

Gold Corridor Blueprint

Denver Region
Sustainable Communities Initiative

SCI

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Background

Sustainable Communities Initiative

In November 2011, as part of a coordinated effort with 86 partner organizations, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) received a \$4.5-million Regional Planning Grant. The grant was part of the Sustainable Communities Partnership, a federal collaboration of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). With this grant, a consortium of municipalities, counties, state agencies, economic groups, housing authorities, and corporate interests joined with nonprofit, philanthropic and academic organizations to address one of the region's most pressing and exciting challenges: leveraging the planned multi-billion dollar expansion of the FasTracks transit system to meet other local and regional needs and opportunities.

The overarching goal of the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) is to align investments, programs and policies to maximize the benefits that result from the region's investment in transit. SCI anticipates a region with greater access to job opportunities across the entire income spectrum, lower combined transportation and housing costs, reduced consumption of fossil fuels, reduced strain on our air and water resources, and ultimately the development of concentrated, mixed-use, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly “urban centers” along transit lines that allow residents to easily access their daily needs without having to get into a car.

Corridor Planning

This Blueprint serves as the final report of the planning efforts conducted along the Gold Rail Line. It is designed to support ongoing collaborative cross-jurisdictional and inter-agency planning and development. The corridor is defined as the area within one mile of these lines.

Specifically, these efforts are intended to help increase access to employment and educational opportunities, decrease combined housing and transportation costs (particularly for low-income households), support active living and healthy aging, reinvigorate existing neighborhoods, enhance economic competitiveness, reduce pollution, and improve the efficient use of natural resources including energy and water.

Corridor Working Group Activities

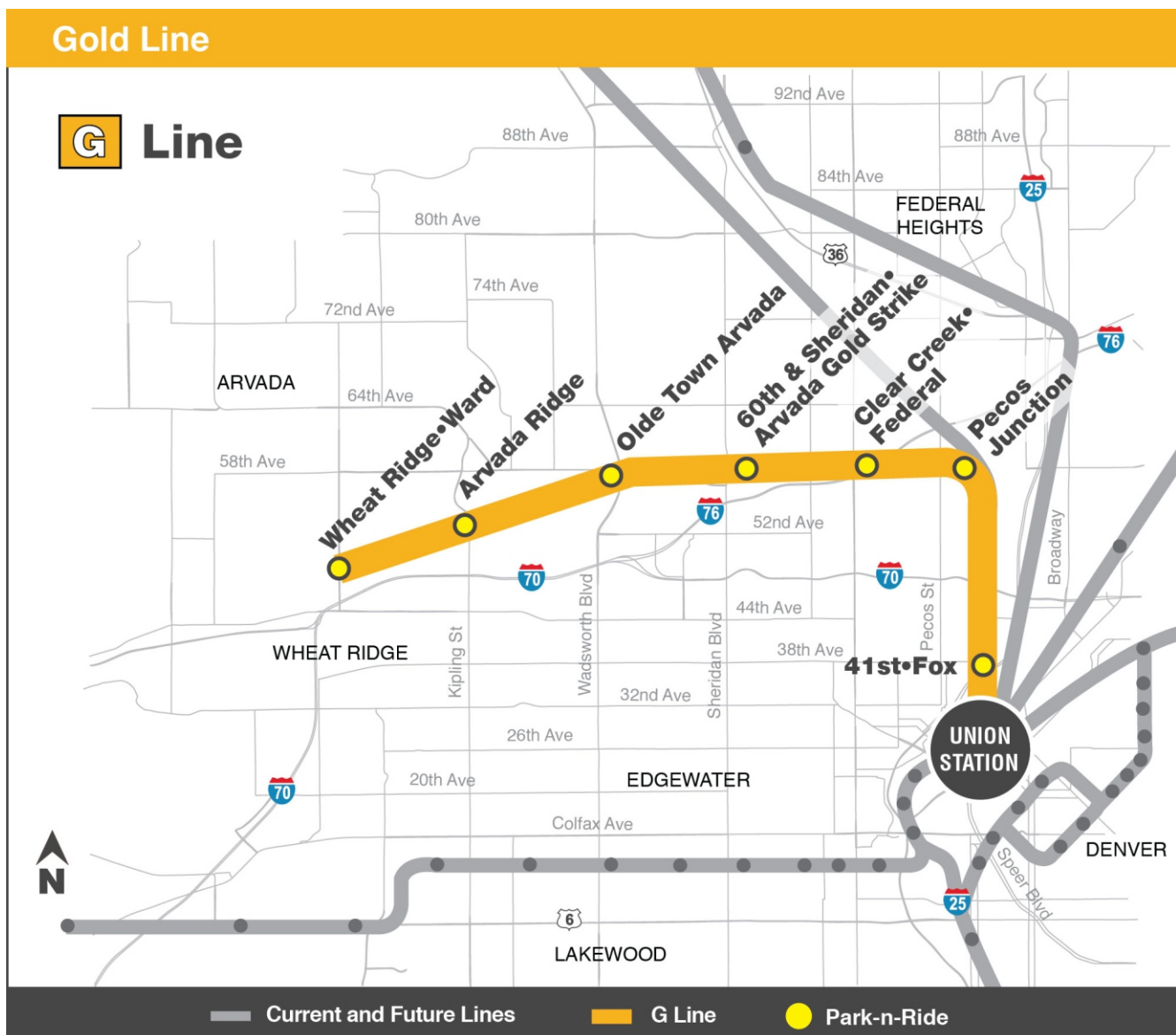
1. Develop a corridor vision and identify a set of goals to achieve that vision
2. Identify a corridor-wide issue that would benefit from technical assistance funding available through the SCI grant to study potential opportunities, issues and strategies
3. Select a site-specific Catalytic Project in the corridor for pre-development planning funded by the grant to stimulate transformational changes and serve as a model for similar projects
4. Recommend specific actions based on all the activities conducted by the CWG to serve as guidance for future collaborative development efforts in the corridor and in individual communities



This work was conducted by the Gold Corridor Working Group (CWG) comprised of staff from jurisdictions along the corridor including those representing planning, public works, economic development, and public health departments. The CWG also included housing authorities, transportation management associations, the Regional Transportation District (RTD), and other key stakeholders.

In addition to the Corridor Working Group, SCI took steps to ensure all constituents with a stake in the outcome were engaged in the corridor planning process. The CWG received input from a broader Corridor Stakeholder Committee (CSC). The CSC provided feedback from the resident perspective at key decision points in the planning process including the vision, goals and recommendations.

For a list of Gold CWG and CSC members please see the Acknowledgements section at the end of this Blueprint.



Gold Corridor Visions and Goals

Gold Corridor Vision

The Gold Rail Line Corridor connects unique and historic transit-centered communities with a range of housing choices and easy access to job centers, recreation, educational and development opportunities. Served by diverse transportation modes for a wide range of socio-economic populations, the Gold Line Corridor supports active, healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

Gold Corridor Goals

- Improve connectivity to the stations and between transit service lines to provide safe, easy multimodal access for people of all ages and abilities.
- Create and preserve a range of quality housing choices throughout the corridor for new and existing neighborhoods and residents of all incomes, age groups, and abilities.
- Identify, attract, sustain, and expand a diverse and unique economic base of jobs along the corridor.
- Leverage public investment to attract private development along the corridor and create unique places.
- Attract and enhance access to amenities and services such as education, family and health services, and healthy food options.
- Provide and enhance access to parks, open space, recreation, and community building opportunities along the corridor.
- Promote denser development near the stations to conserve resources and reduce the combined costs of transportation and housing.



Gold Corridor Profile Overview

The Corridor Profile report provides a comprehensive summary of relevant information and strategies for implementing successful TOD along the Gold Corridor. The goal was for the CWG to use the information, analysis and recommendations contained in the report to strategically prioritize investments, funding sources, and development to benefit the corridor as a whole.

At the beginning of the corridor planning process in 2013, Reconnecting America examined all station area plans and other relevant studies along the corridor, as well as demographic, economic and real estate conditions at each station and throughout the Gold Corridor, to create a summary report of existing conditions, opportunities and challenges to implementing TOD. The report was updated in June 2014. It provides a “snapshot in time” or baseline; as conditions change, it must be updated.

The Corridor Profile also is intended to be a resource for:

- Internal staff and elected officials in jurisdictions along the corridor
- The development and investment community, both private and nonprofit
- RTD and its Board of Directors
- DRCOG and its Board of Directors
- Local and regional economic development agencies
- Potential government and foundation grantors
- Residents of the Gold Corridor communities

The full Corridor Profile can be found on www.drcog.org in the Sustainable Communities Initiative resources.

Corridor Profile Contents

- **Gold Corridor Overview:** A brief overview of the Gold Corridor and the draft Vision and Goals created by the Gold CWG
- **Importance of Corridor Planning:** A summary of the benefits of corridor planning and how this report can help inform decisions made on the Gold Corridor
- **Reconnaissance Summary:** An overview of demographics and economic characteristics of the Gold Corridor and a review of station area and other relevant plans along the corridor, with accompanying maps
- **Opportunities and Challenges Assessment:** A review of the opportunities and challenges to implementing TOD along the Gold Corridor, with information on each station area and corridor-wide opportunities and challenges
- **Corridor-wide Recommendations for Implementation:** A matrix of recommendations for implementing TOD along the Gold Corridor, including an initial priority list created by the Gold CWG to select activities to fund with SCI Technical Assistance funds



Gold Corridor Catalytic Project & Technical Assistance Overview

Catalytic Project

The Catalytic Project study involved detailed pre-development planning intended to encourage new development and/or redevelopment at a specific site that offers the potential for transformational change. The long-term desired outcome of Catalytic Projects is the creation of tangible, proven models for effectively and efficiently achieving economic, housing, transportation, and environmental objectives at the site-level. Based on the existing conditions, market potential, needs assessment, station area typology and associated implementation strategies, the CWG identified several sites as potential catalytic projects. The CWG then set up a process for selecting one specific catalytic project to receive grant funding, with input from the stakeholder committee. The CWG considered the following criteria when selecting catalytic projects:

- Furtherance of *Metro Vision* goals
- Addresses multiple Federal Livability Principles
- Replicability
- Potential for additional regional benefits
- Viability – technical and financial
- Inclusive grassroots resident leadership (existing or potential)
- Likelihood of spurring additional private-sector development
- Other criteria to be determined by the CWG

Upon selecting a site, the CWG developed a detailed scope of work (SOW) for specific activities at that site and determined the need for consultant support. DRCOG integrated the SOW into a request for proposals, which was reviewed by the CWG prior to being issued publicly. A representative sub-group of the CWG reviewed all proposals and selected a final set of consultants among those who responded to the Request for Proposals. The sub-group interviewed the finalists and selected a consultant to conduct the work described in the SOW. DRCOG issued and managed the contract. A Project Steering Committee comprised of representatives of the CWG provided oversight of the work. The entire CWG was briefed periodically during the project and reviewed the draft study.

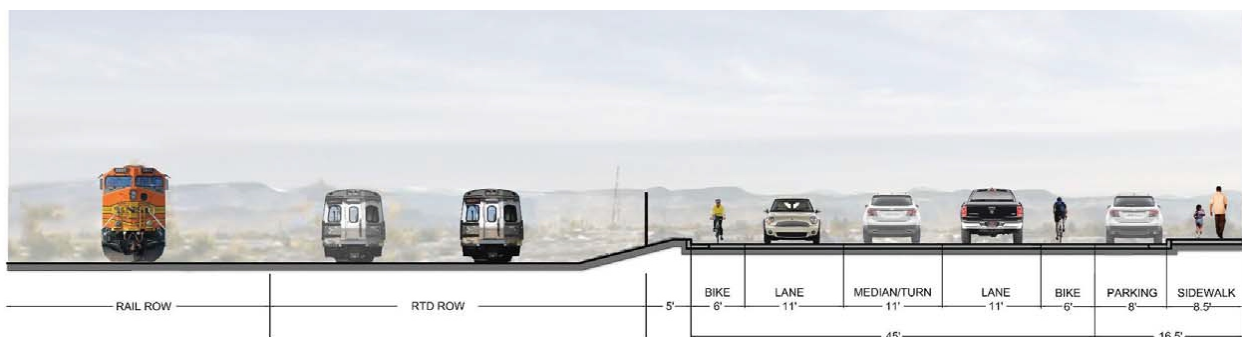


Gold Corridor Catalytic Project: Wheat Ridge – Ward Road Station/Ridge Road

This project identified potential ways to improve the Wheat Ridge-Ward Road Station area and Ridge Road between the City of Arvada and the City of Wheat Ridge. Both cities have identified the need for housing and jobs within one-half mile of station areas with a mixed-use development pattern along Ridge Road. Additionally, Ridge Road provides an opportunity for multimodal connectivity between the two stations. This project addressed the existing conditions of roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, geotechnical issues, and community services along Ridge Road. It also examined accessibility to the Wheat Ridge-Ward Road station with emphasis on obstacles and opportunities associated with Ward Road.

Key Outcomes:

- Ridge Road has great potential as a key access for the Ward Station and a connector between the Ward and Arvada Ridge Stations. Improvements have been identified that would provide a complete street in the short-term, with on-street bike lanes, continuous sidewalks on the north side of the street, and some of the ultimately desirable turn lanes for approximately \$4 million with only very limited additional right-of-way needed.
- Several additional improvements have been identified that Wheat Ridge and Arvada plan to pursue to enhance multimodal access to the two transit stations and to help spur transit-oriented development, including:
 - Bike accommodations along Ridge Road, Tabor Street, 52nd Avenue, and the North I-70 Frontage Road
 - Improved sidewalks on Ward Road, Lee Street (connecting to Red Rocks Community College), and the streets listed above
 - A traffic signal at Ward Road/50th Avenue
 - A traffic signal on Kipling Street north of the Gold Line underpass
 - Coordination with RTD on bus route modifications coinciding with the Gold Line opening
- It was important to include a multimodal transportation planning view of a larger study area to understand the context of the Gold Line station areas before focusing specifically on the Ridge Road study corridor (from Tabor Street to Miller Street).
- The planning effort considered how to build a transportation project in the neighborhood that fits within the overall transportation network, for any day of the week and for the entire season.



Technical Assistance

In addition to the Catalytic Project, the CWG received funds to conduct a study of corridor-wide need, opportunity, challenge, or development strategy. These studies could incorporate several topics including housing opportunity, economic development and resilience, public health and active living, and transit accessibility. The selection and contract management processes for a consultant to conduct work related to the identified technical assistance topics were identical to that described above for the Catalytic Project.

Gold Corridor Technical Assistance: Market Readiness Study

This project included an economic analysis of businesses, housing, and community services along the Gold Line from Union Station to Wheat Ridge-Ward Road Station. The project identified the strengths and market potentials along the corridor. This work was conducted in an effort to meet the vision of the CWG to create and preserve a range of quality housing choices thought the corridor; provide an economic base of jobs; leverage transit to attract private development; and attract and enhance access to amenities, services, and community facilities. A key component of this study addressed grocery and food supply and demand analysis, addressing the need for services from traditional grocery stores, local food producers, community gardens, and agriculture or food share programs. The study also identified community service needs including child care, senior services, and recreation facilities as well as unmet demand. An economic development strategy was developed for the corridor that identified a business attraction and retention strategy, and catalytic infrastructure investment opportunities for real estate development, employment, and access to community services.



Key Outcomes:

- There is existing demand for transit-oriented housing. Multi-family housing projects have already been developed along the corridor in some station areas.
- There are existing available land and development opportunities along the Gold Corridor. Many station areas have vacant property or redevelopment opportunity sites.
- Parallel to the I-70 Corridor, the Gold Corridor is attractive to construction, trades, professional/technical services, building services, distribution, and manufacturing businesses. I-70, I-76, and I-25 provide directional automobile and trucking access enabling businesses to easily access customers and suppliers anywhere in metro Denver.
- The existing land use pattern for much of the corridor is predominantly industrial with larger building footprints and sites, uses that are not compatible with TOD.
- Key opportunity sites are generally outside the ½ mile radius of the station areas and require multimodal connectivity improvements at the corridor level and at each station to facilitate access. Additional infrastructure improvements (including sidewalk, drainage, etc.) also are needed.
- Essential services will not likely be provided at all station areas (within ½ mile radius of the station) because of existing land uses, availability/cost of land, state of infrastructure, timing considerations (including market conditions), etc.
- Improved education/communication approaches may be needed to help developers think at a corridor scale.
- TOD in the corridor and at station areas may not occur in the short-term due to several existing issues including low density, demographics, market conditions/demand, level of transit ridership, availability of workforce housing, opportunities on other corridors, etc.
- There are key opportunities for substantive partnerships for maximizing development in the corridor including those with education, health, and other institutions.
- There is a need for greater coordination among jurisdictions on corridor-wide issues such as food availability and bicycle infrastructure.
- The situation in the corridor is changing quickly requiring assessment and rapid action. Cost of land is increasing while supply is decreasing, leading to an increase in housing costs for families throughout the corridor. Policies will need to be enacted to make sure those who rely the most on transit access can afford to live near current and future transportation investments. There also is a need to better understand what other changes the opening of the rail line may bring to communities in the corridor.
- Developing a plan for next steps during the report development process would help identify staff-level expectations. This includes thinking strategically about DRCOG's role.

Affordable Housing Creation & Preservation Study

The Gold Corridor Affordable Housing Strategy was a multifaceted effort to address affordable housing and accessibility along the Gold Line. Six primary goals were established for this project.

1. Document affordable housing conditions and needs in the future Gold Corridor;
2. Analyze housing need in the short-term and mid-range (i.e., 15 years);
3. Identify potential development sites for affordable housing;
4. Document the current planning and regulatory mechanisms that may enable or impede the preservation and development of affordable housing;
5. Develop specific strategies from regional, state, and national models that will promote affordable housing in specific areas within the corridor; and
6. Develop an evaluation strategy to track the progress of affordable housing preservation and development.

Key Outcomes:

- The market for multi-family housing is already active in the area, but it is entirely market-rate, including 738 recently constructed units and another potential 2500 units in the early pipeline.
- This is out of alignment with the need for affordable housing: 1 in 3 households in the corridor are spending more than 35 percent of income on housing and half of the projected 7000 new households are likely to need affordable housing.
- Except for the Denver 41st and Fox station, the existing TOD plans in the corridor do not specifically support or specify affordable housing as part of the desired development.
- The cities and counties also issue Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, and in the past many households have been able to use vouchers to locate in the area. However, with the tightening housing market it has become increasingly difficult for voucher recipients to use them in the corridor. In fall 2014, 70 households with vouchers from Jefferson County were unable to use them, and others who had lived in the area could not renew their leases. In a strong housing market, landlords are less willing to accept vouchers when other tenants will pay above market rents.
- Three mobile home parks within a half-mile of the Federal station provide affordable housing without subsidy to more than 440 households. These properties may be at risk given development pressures near transit and the lack of protections for mobile home owners.
- By 2030, the age profile in the region will shift from the 20-30 year olds as the largest group, to three new dominant groups: teenagers, early middle age (40-55 years old), and early seniors (60-65 years old). This will influence the demand for housing, work, and services in the corridor. Teenagers will need transportation alternatives to the auto in order to access school, jobs, extracurricular activities, etc. Transit options and safe pedestrian and bicycle ways could greatly increase mobility. Seniors will need a variety of housing options, likely smaller units that are accessible to services such as medical care, pharmacies, and small grocers. For seniors to move from detached homes, these other options will need to be available. This will also allow for the filtering process – 20-30 year olds living in the corridor today can move into that housing with children. Seniors on the upper end of the age cohort, over 85 years old, may be a



large share given longer life expectancies and the current senior population in their 60s; this group will require transportation options other than the auto.

- The Arvada Campus of Red Rocks Community College could be an amenity for young adults, adults seeking a career change, and seniors and families using the college's future health clinic. However, there is a need for bus, bike, and pedestrian access to the campus and housing affordable to the students.
- Most residents leave the corridor for work, and thus, most workers in the corridor are imported. Work in the corridor pays slightly higher wages than the work that corridor residents find elsewhere.
- Alternative modes of transportation, such as bus public transit, walking, and biking in the corridor are limited. There is a lack of bike and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the corridor. Bus service is limited in terms of night and weekend service, frequency of most buses ranges from 30 minutes to 1 hour, and there are several areas without service. Destinations and amenities are not designed to be accessed by modes other than automobiles.
- Large sites for affordable housing exist, but affordable housing developers acting alone (without the support of government, public/private partnerships and grants) will struggle to cover the costs of the high land values and infrastructure requirements.
- Jurisdictions and counties will need more tools, regulations, and financing sources to support the current and future demand for affordable housing that needs to be met through both preservation and new development.

Full reports for the Catalytic and Technical Assistance Projects can be found on www.drcog.org in the Sustainable Communities Initiative resources.



Gold Corridor Stakeholder Profile

Corridor Stakeholder Committee

The Corridor Stakeholder Committee (CSC) was critical to achieving broader stakeholder engagement goals for the corridor planning process. Each CSC was comprised of 10-20 community members representing residential and business interests from communities in the corridor. The CSC helped design activities for a large public workshop, identified additional opportunities for public education and participation, and recruited participants. Representation and areas of interest on the CSC included:

- All ages, incomes and abilities
- Low-income communities or those at-risk of displacement
- Person(s) with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Communities of color
- Small business ownership
- Housing (mixed-income/affordable/workforce)
- Transportation access or alternatives (multimodal--trails, cycling, walkability)
- Public health and/or safety
- Education and training
- Job creation/retention or economic development
- Arts/cultural resources

Stakeholder Engagement Goals

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of the SCI and corridor planning process. Overarching stakeholder engagement goals include:

- Engage all of the relevant constituencies – people who have a stake in the process and who may be impacted by the outcome
- Equip all constituencies with the tools and knowledge they need to effectively participate in the planning process
- Integrate stakeholder engagement into all of the proposed planning and implementation activities, to ensure stakeholders have meaningful opportunities to influence the outcomes of these activities
- Create long-term capacity for continued engagement at the regional, corridor and catalytic project-level scales
- Effectively and meaningfully engage communities typically underrepresented in planning processes, including low-income individuals and families, people with limited English proficiency, and communities of color



Stakeholder Engagement Team

A multidisciplinary stakeholder engagement team supported DRCOG staff in achieving the goals for the corridor planning process. These organizations have significant experience in leadership development, capacity building, outreach to traditionally underrepresented communities, working with advocacy organizations, and meeting facilitation (including the effective use of innovative tools and technologies), and were indispensable to the process.

FRESC: Good Jobs Strong Communities

FRESC is a nonprofit organization with expertise in grassroots community organizing. FRESC community organizers played a pivotal role in recruiting, building capacity, and effectively and meaningfully engaging traditionally underrepresented populations. Staff organizers continually communicated with and fostered relationships with newly developed community organizers and leaders throughout the three-year process. They also assisted with the following tasks:

- Providing food, childcare, translated materials and interpretation services at stakeholder meetings and other engagement events
- Conducting door-knocking in station areas along the corridor
- Recruiting and mobilizing diverse constituents to actively participate in the planning and decision-making process
- Training grassroots leaders to advocate in advisory community meetings for relevant outcomes such as affordable housing, job standards, healthy living, and transit access
- Conducting one-on-one education and quarterly training to help people understand the links between local and regional issues impacting these populations, including housing, public health, transit, jobs, training and economic development.

The Denver Foundation

Colorado's oldest and largest community foundation, The Denver Foundation inspires people and mobilizes resources to strengthen the community. Complementing the efforts of FRESC, The Denver Foundation committed funding for small grants to emerging resident leaders and technical assistance to resident leaders in low-income areas involved in station-area or corridor-level decision-making. This funding supported the provision of food, childcare, translated materials and interpretation services at stakeholder meetings and other engagement events.

Transit Alliance

Transit Alliance is a public-advocacy organization that works to enhance communities and people's lives by supporting transit, active transportation and increased mobility to cultivate a healthy, resilient and more sustainable lifestyle. Transit Alliance modified and conducted its successful Citizens' Academy for each of corridors. The Corridor Academy provided community leaders with a fundamental working knowledge of how to engage in the process of regional transit and better communicate its benefits. The academy also sought to ignite a passion for public transit, community building around transit and fuel community interest in the overall benefits. Academy participants were encouraged to take their new knowledge and put it in action by designing an implementable personal action plan.



PlaceMatters

PlaceMatters is a Denver-based non-profit think tank for civic engagement and process in planning whose work creates opportunities for informed, inclusive decision making in the planning of vibrant cities and communities. PlaceMatters conducted stakeholder interviews with municipal staff and community leaders who had been involved in previous planning efforts in the corridor, like station area planning. They provided recommendations, which were instrumental in designing the process, activities and tools for the stakeholder committees. PlaceMatters also helped design a large-scale interactive public forum for each corridor and synthesized feedback received. Further, they provided training to stakeholders on engagement tools like WALKscope and the Denver Regional Equity Atlas, building long-term capacity among community leaders in the corridor.

Stakeholder Feedback

While stakeholder engagement in each SCI corridor (East, Gold and Northwest) provided unique input to the planning process, some concerns were universal. First- and final-mile connectivity, in particular bicycle, pedestrian and bus modes, and access to opportunities like transit, employment and housing rose as top challenges throughout the region.

DRCOG and the Stakeholder Engagement Team conducted several activities in the corridor designed to elicit feedback from residents, business owners and other members of the community. Several common topics were identified through these activities (see text box). In addition, participants in each activity identified specific issues, needs and opportunities.

Gold Corridor Stakeholder Committee (CSC)

The Gold CSC met eight times between June 2013 and October 2014 at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center. Gold CSC members identified the following issues for why they were interested in participating in the planning process.

- Connectivity to station areas
- Importance of public education on transit
- Preservation of home-ownership for the future generation
- Small-business opportunities
- Promotion of carless lifestyle
- Transit-oriented development (TOD)

Gold Corridor Key Themes

In the Gold Corridor, the most frequently identified themes and opportunities included:

- First- and final-mile challenges/connectivity – Wayfinding
- Access to opportunity
 - Transit
 - Employment
 - Housing (displacement, affordable, senior)
 - Older adults, person(s) with a disability
- Public Education
- Safety
- Preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods
- TOD/economic opportunity
- Multimodal transportation
 - Bicycle, pedestrian
 - Bus/rail access



- Access to opportunity
 - Preservation and/or new affordable housing options – Low-income senior housing; upgrading housing (Globeville)
 - Advocacy for residents and neighborhoods
 - Consideration of transit-dependent riders (large concentration of low-income individuals and families that do not own a vehicle in the corridor)
 - Even distribution of benefits and impacts
 - Access to education and employment
 - Consideration of older adults and those with disabilities

FRESC Outreach

FRESC staff conducted outreach from spring 2012 through spring 2015 primarily in the Sunnyside neighborhood and southwest Adams County. The community members were predominantly Hispanic and one-fourth were monolingual Spanish speakers. Most community members FRESC worked with were renters or owners of mobile homes, women and/or working parents with children.

Through its work in all three SCI corridors, FRESC heard common themes including the need for greater access to jobs and more affordable transit fares. Stakeholders voiced the following concerns in the **Northwest** Corridor:

- Displacement (Federal station area, mobile home parks)
- Safety issues (Federal station area and Federal Boulevard)
- Lack of recreation facilities and parks
- Housing costs (Federal station area)
- Station area access (41st & Fox station area, Federal Boulevard)

Active Organizations in the Gold Corridor

- Tri-County Health Department
- Jefferson County Public Health
- Arvada Community Food Bank
- STRIDE
- Hope House of Colorado
- Ralston House
- Growing Home
- Shrine of St. Anne
- Inter Church Arms
- Agape Life Church
- United Communities of Adams County
- Perl Mack Homeowners' Association

Transit Alliance Gold Area Corridor Academy

Fourteen participants completed the Gold Corridor Academy on four consecutive Thursdays, Oct. 3-24, 2013. Attendees expressed interest in multimodal connectivity to diverse populations, ease of use to transition from car to public transportation, making sure everyone benefits from the system, creating quality transit-oriented development, communicating effectively throughout diverse communities, being able to best represent the benefits of the investment, resident displacement and ease of access and solving for the last mile and providing true alternatives to driving.



The following is a brief description of the participants' Individual Action Plans:

- Creating and installing wayfinding signs at stations to show alternative mode routes, and to introduce people to the surrounding neighborhoods for the purpose of promoting economic development
- Help inform aging neighbors as to benefits of the system. Help them reduce car usage
- Economic feasibility study of connectivity and community
- Preservation issues at 60th and Federal Station.
- Educate decision makers along Gold Line corridor
- Help create last mile circulators to bridge gaps between destinations and regional transit system.
- Develop a concept for using the Sheridan Station as an anchor for a regional sports center
- Help plan pedestrian access to the Arvada Ridge Station
- Get involved in local Olde Town Arvada Station exploring accessibility and first- and final-mile solutions
- Develop concept to encourage the use of small grocery carts to promote walking and supporting local merchants
- Developing proposal to Mile High Connects for a grant to build coalitions and develop neighborhood champions to advocate for urban land uses and more innovative transportation policies to increase ridership of older adults, disabled and low income
- Develop concept for free "Last Mile" connector shuttle from Olde Town Station to the Arvada Center
- Become a strong voice in advocating density along main corridor serving the Olde Town TOD area, including walkable sidewalks and wayfinding
- Find a way or method to actively engage and spark passion with Globeville-Elyria-Swansea residents in regards to transportation

Gold Corridor Public Forum

The Gold Corridor Public Forum was held Oct. 30, 2013 at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center and attracted 80 participants. The forum provided a mix of high- and low-tech activities encouraging both education and engagement. The forum offered a chance for residents to learn about the Gold Corridor and other planning and transportation projects in the region, talk with staff from the jurisdictions along the corridor and RTD and provide input on Gold Corridor vision, assets and challenges, and preferred amenities and services.



Common themes among feedback received included:

- Need for multimodal connectivity, first- and last-mile connections, shuttles
- Safety at station areas, primarily related to pedestrians
- Housing affordability, income diversity and higher density residential development
- Preserving existing communities, values and architecture
- Expansion of higher education and job training opportunities (Arvada Ridge)
- New employment opportunities, mix of employment types from service to manufacturing

In summary, these participants painted a picture of a Gold Corridor community that is moving toward a future that preserves existing values, adds new opportunities, supports an active lifestyle, provides a variety of housing types and a diverse population – a community that is vibrant, clean, safe, affordable, and connected to the entire metropolitan region.

OUR Shared Vision

DRCOG launched a civic engagement website to garner additional feedback from the community using the MindMixer platform. The site encourages idea generation and social interaction among participants. OUR Shared Vision published three topics related to the Gold Corridor covering corridor vision and goals. Common themes included connecting the region to key destinations like Olde Town, increasing access for students and creating economic opportunity.



Gold Corridor Recommendations

The Gold Corridor Recommendations reflect the suggested priorities of the CWG based on the outcome of all activities undertaken as part of the corridor planning process including the Corridor Profile, stakeholder engagement efforts, and the outcomes of the Catalytic Project and technical assistance studies, as well as the expertise and experience of all the CWG members. The recommendations propose next steps for collaboration by the jurisdictions and other key partners in the corridor to continue work begun under the SCI grant and achieve the opportunities opened up by the build-out of the transit system.

Station-Specific Recommendations

1. Individual jurisdictions should identify the need, prioritization and funding for the recommended improvements for each station area, as described in the Gold Corridor Economic Development and Community Services Strategy. These may include recommendations for:
 - A. Station area improvements, development and land use
 - B. Food access
 - C. Community services
2. Create/update TOD plans to include consideration for identifying affordable housing as a desired use and recommending supportive zoning and development guidelines.
3. For Ward Station/Ridge Road Station, identify funding for final design and construction of infrastructure and multi-modal improvements discussed in the Catalytic Project Final Report. (Note: this would be a collaborative effort between Wheat Ridge and Arvada and a potential funding mechanism could be explored as part of a corridor-wide entity.)

Gold Corridor Recommendations

All jurisdictions within the Gold Corridor agree continued communication and coordination is integral to the success of the corridor as a whole. Using the Gold CWG as an initial framework, an inter-jurisdictional working group should be formed and work toward the best means by which to achieve shared goals including informal partnership, 501(c)(3), etc. This newly-formed entity should consider the following next steps to achieve its goals. Work could include prioritization based on type of group formed, goals, funding and timing.

Collaborate on strategies to create and expand primary jobs along the Gold Line Corridor

1. Identify priority development sites
2. Develop coordinated economic development marketing materials
3. Conduct targeted broker site tours
4. Consider developing financial assistance mechanisms



Implement the Affordable Housing Creation and Preservation Strategy focused on creating and preserving affordable housing and promoting diverse, mixed-income housing options at each station along the Gold Line Corridor

Components could include:

1. Adopt policy statements to preserve existing affordable housing and construct new affordable housing where possible.
2. Using the Affordable Housing Creation and Preservation Strategy as a basis, identify sites that have potential to be developed for affordable housing. Work with appropriate housing authorities and non-profits such as Urban Land Conservancy.
3. Develop detailed strategies for preserving affordable housing and constructing affordable housing on identified sites.
4. Implement detailed strategies for preservation and construction of affordable housing.
5. Identify tools each city or county could adopt to support affordable housing development, e.g. density bonuses, permit and fee waivers, low cost land, inclusionary housing ordinance, revised ADU guidelines, new zoning categories, e.g. changes to lot size, density, etc.
6. As a corridor, identify sites, prioritize sites for the yearly 9 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credit round and work together on the applications.

Collaborate on strategies to address first-and final-mile connections

Prepare a First-and Final-Mile Connections Strategy that focuses on the potential for multimodal infrastructure improvements that better connect neighborhoods to transit stations. This study could also expand to examine existing transportation options, housing choices, job access, and community amenities to identify gaps and opportunities to best connect residents to origins and destinations within a 20-minute walking commute.

1. Inventory infrastructure and amenity needs for both bus and rail stations to identify connectivity and access needs. Elements inventoried will include stop amenities (i.e. benches, trash cans, shelters, etc.) as well as infrastructure elements such as sidewalk conditions, concrete pads, access walks, and proximity to safe crossing locations. Results from the inventory will be integrated into a dynamic database to help prioritize investment and implementation to the highest need areas as funding is available.
2. Study needed infrastructure to connect key opportunity sites outside of the ½ mile radii of station areas.
3. Analyze bicycle and pedestrian networks and needed infrastructure.
4. Evaluate strategies for implementing private and corporate sponsored connectors including business/corporate circulators and shuttles, car-share programs, etc.
5. Create an accessibility strategy to identify potential funding sources, areas of priority, and partners. Areas of possible focus include: public school transport (Mile High Connects, RTD, MATES), circulators, bicycle connectivity and services around the Federal Station (Regis, Denver B-Cycle, Aria).



Convene a Gold Corridor Healthy Living Coalition to address healthy food and health care access. With so many cities and counties along the Gold Line, a health coalition can help maximize scarce resources and promote cooperation on healthy community design across jurisdictions in a politically neutral setting

1. Regularly convene stakeholders, including city staff, elected officials, representatives of local businesses and organizations, and community members.
2. Address policies, systems and environments to support healthy eating, active living, and health equity.
3. Seek funding to support a long-term coalition.
4. Potential activities include: develop action plan, advocate for policy change, and promote education on



healthy community design.

Collaborate on locating needed community services at or near station areas

These services may include:

1. Child care
2. Social services and assistance
3. Medical and health services
4. Retail and personal services benefiting both daytime workers and corridor residents
5. Job training

Develop and implement a Gold Corridor Marketing Strategy based on the Gold Corridor Market Readiness Study to enhance visibility and attractiveness of the Gold Corridor to visitors, residents, business owners and developers

This strategy could include:

1. Create educational materials and a communication plan targeted to interested developers to guide them in opportunities at a corridor-scale as well as individual stations.
2. Create materials for interested homeowners and businesses, as well as an economic development marketing and awareness campaign.
3. Host a cross-jurisdictional broker crawl to highlight available development opportunities at each station area.

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Gold Corridor Blueprint