Weiske, Executive Vice President for Administration/ CEO, Auraria Higher Education Center
- Carl Meese, Senior Campus Planner, Auraria Higher Education Center
- Donald May, Executive Director, Adams County Housing Authority
- Christopher Auxier, Director of Development, Adams County Housing Authority
- Ismael Guerrero, Executive Director, Denver Housing Authority
- Lynne Picard, Resident and Community Services, Denver Housing Authority
- Randy Weinert, Community & Volunteer Relations Manager Arvada Community Food Bank
- Peter Lozano, Director, Aztlan and Globeville Recreation Centers
- Sharon Whitehair, Community Activity living near Clear Creek/Federal Station

## **Social Safety Net Services**

### **Summary of Outreach**

The consultant team reached out to the primary social safety net service providers such as food and clothing banks, rent and utility assistance, and homeless support in the vicinity of the Gold Line Corridor. There are very few social safety net service providers along the corridor, and most of them have geographic boundaries that limit where residents can access services. All service providers interviewed stated that they do not have the capacity to meet the demand and that many of their clients must travel relatively far to access services, particularly in the more suburban areas of Jefferson County. A shift in funding priorities and the suburbanization of poverty are creating greater strain on service providers.

### **Major Takeaways**

- 1) Conversations with social safety net service providers indicate that although there is a high level of coordination and collaboration among service providers, there is a need for greater resources devoted to service provision in order to meet the existing and growing demand.
- 2) The cost of transportation is a primary barrier for residents in accessing social safety net services.

### **Outreach List**

- Randy Weinert, Community & Volunteer Relations Manager Arvada Community Food Bank
- Brooke DeGroat, Director of Program Services, The Action Center
- Scott Shields, Chief Executive Officer, Family Tree
- Alberto Torres, Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Catholic Charities

## Traditional Grocery Providers

### Summary of Outreach

After an analysis of grocery store market areas and conversations with stakeholders about grocery store desires in the market area, the consultant team reached out to the following retailers for feedback on potential interest in Gold Line Corridor locations. They included:

- Safeway
- King Soopers
- Natural grocers by Vitamin Cottage
- Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market
- Sprouts
- Save-A-Lot
- Lucky's
- Trader Joe's
- Tony's Market
- Mi Pueblo Market

### Major Takeaways

- 1) Grocery store conditions and location criteria are constantly changing. Based on the market analysis, the stations with the greatest potential for a grocery store location in the short and longer term futures include the Olde Town Arvada station and the Clear Creek/Federal station, potentially in conjunction with the Aria development.
- 2) The interviews indicate that the market continues to be challenging. The feedback indicates that the number of households in the market area and income levels are still of concern.
- 3) The most concrete near-term interest has been shown at the Olde Town Arvada station. Most of the grocers interviewed prefer horizontal instead of vertical mixed use development environments.
- 4) Although there is a strong desire on the part of the City and neighborhood for a small grocery store at the 41st and Fox Station, one of the current challenges is that the market is bisected by I-25. Additional residences in the area would bolster demand for grocery and neighborhood services.

### Outreach List

- Eric Swan, Retail Specialist, Office of Economic Development, City of Denver
- Erica Heller, Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund, P.U.M.A.
- Rose Chavez, Healthy Places Coordinator, City of Arvada
- Jessica Prosser, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Arvada
- Chuck Perry, Perry / Rose, Aria
- Christopher Smith, Senior Program Officer, Colorado Health Foundation
- Steve Markey, David Hicks Lambert, Lucky Stores
- Julie Walker, Senior Real Estate Manager, Save-A Lot Groceries
- Joel Starbuck, Assistant Director of Real Estate, King Soopers
- Keith Deighen, Timberline Real Estate, Trader Joe's
- Brian Shorter, Sullivan Hayes, Sprouts

## Community-Based Food Access

### Summary of Outreach

There are several community-based food providers and food access advocates along the corridor, with two new sizeable food production projects planned at Aria near the Clear Creek/Federal station and the Hyland Hills regional park between the Clear Creek/Federal and Gold Strike stations. However, there continues to be a need for community-based food strategies to improve access to healthy affordable foods along the corridor, particularly for communities underserved by traditional grocery retailers. In order to better understand which strategies are best suited for the Gold Corridor, the consultant team reached out to numerous community-based food providers, food producers, and food access advocates along the corridor including community garden leaders, urban farmers, food banks, farmers' markets, and community health leaders.

### Major Takeaways

- 1) Many the stakeholders interviewed indicate a strong interest in collaborating through a Gold Corridor Wellness Coalition in order to coordinate strategies and resources that will improve access to healthy affordable foods and other healthy living opportunities.
- 2) There is an opportunity to connect food producers along the corridor to communities that need access to healthy affordable foods. Key partners need to be identified to coordinate distribution of produce.
- 3) The Healthy Corner Store Initiative appears to be a viable alternative for communities wherein traditional groceries are not likely to locate. Denver's Department of Environmental Health is piloting this program with five stores in 2014 and will be scaling up to 50 stores in 2015.
- 4) The Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund is a potential funding mechanism for healthy food retail strategies.

### Outreach List

- Heidi Hoffman, Food Access Program Administrator, Denver Environmental Health
- Lindsay Saperstone, Denver Environmental Health
- Erica Heller, Colorado, Fresh Food Financing Fund, P.U.M.A.
- Rose Chavez, Healthy Places Coordinator, City of Arvada
- Jessica Prosser, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Arvada
- Molly Hanson, Jefferson County Public Health
- Jennifer Wiczorek, Denver Public Health
- Britta Fisher, Wheat Ridge 2020
- Rachel Hultin, LiveWell Wheat Ridge
- Troy Long, Physician, Kaiser
- Erin Mooney, Executive Director, Community Enterprise/LiveWell SW Adams County
- Greg Adams, GIS/HIA Specialist, Tri-County Health
- Maria Bumgard, Jeffco Conservation District
- Mary Sanchez, Garden Leader, Globeville Community Garden
- Ana Chavez, Garden Leader, Troy Chavez Memorial Peace Community Garden
- Chris Armijo, Garden Leader, El Oasis Community Garden
- LeAnne DeVos, Garden Leader, Mount St. Vincent Community Garden
- Celeste Melville, Garden Leader, Regis University Community Garden
- John Chisum, Rose Roots Community Garden
- Turner Wyatt, Denver Food Rescue

- Randy Weinert, Community & Volunteer Relations Manager Arvada Community Food Bank
- Kimberly Mudd, Arvada Farmers' Market
- Michael Ross, Highland Farmers' Market
- Jackie Raehl, Star Acre Farms
- Chuck Perry, Perry / Rose, Aria
- Damien Thompson, Associate Professor, Regis University
- Candice Orlando, Executive Director, Urbiculture Community Farms
- Terry Barnhart, Planner, Hyland Hills Park and Recreation District
- Christopher Smith, Senior Program Officer, Colorado Health Foundation