



**COLFAX BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT  
DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN**



PREPARED FOR

**COLFAX BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT  
DISTRICT**

PREPARED BY

**PROGRESSIVE  
URBAN  
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ASSOCIATES**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Colfax Business Improvement District (CBID) was formed in 1988 and was one of the first BIDs established in the state of Colorado. The CBID boundaries are from 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the south, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, Grant Street to the west and the alley just east of Josephine Street to the east. The CBID collects 7.8 mils on real property within the district raising an annual assessment of approximately \$335,000. Traditionally, the CBID has focused primarily on activities pertaining to clean and safe, advocacy and promotions.

The CBID has enjoyed some notable successes over the last few years, including:

- Advocating for Main Street Zoning along the length of the east Colfax corridor - the first comprehensive rezoning effort in the City of Denver in over fifty years
- The East Colfax Small Area Plan, which established a vision for land use and transportation development along the corridor
- Introducing a video surveillance system that has contributed to a significant reduction in crime in the area
- A variety of events and promotions, perhaps most notably the Colorado Colfax Marathon

Recent changes on both the board and staff levels have created an opportunity for the CBID to review its goals and mission and reorganize its work plan and approach. Accordingly, in the summer of 2008, the CBID commissioned a strategic plan to look at how it can most effectively lead efforts to improve the East Colfax corridor over the next five years. The Denver-based consulting firm Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.) was selected to facilitate a strategic planning process to help re-define the CBID's work program, establish consensus among ratepayers within the district, and outline the district's priorities for moving forward.

The CBID Strategic Planning process began with an analysis of the district's current economic, political and planning environment within the neighborhood marketplace. This analysis was accomplished through a comprehensive review of existing planning documents, annual work plan and budget, extensive interviews and forums with stakeholders and a survey of business and property owners in the district as well as nearby residents. Nearly 50 stakeholders were involved in group discussion and individual interviews and 75 people responded to a survey.

An in-depth analysis of the East Colfax demographic and market conditions, as well as findings from the outreach process, resulted in the development of the following **strategic plan overall goals to *reinvigorate* the CBID:**

- Be *aware of and responsive to* ratepayers' priorities
- Provide *advocacy and leadership* to promote issues central to the healthy growth and evolution of the district
- Be a *catalyst* that brings together a variety of interests with the common goal of improving the East Colfax corridor

*In order to meet those goals, the following key recommendations include:*

- Re-defining the current focus of CBID from a predominantly clean and safe program to one that incorporates clean and safe into a larger, more comprehensive economic development strategy.
- Recruiting an Economic Development Director to implement a newly defined work program that is focused on economic development, communications and advocacy for the District.
- Identifying partners and resources that can leverage the BID's programs, leadership and revenue potential
- Creating and implementing a communication and outreach strategy that keeps BID ratepayers, neighbors and other Colfax stakeholders aware of developments in the District and how a variety of efforts and organizations can best support and leverage each others' efforts.

The chart below outlines the key recommendations contained in this report.

BID Programs	Organizational Leadership & Administration	Additional Resources
Economic Development	Recruit Economic Development Director	Identify potential partners
Vital, Clean & Safe Public Realm	Open a storefront office on Colfax	Identify sources of revenue beyond assessments
Communication & Advocacy	Board Organization: Defined roles/committees	
	Define role for management company	

## MARKET PROFILE

As part of the strategic planning process, a Colfax area market profile was prepared that provides detailed information regarding the community's demographic and economic context. Below is a map of the market area that was studied.



The market profile in its entirety is attached to this report. Some highlights of the market profile include:

- Colfax Avenue has been and will continue to be a major transit corridor for its surrounding *neighborhoods and the region*
- Its strong traffic (more than 31,500 cars per day) and transit counts (the 15 and 15L bus routes have the highest paid ridership in the City) supply visibility for businesses located along the corridor
- East Colfax Avenue is surrounded by a highly educated, income-diverse population that is the densest in the metropolitan area
- East Colfax Avenue connects a study area that is rich in historic amenities, neighborhoods and attractions
- Within the study area, crime decreased by 20.3% for crimes against persons and decreased by 13.9% for crimes against properties between 2006 and 2007
- Current study area development has begun to focus on the East Colfax Avenue corridor
- The assessed value of properties within the Colfax Business Improvement District increased by more than 250% within the last 15 years.

## STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND SURVEYS

In May and June of 2008, P.U.M.A. conducted a series of community meetings for business and property owners and interviews with key stakeholders. Nearly 50 individuals participated in community meetings and one-on-one interviews including:

- Residents
- Property owners
- Business owners
- City Council Representatives
- Developers
- District 6 Police
- CBID Board

The consultant team led the small groups through a participatory visioning process which probed stakeholders' perceptions of how Colfax has evolved in the last five years as well as their vision for Colfax in five years - 2013. Based on the vision for the future, stakeholders were asked to prioritize a variety of improvements. The priorities that emerged from the community and small group workshops include:

1.	Promote development and attract developers to the corridor
2.	Invest in pedestrian amenities: beautification, trees, lights, more crosswalks, wide sidewalks
3.	Create a cleaner and safer environment
4.	Invest in improved transit options

The role of the CBID was also probed in the focus groups, as P.U.M.A. sought stakeholder's opinions regarding the role of CBID both in implementing the improvement priorities and investments along the East Colfax corridor and in the surrounding areas of the CBID. The following themes emerged with regard to CBID's Role:

1.	Hire staff to mobilize stakeholders and implement a new work plan – specifically economic development and streetscape initiatives
2.	Maintain the street at a higher standard in order to attract new development
3.	Budget by priorities expressed by stakeholders
4.	Continue to work on safety issues collaboratively with District 6 Police

In addition to the meetings and focus groups, P.U.M.A. also conducted an online survey of CBID property owners, business owners and residents to assess priorities for improvements and investments in the District. Seventy-five individuals responded to the survey, with 21% of respondents identifying themselves as commercial property owners, 31% as Business Owners and 43% as residents. In assessing the current state of East Colfax, respondents noted the following projects and investments have been "Very Important" in improving the environment over the past five years:

<b>"Very Important" in Improving East Colfax Over the Past Five Years</b>					
<b>Overall Rank</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Commercial Property Owner</b>	<b>Business Owner</b>	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Residential Property Owner</b>
1 (80.6%)	Cleaner & Safer	1 (76.9%)	1 (85.0%)	1 (75.9%)	1 (80.0%)
2 (65.3%)	Better Image	3 (53.8%)	2 (80.0%)	2 (58.6%)	2 (76.0%)
3 (53.5%)	Restaurants & Entertainment	5 (38.5%)	6 (50.0%)	3 (58.6%)	3 (58.3%)
4 (47.1%)	Better Retail	7 (33.3%)	5 (68.4%)	4 (41.4%)	6 (37.5%)
5 (42.3%)	New Mixed-Use Development	2 (69.2%)	3 (70.0%)	5 (37.9%)	4 (45.8%)

In looking five years into the future, respondents noted the following general improvements will be very important to enhancing the east Colfax corridor by 2013:

<b>"Very Important" to Enhance East Colfax in the Next Five Years</b>					
<b>Overall Rank</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Commercial Property Owner</b>	<b>Business Owner</b>	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Residential Property Owner</b>
1 (73.6%)	Cleaner & Safer	4 (57.1%)	2 (71.4%)	2 (60.0%)	1 (84.6%)
2 (69.4%)	Improved Streetscape	1 (84.6%)	1 (80.0%)	1 (66.7%)	2 (76.9%)
3 (58.9%)	Pedestrian Friendly	2 (64.3%)	3 (66.7%)	3 (60.0%)	4 (57.7%)
4 (50.0%)	Improved Transit Options	7 (35.7%)	6 (57.1%)	4 (53.3%)	3 (60.0%)
5 (48.6%)	Neighborhood Serving Retail	6 (46.2%)	7 (55.0%)	5 (51.7%)	6 (52.0%)

When asked to use brief words to summarize their vision for Colfax as they look five years ahead to 2013, the following words were most frequently noted:

<b>Vibrant</b>	<b>Pedestrian Friendly</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Inviting</b>
<b>Clean</b>	<b>Bikes</b>	<b>Family-Friendly</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
<b>Safer</b>	<b>Diverse</b>	<b>Funky</b>	<b>Exciting</b>

To achieve the vision described in the question above, respondents said the following actions will be important to improving East Colfax in the next five years:

"Very Important" to Improving East Colfax in the Next Five Years					
Overall Rank	Action	Commercial Property Owner	Business Owner	Resident	Residential Property Owner
1 (75.0%)	Beautification Projects to Improve the Pedestrian Environment	1 (71.4%)	1 (76.2%)	1 (76.7%)	1 (80.8%)
2 (71.2%)	Improve Safety	4 (53.8%)	3 (70.0%)	3 (53.6%)	1 (80.0%)
3 (70.1%)	Better trash & Graffiti Control; Overall Cleanliness	6 (46.2%)	4 (60.0%)	2 (65.5%)	4 (69.2%)
4 (50.0%)	Improve Shopping options	5 (46.2%)	2 (75.0%)	6 (41.1%)	6 (52.0%)
5 (46.7%)	Streetcar or other Type of Improved Transit	7 (35.7%)	7 (52.4%)	4 (50.0%)	3 (65.4%)

When asked to describe the one most important improvement to East Colfax that would encourage respondents to shop, dine or patronize East Colfax more frequently, the following improvements were most frequently mentioned:

1.	Make the street more pedestrian friendly
2.	Attract a full-service grocery store
3.	Invest in more transit options/add bike lanes

**Internal Assessment:** P.U.M.A. also conducted an internal assessment of the CBID's work program, budgets and organizational structure. Additionally, other district planning studies and reports completed in the past five years were reviewed, including:

- The East Colfax Small Area Plan
- The Main Street Zone Guidelines
- Review of Denver's Office of Economic Development East Colfax Loan Transactions
- Review of CBID property ownership data
- Review of Senate Bill-1 Strategic Transit Project (BRT Study)
- Review Build A Better Denver Bond Projects
- Colfax Street Design Guidelines
- Revolving Loan Fund & Neighborhood Revitalization Target Areas
- Review of Office of Economic Development's Loan Programs
- General research on the Economic Benefits of good street design

## STRATEGIC PLAN TOP PRIORITIES

This plan provides specific strategies and recommendations for how the CBID should be positioned and organized to respond to current challenges and opportunities. The following chart illustrates three categories of emphasis and strategies contained within each:

BID Programs	Organizational Leadership & Administration	Additional Resources
Economic Development	Recruit Economic Development Director	Identify potential partners
Vital Clean & Safe Public Realm	Open a Store Front Office on Colfax	Identify sources of revenue beyond assessments
Communication & Advocacy	Board Organization: Defined roles/committees	
	Define Role for Management Company	

### *A New CBID Work Plan:*

The priorities expressed by stakeholders during the outreach phase of this process were strikingly consistent. A priority expressed across the board was to develop a new work program with clearly defined and articulated goals intended to promote the healthy growth of the corridor through:

- Proactive economic development strategies
- Advocating for a vital, safe and clean pedestrian experience
- A comprehensive communication and advocacy strategy
- Leadership and administration

A detailed description of the proposed work program follows.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

East Colfax was the focus of a great deal of excitement during the development of the East Colfax Small Area Plan and the implementation of Main Street Zoning in 2006. Since then, the market has become more temperamental and some of the enthusiasm surrounding Main Street has leveled off. However, many interesting projects have recently been completed or are underway including the new Argonaut store, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless mixed-use development and new mixed use development projects near the Tattered Cover complex. CBID should be strategically positioned to capitalize on economic opportunities for the corridor as they arise, and help create them when they don't. A comprehensive economic development strategy will create an environment that encourages investment and the development of creative activity and business.

*Components of a new economic development approach, described in more detail below include:*

- Develop a business retention and recruitment initiative
- Identify/create financial incentives for doing business on the corridor
- Market and educate the business and development community about opportunities along East Colfax
- Identify partners to help achieve new, healthy development and bring businesses to the corridor

### ACTION STRATEGIES:

#### A. Develop a Business Retention and Recruitment Initiative; Attract New Developers and Development

East Colfax currently lacks a strategy to retain and diversify its business base or to attract new development. The CBID should be positioned to serve as the primary point of contact for business development along the corridor. Working in partnership with the City of Denver's Office of Economic Development (OED) and others, the CBID should nurture businesses and encourage development by coordinating and packaging information important to doing business on Colfax and the surrounding CBID area.

To accomplish this, a business support initiative is encouraged as an "*entry portal*" for developers looking for opportunities along the corridor or for businesses that want to start, expand or relocate to East Colfax including:

- Compilation of Colfax market information to assist existing and prospective businesses and development
- Business counseling to refine business plans and merchandizing practices
- Space referrals to identify specific sites suitable for new business concepts and development
- Trouble-shooting to assist existing or new businesses through local permitting and development review processes
- Information on financial incentives geared to specific kinds of development, tenant improvement, and working capital for innovative business concepts.

A business support program was one of the key economic development recommendations of the *2004 East Colfax Small Area Plan*. Such a program can help developers identify potential sites and assemblages and assist businesses in getting started and filling vacant space. Specific elements could include:

### 1. *Market Information*

In order to efficiently assist developers and/or businesses, CBID could provide information about the existing conditions of real estate along the corridor including:

- **Business Mix:** Data should be collected on the existing business inventory along the corridor and an analysis should be performed to identify future demand.
- **Property Information:** In order to acquire all the necessary information needed to understand the business and real estate inventory, outreach to individual property owners will be necessary. Detailed property information should be sought including space available, lease rates, sales price per square foot, condition of space, and, if possible, expiration dates of existing leases.
- **Data, Maps and Leasing Collateral:** All the necessary data which prospective entrepreneurs and developers will need to decide whether to locate along the Colfax corridor should be well organized and packaged. Brokers, investors, developers, interested businesses and other Colfax stakeholders should have easy access to this information and should be able to quickly find the comprehensive information about the district that they need. Recommended pieces include:
  - *Recruitment Target Area Map:* The map should clearly illustrate the location of first floor occupants, vacant spaces with square footage and occupied spaces that could be considered available by the property owner.
  - *Marketing Information Package:* This package should include general information about the Colfax market, including: demographics; sales tax trends; development updates; and positive attributes about the Colfax corridor.

### 2. *Financial Incentives*

Financial incentives should be developed and packaged to entice desirable development and new businesses to the corridor. Some existing incentives can be utilized immediately; others will require partnership and coordination and can be deployed in the long-term (ideally within the next one to two years).

Immediate opportunities for existing and potential businesses and developers include:

- **Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) & Neighborhood Business Revitalization (NBR) Target Areas:** East Colfax from Broadway to Colorado Boulevard is eligible for access to the City's RLF and is a designated NBR corridor allowing businesses along the corridor to utilize CDBG funding for specific purposes. CBID should work closely with the Office of Economic Development to maximize the use and availability of these funds to support East Colfax businesses and development.
- **Creative Enterprise Revolving Loan Fund (CERLF):** CBID should be positioned to encourage a healthy, vibrant and diverse business mix, and the CERLF can assist with that.

This Fund offers creative enterprises in the City and County of Denver access to affordable and flexible business capital to increase income and build assets. Creative enterprises are defined as non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses producing or selling fine art, photographic and graphic art, performance art, handcraft and design and media.

- **Familiarity with Other Loan Programs:** CBID should have a working understanding of other loan programs and tax incentives available to businesses in the CBID area and should be familiar with the circumstances under which they can be utilized. Financial tools CBID should have a general understanding of include:
  - New markets tax credits
  - SBA 504 mortgages
  - Micro-lending programs
  - Others as appropriate

Other incentives to be explored in the longer term include:

- **Community Development Corporations (CDCs):** CDC's are often utilized to assist in the development of under-utilized real estate and to attract business capital for small businesses. CBID could participate in a broader corridor-wide effort to create a CDC to facilitate the development of real estate to accommodate new business concepts, providing predevelopment, construction and long-term financing. The CDC could also house a seed capital loan and equity fund to launch new business concepts. Active Denver CDCs include *Newsed* (concentrating development and activity along Santa Fe Drive and Denver's near west-side neighborhoods) and *Del Norte* CDC that concentrates its efforts primarily in housing development on the west side of town. Aspects of both of these CDCs could be used as models for a Colfax CDC. CBID should look to other Colfax organizations (such as the Fax Partnership on Colfax east of Colorado Boulevard) to leverage any efforts to establish a CDC to support Colfax businesses and development.
- **Work with the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) to Explore Potential Applications of Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** The availability to capture TIF can be an effective way to attract new investment in a particular area. CBID should take a leadership role in promoting the CBID areas as an underutilized area ripe for TIF.
- **Explore the Creation of Transit-Oriented Development Incentives:** Work with the City of Denver, Regional Transportation District (RTD) and Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) to create a tool being used in California and other states in which transit agencies reward jurisdictions that encourage dense residential and mixed use development in urban locations near transit hubs. As an enhanced transit corridor, Colfax could be a natural fit for this type of program and should be considered in the context of any transit planning efforts that involve the corridor.

### 3. *Economic Development Marketing and Education*

Economic development marketing and education should revolve around the following components:

- **Educating the Investment Community:** Educating and marketing the corridor to potential developers, brokers, potential retailers, and customers should be pursued. CBID could conduct

public relations efforts surrounding every new development including lease signings, construction announcements, “coming soon” teasers, and grand openings.

- **Marketing Suite:** A marketing suite or “war room” would send a strong message that East Colfax is open for business, and could be used to educate and communicate to potential small businesses, brokers and developers. Components of a marketing suite could include: enlarged versions of district maps, presentations about future developments along the Corridor, charts and graphs on Colfax demographics and boards on existing space. *(This idea is discussed in more detail section #4 of this report.)*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Identifying and working with strategic partners is critical to the success of the economic development program. Potential partners include:

<b>City of Denver Office of Economic Development</b>	To tap RLF, NBR, gap financing and other low and no-interest loans and technical assistance for new and existing businesses and development
<b>DURA</b>	To explore expanded use of TIF on East Colfax
<b>Seedco</b>	For low interest loans and technical assistance
<b>The Fax Partnership, Bluebird District, Greektown, West Colfax BID</b>	To explore the creation of a Colfax CDC
<b>Urban Land Institute (ULI)</b>	As a potential resource for challenging development scenarios
<b>CU Graduate School of Public Affairs, Planning and Architecture</b>	To tap graduate interns to work on Colfax projects, outreach, research or other issues that need manpower
<b>BID Business and Property Owners</b>	To communicate potential assemblages, vacancies and potential projects

## VITAL, CLEAN AND SAFE PUBLIC REALM

There is mounting evidence that good street design contributes not only to a better pedestrian experience, but also contributes to the economic health of an area. Staff members of various City agencies have indicated that the ability to *demonstrate* the economic benefits of good street design could potentially help elevate streetscape implementation in specific areas. According to a 2007 report published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), good street design including consistent curb lines, adequate number of pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, maintenance, sense of safety and good signage all contribute to a more robust economic climate and lead to significant increases in:

- Property sales prices
- Prices of retail goods and services (and generate more sales tax)
- Lease rates
- Parking rates
- Occupancy rates

Accordingly, a top priority that emerged during the outreach process is creating an improved public realm that establishes an inviting, safe and vibrant atmosphere in the District. The East Colfax corridor currently has several functional blocks that are attracting successful businesses and generating significant pedestrian activity. However, much of the corridor is challenged by inconsistent design features; curb lines, flood plain issues, lack of pedestrian amenities, insufficient street crossings and poor maintenance. Recommendations for improving the public realm include:

- Strategically integrating CBID into several initiatives currently underway
- Promoting strategies for a more vibrant, clean and safe pedestrian experience
- Advocating for enhanced streetscape, landscape and street design
- Exploring strategies for enhanced mobility, transit and parking options
- Traffic calming options

### ACTION STRATEGIES:

#### A. Influence Existing Initiatives

There are several initiatives currently underway that will have a significant impact on the East Colfax corridor and CBID in the near term. All the studies are being coordinated through the Office of Public Works (PW) and/or the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) and include:

- An allocation of approximately \$3 million in Build a Better Denver bonds for streetscape improvements
- A \$4.3 million State Senate Bill-1 (SB-1) allocation for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study and implementation and improvements for the 15L regional bus service, including advanced technologies, queue jumping, travel time reduction and increased safety and security for a line running from Downtown Denver to the Fitzsimmons campus
- An allocation of approximately \$500,000 for a Colfax streetcar study
- The Colfax Street Design Guidelines, which are currently being finalized

- The Living Streets Initiative (LSI) which is a joint PW/CPD effort to create a model for multi-modal streets that increase a street's carrying capacity, decrease car use and encourage better land use along commercial corridors. CBID should monitor the progress of the LSI and encourage its application on the Colfax corridor once the Initiative has been finalized.

CBID should work closely with PW and CPD to ensure it is an integral part of all of the studies and initiatives currently underway to guarantee these efforts are well leveraged and the sequencing of the improvements is logical by:

- Identifying District-wide design and engineering strategies to address flood plain and accessibility issues so that plans for new development along the corridor aren't compromised or terminated due to engineering challenges discovered at the end of a planning process
- Identifying stakeholders who have technical expertise to be part of standing committee(s) to work with city agencies on bond, streetscape and transportation projects
- Identifying ways to leverage bond and other monies through grants, loans or other capital resources
- Ensuring improvements are coordinated and logically sequenced so that one project doesn't undo the good work of a previous or successive project
- Implementing the street design guidelines currently being developed by PW and reward developers or business owners who choose to employ the new guidelines through incentives that could include reduced permitting fees, fast tracking permitting or other incentives that might be appropriate

## B. Public Realm

A clean, safe and vibrant pedestrian experience and consistent design along the corridor were stakeholders' highest priorities, expressed both in the surveys and in the interviews and group meetings. As the design, transportation and capital projects get underway, CBID should ensure the following issues are addressed:

- ***Pedestrian Experience:*** Frequently mentioned aspects of an improved pedestrian environment include more trees, wider sidewalks and better lighting which should be part of all new development as it occurs. The Colfax Street Design Guidelines (anticipated to be finalized within the next several weeks) advocate for streetscape improvements to be implemented as development occurs. Maps and draft recommendations are available at: <http://www.denvergov.org/Infrastructure/ColfaxDesignGuidelinesDocument/tabid/388454/Default.aspx>
- ***Cleaner:*** Stakeholder outreach clearly indicates that maintaining and improving the cleanliness of the District is key to its success. CBID currently funds a basic maintenance contract, but limited funds mean current maintenance levels can't be effectively expanded. To address this issue effectively, two actions are recommended:
  - **Stabilize budget allocation for cleaning and maintenance:** The board has been inconsistent in its maintenance funding and needs to reach consensus about what the annual allocation should be. Once decided, this funding should remain consistent.

- **Advocate for Stronger City Partnership:** A stronger, defined relationship with the City could be explored to tackle the cleanliness issues and provide comprehensive cleaning. Work toward creating a baseline services agreement with the Department of Public Works.
- **Safer.** Ensuring a sense of safety in the district also rated as a high priority and is critical to the success of the corridor. Suggestions for a safer environment include:
  - Continue to utilize video cameras as a crime deterrent
  - Work more closely with District 6 Police generally to determine areas of need and emphasis and how the BID can partner and support District 6. CBID should also work with District 6 in the safe design of existing buildings or as buildings are renovated or built to employ safety through design (SEPTED) standards
  - Work closely with Neighbors on the Hill and other community stakeholders to more effectively employ Community and Business Watch Programs
- **Transit/Parking/Mobility.** CBID should take full advantage of Colfax's designation as an enhanced transit corridor, high transit ridership and high density through:
  - **Streetcar/BRT:** Position CBID as an integral part of all processes related to BRT and streetcar
  - **Parking District:** CBID should consider partnering with other BIDs and business groups (perhaps through the recently formed Business District Alliance) in the City to advocate for establishing parking districts that would allow a percentage of parking revenue generated in a specific district to stay in that district. Revenues could be used for enhanced parking options, amenities, maintenance, or related activities
  - **Strategic Parking Options:** CBID could also explore identifying strategic parking reservoirs, and shared parking opportunities for visitors and employees
  - **Bike Lane/Bike Racks:** Establishing a bike lane was frequently mentioned as a priority from stakeholders. Current conditions discourage biking along the corridor. As BRT and streetcar studies unfold, CBID should advocate for a bike lane on Colfax, or alternatively, work with the City to ensure the 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue bike path be maintained and striped regularly and be more visible and accessible to Colfax bike traffic through better signage. New bike racks should be installed to accommodate existing and future needs.
  - **Bus shelters:** Frequently mentioned as unclean, unsafe, and a significant barrier to adjacent businesses, CBID should work with the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to coordinate better design and maintenance of all bus shelters along the corridor
- **Traffic Calming.** With 31,500 vehicles travelling the corridor on weekdays, traffic calming strategies are critical to enhancing the pedestrian experience. Traffic calming was frequently mentioned as a priority among stakeholders. Strategies include:
  - **Pedestrian Crossing Lights:** Advocate for Denver to create its own policies that direct the placement and spacing of pedestrian and traffic light placement to replace the current Federal Guidelines under the Manual of Urban Traffic Control Devices (or MUTCD). Work with traffic engineering to decrease the time for a pedestrian signal to be activated once the cross button has been pressed.

- **Utilize Design and Materials to Slow Traffic:** As new development occurs, CBID should work with both the public and private sectors to encourage design elements and materials to reduce traffic speed.
- **Curb Cut Elimination:** An abundance of curb cuts along the corridor inhibit orderly traffic flow and reduce parking availability (each curb cut eliminates 2 to 3 parking spaces).
- **Street Medians:** The Colfax Street Design Guidelines call for concrete center medians in places along the corridor. CBID should work with Public Works to ensure the medians are landscaped by the City when they are installed, if CBID agrees to maintain them.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Office of Public Works, Community Planning and Development	Work with PW on all aspects of public right-of way enhancements; bond allocation; streetcar and BRT studies, and implementation of Colfax Street Design Guidelines; Community Planning on facilitating new development along the corridor and in the District, and to remain apprised of planning efforts that could benefit the corridor such as the Living Streets Initiative and the Strategic Parking Plan
City Council Districts 8 & 10	To advocate for implementation of Street Design Guidelines, Denver home rule authority over pedestrian crossing policies and supporting the formation of a parking district
Developers	Work with developers to acquire right of way for wider sidewalk and to install design treatments and pedestrian amenities as new development occurs
Police District 6	Work with District 6 on crime reduction strategies, SEPTED implementation
Greenprint Denver	Work with Greenprint to leverage tree planting efforts along the corridor and in the District
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (CHUN), Neighbors on the Hill (NOH), Colfax on the Hill (COH)	Work with neighborhood and Colfax advocates on community based crime watch programs and general advocacy for an improved public realm
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)	Coordinate with CDOT to leverage any maintenance or design projects; determine if there is any grant or funding opportunities for street enhancements or pedestrian crossings
RTD	Coordinate with RTD to create a plan to redesign and maintain bus shelters

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

In order for CBID to maximize its influence and create a strong communication network, it will be essential to bring together a strategic partnership to advocate for programs, policies and resources to enhance the corridor and the District. Once developed, a communication and advocacy strategy needs to be implemented.

Through its organizational capacity and reliable funding, CBID is uniquely positioned to facilitate a coordinated approach among the many Colfax focused business and community groups to ensure the healthy and cooperative development of the corridor. Suggestions for a communications and advocacy program are outlined below:

### A. CBID Communication

CBID should take a proactive approach in engaging all of its potential public and private-sector partners. Recommendations include:

- **“Colfax Collaborative”**: There are several organizations that support and promote East Colfax from the CBID east to Aurora. Additionally, the City of Denver is embarking on several initiatives that will have a significant impact on all the Colfax advocacy groups, residents, visitors and transit riders. CBID should consider coordinating a “Colfax Collaborative” in order to bring together City Departments (PW, OED, and CPD), City Council Representatives, COTH, Bluebird District, Greek Town, the FAX, and any other appropriate organizations to participate in an on-going dialog about:
  - How to effectively address common issues affecting Colfax \
  - Determine if there is a logical role for each organization to take on to avoid duplicative efforts among the various groups
  - Determine how to leverage and support each group’s efforts through greater collaboration and communication.
- **Monthly coffee roundtable chats** with BID business and property owners. In order to stay in touch with its ratepayers, the CBID Economic Development Director along with a board member should host a regularly scheduled, informal meeting with 6 to 8 business and property owners to discuss issues, concerns and opportunities in the District and how CBID can effectively address them.
- **Developers Forum**: In order to highlight available properties, spaces, and development opportunities, CBID, in cooperation with OED, should host an annual developer’s forum. The forum can also educate developers and business owners about CBID and its renewed emphasis on economic development, and its resources and ability to facilitate processes with the City and others.
- **Web site**: As the new web site comes on line, it should be used to communicate with ratepayers about new businesses, developments, programs, meetings and issues effecting Colfax.

- **Street Presence:** CBID should reintroduce itself to its ratepayers through a highly visible presence by an Economic Development Director who is out and about on the street, introducing him/herself and getting acquainted with business and property owners and hearing their concerns.
- **Life on Capitol Hill:** CBID should consider reinstating its page in *Life on Capitol Hill* to acquaint residents and the greater Capitol Hill community with efforts CBID is spearheading.
- **Build relationships:** CBID should be proactive in getting to know and meeting with City Staff from Planning, PW, OED, City Council, Council aides and others.

## B. Advocacy

Stakeholders clearly feel that the CBID should be positioned as a strong advocate that can provide visionary leadership and a unified, influential voice for East Colfax. The CBID's advocacy efforts should be focused on advancing strategic issues that affect the corridor, and on serving as a liaison between the public and private sectors. Recommendations for strengthening CBID's advocacy role include:

- Focus on issues and policies that affect the collective interests of East Colfax
- Ensure the outcomes of CBID planning efforts provide consensus and direction for future public and private investment and direct advocacy efforts around top priorities including:
  - Public Realm & Mobility
  - Bond Money allocation: CBID should collaborate with the City and other Colfax organizations to ensure the bond money is highly leveraged before it is expended
  - Regulatory issues as they arise
  - Any issue or resource allocation that affects the district in any way

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Partners to advocate for the corridor include City departments - specifically Public Works, Economic Development and Planning - City Council, COTH, Bluebird District, Greek Town, the Fax and other appropriate organizations focused on Colfax issues.

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

To be an effective leader and advocate, CBID needs to revamp its organizational structure to be more nimble and responsive to the myriad forces affecting the District. Recommendations include:

- Recruit an Economic Development Director (EDD)
- Determine whether there is a need for additional resources and/or support for the EDD
- Determine future role for RS Wells, CBID Management Company
- Create board committees
- Create Task Force Committees
- Nurture New Leadership
- Open Store Front Office

### ACTION STRATEGIES:

#### A. Recruit an Economic Development Director

In order to carry out the new CBID work plan and re-establish the BID as a leader in implementing policies and programs that advance the best interests of Colfax, it is recommended a full-time EDD be hired. The EDD will work closely with the CBID board to carry out policies as directed by the board.

The ideal EDD should be someone who:

- Understands the complexities of leading an effort with several moving parts
- Can facilitate a process that is inclusive and results-oriented
- Is proactive and resourceful
- An exceptional communicator and consensus builder
- Committed and passionate
- Understands the recommendations in this plan, that the economic health of the corridor requires attention to economic development activities *in conjunction with* a vital pedestrian realm, including a clean and safe environment, communications and rate payer engagement

The EDD should be responsible for the following:

1. Coordinating and implementing the new CBID work program
2. Reaching out to ratepayers to understand needs and issues and how CBID can be the most effective in achieving their goals and vision for the street
3. Creating partnerships with City Staff, City Council, CDOT, RTD, other Colfax focused organizations
4. Meeting with prospective Colfax business owners and developers
5. Developing and promoting a Colfax Vision
6. Overseeing contracts
7. Determining whether he/she needs staff or contract administrative assistance

It is common practice in small BIDs to support a full-time staff person with additional staff or contract resources to assist with administrative and special project tasks. Examples of tasks CBID may need additional help with include:

1. Maintaining and updating the web site
2. Coordinating and documenting information about property and business ownership in the district
3. Compiling market data and creating maps for a variety of purposes

4. Administrative tasks such as answering phone calls, responding to emails and inquiries about CBID, mailings to constituents
5. Coordinating meetings
6. Becoming familiar with and carrying out legal requirements of posting meetings, taking minutes and adhering to laws and regulations applying to BIDs
7. General support to the EDD and the board as needed

CBID should determine if there are viable partners with whom CBID could work out a contractual relationship to handle the administrative tasks associated with having staff such as payroll, health insurance, retirement fund and other potential benefits. Potential partners could include:

- Downtown Denver Partnership
- Cherry Creek North BID
- North East Denver Housing

Additional administrative considerations include:

- Utilizing interns from CU's graduate programs in planning and public administration to work on specific projects, research and/or community outreach
- Determine whether to continue to outsource services such as accounting

#### **B. Determine Future Role of RS Wells:**

The CBID board needs to consider what, if any, role RS Wells should fill once CBID staff has been hired. Possibilities include:

- Maintain RS Wells for administrative and programmatic support
- Maintain RS Wells exclusively for state legal compliance such as noticing, posting, annual reporting and other issues surrounding legal compliance
- Have CBID staff assume current RS Wells duties and responsibilities

#### **C. Create Committees and Task Forces**

Committees and task forces should be formed to address and implement specific recommendations of this report and are recommended to be board-led, with broad-based participation from property and business owners throughout the BID. They could include:

- Economic Development Committee to work with the Economic Development Director to implement the economic development program
- Vibrant Public Realm Committee to ensure the priorities expressed by the Board and stakeholders are carried out
- Mobility and Transportation Committee to work with the City on upcoming initiatives

#### **D. Nurturing the Next Generation of Leadership**

The CBID board should nurture new leadership through task force participation, outreach and partnerships. Several survey respondents indicated they were interested in volunteering with CBID, and those individuals should be considered for future leadership roles as well.

## E. New CBID Storefront Office

CBID should consider moving from its current office location to an office located on Colfax. A visible, accessible office would:

- Promote the goals of the renewed work program
- Integrate CBID more fully into the community
- Create an attractive, inviting place for business, property owners and developers to come to get information about the corridor

The office is envisioned as a place anybody interested in promoting the healthy development of the street could come. It would promote the notion of a “Colfax Marketing Suite” outlined in the Economic Development section of this report. The office would have maps, property information, marketing collateral and ideally, meeting space large enough for group meetings. The EDD and board should work together to determine if any existing or potential developments could offer free or reduced rental space.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET

*Recommendations for YEAR ONE* of a redefined CBID includes:

Task	Timing	Responsibility
Develop an Economic Development Director Hiring Committee	3 months	Board
Recruit an Economic Development Director	3 months	Board Hiring Committee
Identify new office space	3-9 months	Economic Development Director
Begin outreach to business and property owners and other Colfax advocacy groups	6-12months	Economic Development Director/Board Members
Determine CBID Role in City Initiatives (BRT, Streetcar, bond allocation)	6-12 months	Economic Development Director/Board
Economic Development: Begin to acquire and document property information; initiate Colfax marketing and education efforts	6-12 months	Economic Development Director and/or graduate school interns
Update Maintenance Contract	6-12 months	Board/Economic Development Director
Create committees, task forces	6-12 months	Board/Economic Development Director

*A suggested YEAR ONE CBID Budget* based upon the foregoing is outlined below:

Program Activity – 2009	Cost
Economic Development Director	\$65,000 to \$80,000 salary + \$13,000 to \$16,000 taxes and insurance = \$78,000 to \$96,000
Assistant: TBD (Contract or Staff, FT or PT)	\$0 to \$40,000 salary + \$0 to \$8,000 taxes and insurance \$0 to \$48,000
Rent	\$15,000 to \$18,0000
Office equipment (computers, software, phone, etc.,)	\$10,000
Insurance, Accounting, Legal, internet hosting	\$10,000
Meeting Expenses	\$5,000
Economic Development Programming	\$10,000 to \$25,000
Video cameras	\$5,000
Maintenance Contract	\$115,000
<b>TOTAL YEAR ONE</b>	<b>\$248,000 to \$332,000</b>

**Recommendations for YEAR TWO include:**

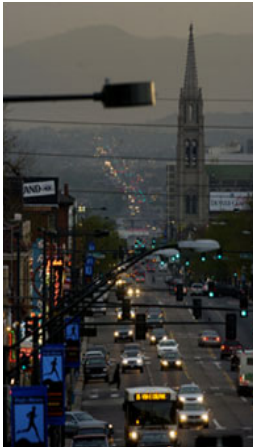
<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Continue outreach and coordination with Colfax stakeholders, including informal meetings, coffee chats and “Colfax Collaborative” meetings to be responsive to challenges and capitalize on common opportunities such as parking districts, CDC and or TIF exploration, potential for additional pedestrian crossings, etc.	Board/Economic Development Director
Hold developers forum	Economic Development Director
Develop business retention/recruitment program; coordinate creation of marketing materials; promote business planning, other types of support to existing and prospective businesses; Become acquainted with loan programs and incentives	Economic Development Director
Document space availability; continue to maintain updated property information	Graduate Interns
Active on BRT, Streetcar and bond money allocation efforts	Board/Economic Development Director
Work with District 6 Police on crime mitigation strategies, explore the use of SEPTED	Economic Development Director
Create District maps for a variety of purposes including development opportunities, assemblages, ownership, etc.,	Economic Development Director
Nurture next generation of leadership through formal/informal meetings, committees, task forces	Board/Economic Development Director

**Recommendations for year 3 include:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Continue outreach and coordination with Colfax stakeholders; Refine approaches as needed	Board/Economic Development Director
Hold developers forum	Economic Development Director
Continue to coordinate efforts to form CDCs and/or TIF District	Economic Development Director
Refine economic development programming	Economic Development Director
Respond to outcomes of BRT, street car, Living Streets and bond allocation efforts	Board/Economic Development Director
Maintain and update property information	Economic Development Director
Be responsive and nimble; adjust approaches as necessary	Board/Economic Development Director

## Economic Profile

**Background.** Denver's founding in 1850 brought countless prospectors searching for gold. Colfax Avenue, originally called Golden Road and Grand Avenue was the major artery linking the miners to the riches of the Rocky Mountains. Colfax Avenue underwent yet another name change in honor of Schuyler Colfax, Indiana congressman, Speaker of the House of Representatives and United States Vice President under Ulysses S. Grant. Colfax Avenue, also known as U.S. Highway 40 as it passes through the Denver metropolitan area, is the longest continuous commercial street in the United States, said to be the "Gateway to the Rockies" as it moves from the eastern plains to the mountains.



East Colfax Avenue

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mansions and trees lined the avenue and the streets of wealthy neighborhoods adjacent to Colfax. Rail lines pushed suburban growth to Aurora in the east and Lakewood in the west, making Colfax one of Denver's most desirable addresses. Colfax has always served as a major transportation corridor, transitioning from a dirt road to a busy trolley route and an urban transit corridor. The completion of Interstate 70 in the early 1960s pulled travelers and their business away from Highway 40, propelling the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods into declining districts marked by vacant hotels, vacant lots and failed businesses. In the early 2000s, East Colfax began a renewal due to the efforts of the City of Denver, citizen groups, business owners and developers.

Colfax Avenue (Highway 40) extends 26.8 miles through the region, stopping where the road meets Interstate 70 at both ends in Aurora and Lakewood (Figure 1).

Figure 1  
Colfax Avenue, Colorado - Regional Setting

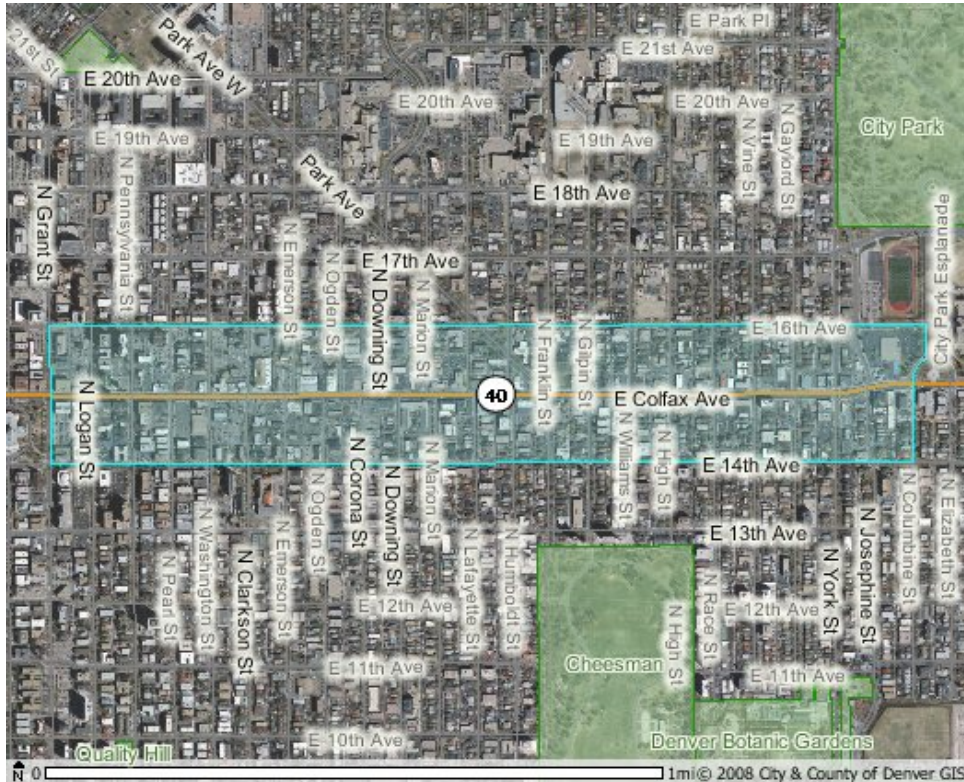
source: Colorado Directory



The Colfax Business Improvement District (CBD) boundaries are East 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north, Columbine Street on the east, East 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south and Grant Street on the west (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**  
**Colfax Business Improvement District Boundary**

source: [www.denvergov.org](http://www.denvergov.org)



An analysis of the demographic composition of area residents, visitors and employees provides the most accurate description of the target markets that will be generating the demand for the business products and services in the corridor. The following analysis is based upon data compiled from the City of Denver's statistical neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the East Colfax Avenue corridor. The neighborhoods include North Capitol Hill, City Park West, City Park, Capitol Hill, Cheesman Park and Congress Park, wherein reside a market that lives within a ten-to fifteen minute walking distance of the commercial corridor (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
**Study Area – East Colfax Avenue Corridor and Surrounding Neighborhoods**

source: [www.denvergov.org](http://www.denvergov.org)



**Residents.** Population estimates for the overall study area show a 7.2% decline between 2000 and 2006, compared to the City population, which grew by 4.6% during the same period. A sizeable low-income housing development in North Capitol Hill was demolished and is currently being rebuilt to house a variety of income levels. Population densities in the Capitol Hill and Cheesman Park neighborhoods are some of the highest in the City of Denver. Study area households increased as persons per household decreased during the same period. 7.6% of study area households were families with children, according to the 2000 Census (Figure 4).

sources: State Demography Office, Census 2000, DRCOG

**Figure 4**  
**Populations and Households: Study Area and the City of Denver, Percent Change 2000 - 2006**

sources: DRCOG, U.S. Census, Colorado State Demographer

	Study Area		City of Denver	
	2006	% Change	2006	% Change
Population 2006*	40,896	-7.2%	580,223	+4.6%
Households 2006	28,884	+4.5%	254,897	+6.5%
Average Household Size	1.5	-6.7%	2.24	-1.3%

\*July 1, 2006 estimates

Study area households are smaller in comparison to those of the City of Denver, and 13.1% of study area residents were Hispanic, compared to 31.7% of the City population (Figure 5).

**Figure 5**  
**2000 Demographic Summary: Study Area\***

source: Census 2000

Population	Households	Average Household Size	Race and Ethnicity					
			White	Black	American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other	Hispanic Origin
		1.6	11,255	764	150	435	1,120	1,963
		<i>percent of total</i>	<b>75.1%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>
44,075	27,643							

\*most recent data available

The 2000 Census reports that study area residents tended to be younger than overall residents of the City, with 32.1% in the 25- to 34-year age cohort (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**  
**2000 Age Distribution: Study Area\***

sources: Census 2000

	Study Area	City of Denver
under 18 years	7.9%	20.7%
18 to 24 years	12.7%	10.7%
25 to 34 years	32.1%	20.5%
35 to 44 years	17.3%	15.6%
45 to 54 years	13.9%	12.8%
55 to 64 years	7.2%	7.2%
65 years and over	8.8%	11.3%

\*most recent data available

### Historic Neighborhoods.



The six neighborhoods that surround the East Colfax Avenue corridor - North Capitol Hill, City Park West, City Park, Capitol Hill, Cheesman Park and Congress Park, are among Denver's oldest residential areas. On the west, the study area is adjacent to the Civic Center Complex, which spurred early residential, commercial and public construction through the construction of the State Capitol during the late 1800s. By the 1930s the formerly "fashionable" Capitol Hill and Cheesman Park neighborhoods had moved from well-balanced single-family home and apartment districts to converted homes and small and large apartment building districts, which currently contain some of the highest population densities in the City of Denver.

The neighborhoods contain sixteen Historic Landmark Districts, which aid in preservation of City history and character. Significant historic developments including hospital facilities built on Denver's turn of the century reputation as a health-care center, public schools, parks and parkways, attractions like the Denver Zoo, the Colorado Museum of Natural History, Molly Brown House Museum and facilities such as the Denver Turnverine, Ogden Theater, Bluebird Theatre, Mammoth Gardens and the Temple Emanuel which are now used as performance venues can be found throughout the various neighborhoods.

**For Sale Housing Activity.** Figure 7 illustrates housing sales activity for three of the study area neighborhoods. From January 1 to December 31, 2007, the average sale price of a Denver metro area single family detached home fell 2% from 2006 to \$311,000.

**Figure 7**  
**For Sale Housing Activity:**  
**Selected Study Area Neighborhoods\*, 2006 - 2007**

*sources: Metrolist MLS Service, Denver Post*

	Cheesman Park**	City Park West	Congress Park
2007 Average Sale Price	\$869,296	\$340,950	\$407,608
Price Change From 2006	+54.1%	+3.0%	-2.2%
Days on Market	95	90	63
Number of Sales	23	53	151
Foreclosures/Short Sales	17.4%	18.9%	11.9%

*\*\*Information not available for all Denver statistical neighborhoods*

*\*\*\*one high or low sales price in neighborhoods with less than 30 sales in one year could adversely skew the numbers*

The collapse of the subprime lending market continued to help drive former homeowners into rental housing during 2007. Denver rental vacancy rates fell from 10% during third quarter 2003 to 5.7% in third quarter 2007. The Denver metropolitan area average rental vacancy rate for third quarter 2007 was 5.3%. Third quarter 2007 average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the market area north of East Colfax Avenue was \$850, and the average rent for the market area south of East Colfax Avenue was \$846. 2005 DRCOG estimates reported that there were 30,912 housing units within the study area, and the 2005 vacancy rate for all study area housing types was 7.1% (Figure 8).

*sources: Denver Metro Area Apartment Vacancy and Rent Study, Colorado Division of Housing, March 2008, DRCOG*

**Figure 8**  
**2000 Housing Characteristics: Study Area\***

*source: Census 2000*

	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Percent Owner-Occupied
Study Area	29,616	27,643	24.3%
City of Denver	251,435	239,235	52.5%

*\*most recent data available*

**Current Study Area Development.** Several study area neighborhoods; in particular North Capitol Hill and City Park West have been undergoing steady residential infill development since 2000. The availability of vacant or underutilized lots generated through the demolition of historic housing stock in anticipation of more high rise development and parking during the 1970s and 1980s created numerous opportunities for infill. Between 2000 and 2007, roughly 2,150 housing units were built. With the exception of a 700-unit apartment complex in North Capitol Hill, the majority of all units are for-sale condominiums. As of January, 2008, more than 300 residential units are under construction and over 640 units are planned. 96,000 square feet of retail space in mixed-use developments and 245,000 square feet of office/bank space were built in the study area between 2000 and 2007. 20,000 square feet of office space is planned for the study area.

## East Colfax Avenue Current Development

**Argonaut Building** - 40,000 square feet of retail space is under construction on East Colfax Avenue and Clarkson Street. <sup>1</sup>

**Renaissance Uptown Lofts** at East Colfax Avenue and Pearl Street will include 99 apartments and about 8,000 square feet of retail. The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, which is the developer for the project, helps people who are chronically homeless move into stable, permanent housing. <sup>2</sup>



Utopia Flats c. 1902

**Utopia Flats** at 420-444 East Colfax will be the “green” historic redevelopment of a former luxury apartment building that was converted to retail and office uses in 1936. The building’s upper floors have been vacant for 25 years, and will be returned to residential and retail uses. <sup>3</sup>



Lowenstein Theater

Immediately to the east of the CBID boundary, the historic **Lowenstein Theater** at 2526 East Colfax is a \$16 million redevelopment that opened in 2006. It is a 56,400 square feet cultural destination with major local independent retailers including a bookstore, music store and a cinema/cafe. <sup>4</sup>

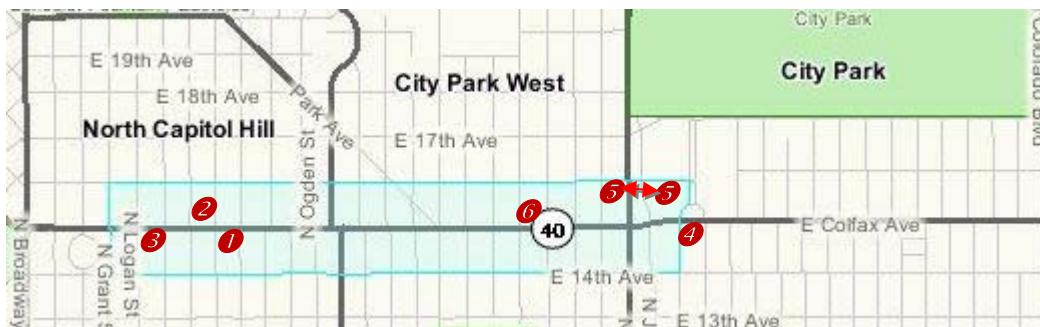
**Church in the City Site.** The existing church will be relocated to a restored historic synagogue building at East 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Gaylord Street. The current church site at 1530 Josephine Street is proposed as a residential-retail complex. One developer will coordinate the relocation, restoration and development of both projects. <sup>5</sup>

Other recent developments along East Colfax Avenue include The Gathering Place, a women’s shelter at High Street <sup>6</sup> and a FirstBank branch location at Franklin Street <sup>7</sup> (Figure 9).

*sources: denverinfill.com, Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc.*

## Figure 9 East Colfax Avenue Current Development

*sources: denverinfill.com, Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc.*



**Commercial Lease Rates.** The Colfax Business District and immediately adjacent areas contain nine major office buildings (excluding government uses) with over 750,000 square feet of space. First quarter, 2008 full service office lease rates for the Capitol Hill submarket averaged \$18.54, with a vacancy rate of 16.4%. The average retail lease rate for first quarter 2008 was \$15.86, with a 7.5% vacancy rate for the Central submarket.\*

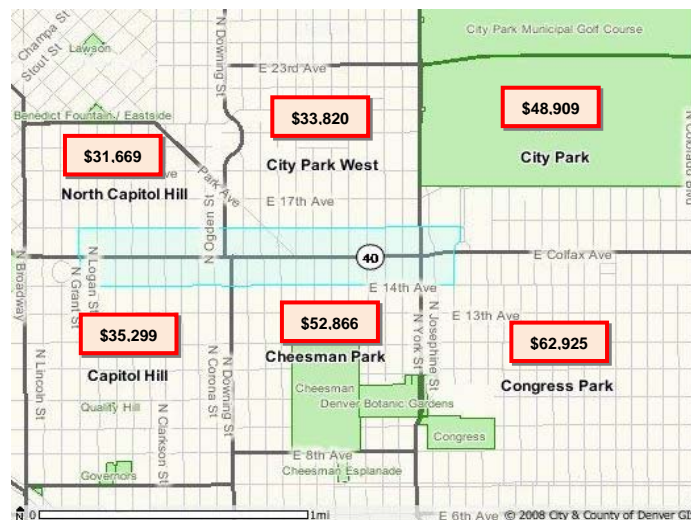
*sources: Black’s Guide, CBRE\**

**Education.** 1,206 study area students were enrolled in Denver Public Schools (DPS) grades 1 through 12 during the 2006 - 2007 school year. 2001 study area students' public school enrollment reached 1,617 in 2001, and then declined by 24% during 2002 to 1,229 students. Within the study area, an elementary school recently closed and students were reassigned after an extensive reform process by DPS. The study area is currently home to a K-8 school, one elementary school and one high school. Post secondary, vocational and technical education programs are offered at several nearby facilities; major universities are within a brief commute. East High School and the Colorado Free University, a continuing education facility is located on East Colfax Avenue. According to the 2000 Census, 46% of study area residents attained a bachelor's degree or higher level of education, compared to 34.5% of all Denver residents.

**Income.** According to the American Community Survey, the 2006 Denver average household income was \$59,590 compared to the 2000 average household income of \$55,129. 2000 average household income estimates for the study area ranged from \$31,669 in North Capitol Hill to \$62,925 in the Congress Park neighborhood (Figure 10).  
*source: U.S. Bureau of the Census*

**Figure 10**  
**2000 Average Household Income by Study Area Neighborhood\***

*source: 2000 Census*



\*most recent data available

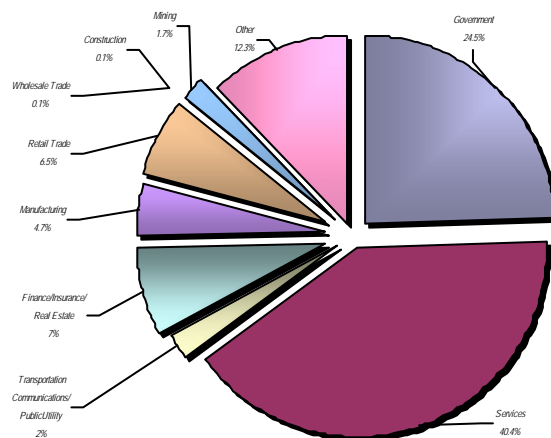
**Figure 11**  
**2002 Study Area Employment Distribution**

*source: DRCOG*

**Employment.** Metro Denver's unemployment rate rose from 4.3 percent in April to 4.7% in May 2008 as labor markets in each of the region's seven counties weakened. On a year-to-date basis, unemployment rates were highest in Adams (5.2%) and Denver (5.1%) Counties, and rates in the remaining five counties ranged from 3.9% to 4.6%.

In 2002, the largest industry employment sectors within the study area were services (40% of total employment) and government (24.2%). More than 64,000 workers were employed within the study area, with over half situated in the North Capitol Hill neighborhood. Health services, government, finance/insurance/real estate and retail trade accounted for the majority of area employment (Figure 11).

*sources: DRCOG, Metro Denver EDC*



**Study Area Amenities.** The study area has more than 650 rooms in four hotels and seven historic bed and breakfast inns. Attractions include a variety of museums, four parks and a botanic gardens, and performance facilities (Figure 12).

**Figure 12  
Study Area Amenities**

*sources: various*

**Parks.** Cheesman Park, Congress Park, Governor’s Park and City Park.

**City Park Facilities.** The Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Gates Planetarium, IMAX Theater, Denver Zoo and City Park Golf Course.

**Civic Center Area.** Located west of the study area are the Denver Public Library, the State Capitol, City and County Building, the and the U.S. Mint.

**Museums.** Molly Brown House Museum, the Byers Evans House Museum, Colorado State History Museum, Denver Art Museum.

**Performance and Event Venues.** The Fillmore, Denver Turnverein, Ogden Theater, Temple Events Center, 1770 Sherman Event Center Complex (El Jebel Shrine).

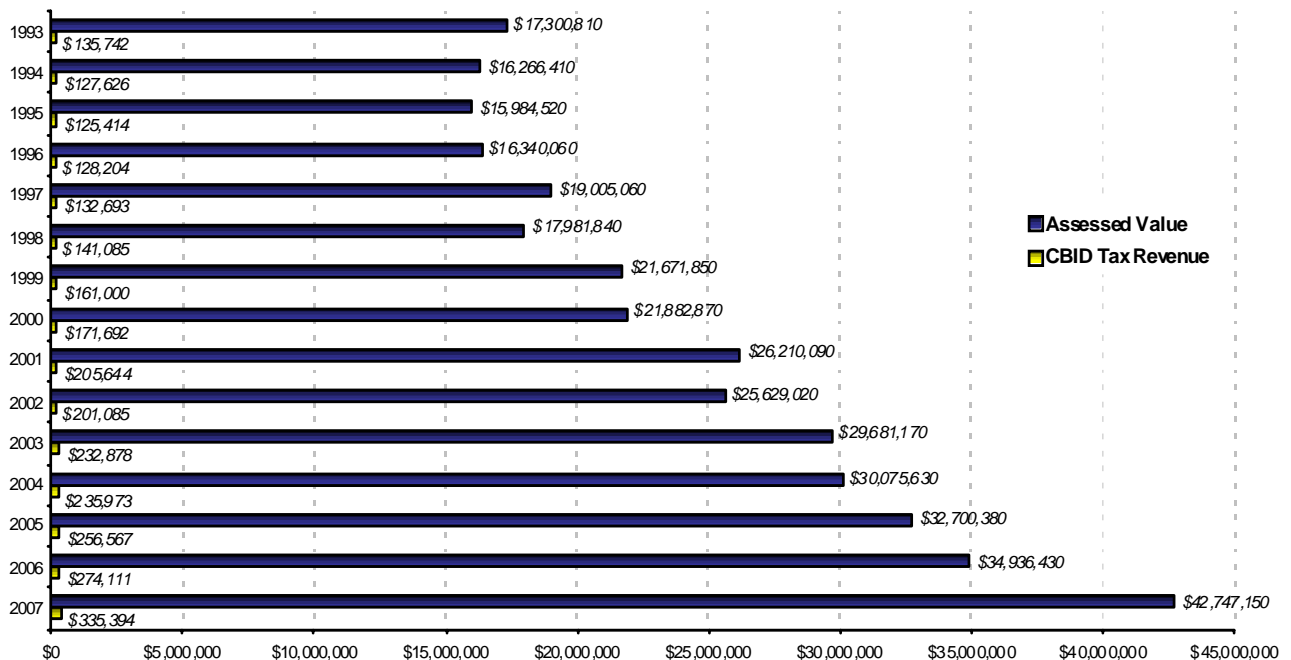
**Denver Botanic Gardens.** At 23-acres, one of the largest and most visited botanical gardens in the United States.

**Lowenstein Theatre Complex.** Located to the east of the study area, a cultural destination with major local independent retailers including a bookstore, music store and a cinema/cafe.

**Special District Assessed Value.** The Colfax Business Improvement District (CBID) was originally organized as the Colfax on the Hill Business Improvement District in 1989. Assessed value for the district increased by more than 250% between 1993 and 2007, and the current mill levy is 7.846 (Figure 13).

**Figure 13  
Assessed Value and Tax Revenues  
1993 to 2007: Colfax Business Improvement District**

*source: Denver Assessor’s Office*



**Retail.** The East Colfax Avenue corridor between Broadway and Columbine Street, East 16<sup>th</sup> and East 14<sup>th</sup> Avenues contains roughly 160 retail businesses including a variety of restaurants, home furnishings, book and music stores, specialty shops and retail services (Figure 14).

*sources: colfaxave.com, P.U.M.A.*

**Figure 14**  
**Existing Retail Along the East Colfax Corridor**

*source: colfaxave.com*

	Quantity
Food and Beverage Stores	6
Eating and Drinking Places	46
Home Furnishings/Furniture	9
Apparel and Accessories/Services	13
Leisure and Recreation	13
Health/Personal Care/Fitness	27
Automotive Sales/Aftermarket/Gas Stations	13
Used and Vintage Goods	5
Miscellaneous	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>

**Access.** Colfax Avenue (Highway 40) extends 26.8 miles through downtown Denver and the region, stopping where the road meets Interstate 70 at both ends in Aurora and Lakewood. Colfax intersects Interstate 25 to the west of Downtown Denver, and is adjacent to light rail and downtown mall shuttle stations.

**Commuter Transit Service.** East Colfax Avenue has been a transit corridor hosting different types of transit technology for many years. Currently, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) routes 15 and 15 Limited routes serve Colfax Avenue from downtown Denver to the Eastern edges of Aurora. The corridor has the highest ridership of all RTD routes with 23,000 to 24,000 boardings per day along the entire route. Approximately 16,000 passengers board and alight along East Colfax Avenue between Broadway and Josephine Streets on a daily (weekday) basis. East High School and Auraria Campus sessions cause ridership to fluctuate through the year.

*source: RTD Ridecheck Plus, January 2008*

**Traffic.** By studying traffic patterns in conjunction with nearby employment, education and retail centers, it is possible to reveal additional commercial uses that may be supported simply by drive-by traffic. Traffic counts were conducted by the City of Denver on weekdays during June 2000 and 2005, and September 2003 and 2005. Traffic volumes listed in this report are the total vehicles in both directions, measured in a 24-hour period. The East Colfax Avenue corridor averages annual daily traffic counts of 31,500 vehicles per day within the CBID. Additional counts are available for Logan Street and Columbine Street, which cross East Colfax Avenue in the CBID (Figures 15 and 16).

**Figure 15**  
**East Colfax Avenue Traffic Analysis** *(counts taken June 2000 and 2005, and September 2003 and 2005)*

*source: City of Denver*



**Figure 16**  
**East Colfax Avenue Traffic Analysis** (counts taken June 2000 and 2005, and September 2003 and 2005)

source: City of Denver

East Colfax Avenue @	24-Hour Traffic Volumes
West of Grant Street	34,703
West of Washington Street	29,841
West of York Street	30,082
<b>Average Traffic Volume</b>	<b>31,542</b>

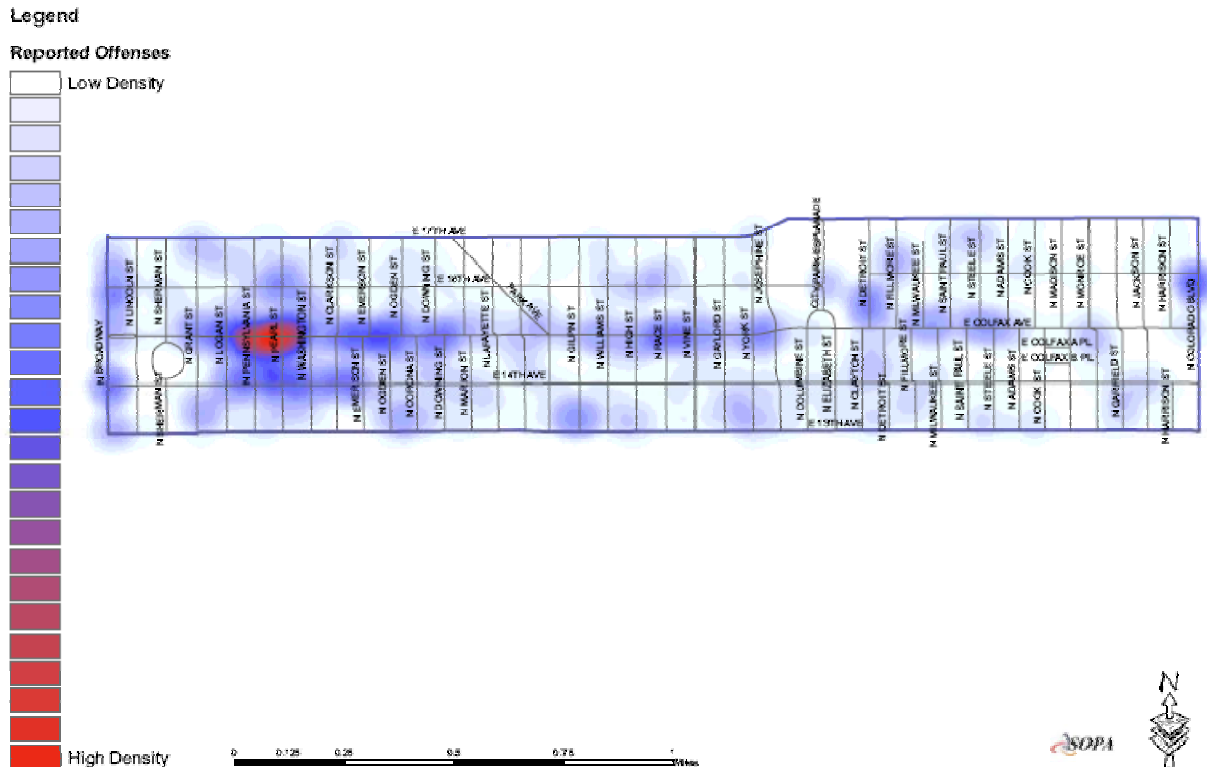
  

	24-Hour Traffic Volumes
Logan Street, northbound at East Colfax (one way street)	6,055
Columbine Street @ East Colfax	1,624

**Crime.** During 2007, 1,687 offenses were reported along the East Colfax Avenue corridor. The corridor is bounded by 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Broadway, 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Part I crimes against property (burglary, theft, arson) accounted for 47.8% of total crimes in the corridor. Theft (except from motor vehicles) accounted for 16.3% of crimes in the area. Part I crimes against persons accounted for 11.8% of the crimes in the area. Crimes were concentrated along East Colfax Avenue between Logan and Washington Streets (Figure 17).

**Figure 17**  
**East Colfax Avenue: 2007 Reported Offenses**

source: City of Denver



## Summary.

- ✧ Colfax Avenue has been and will continue to be a major transit corridor for its surrounding neighborhoods and the region, its strong traffic and transit counts supply visibility for businesses located along the corridor.
- ✧ East Colfax Avenue is surrounded by a highly educated, income-diverse population that is the densest in the metropolitan area.
- ✧ Study area employment is centered in the North Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill and City Park West neighborhoods.
- ✧ East Colfax Avenue connects a study area that is rich in historic amenities, neighborhoods and attractions.
- ✧ Within the study area, crime decreased by 20.3% for crimes against persons and decreased by 13.9% for crimes against properties between 2006 and 2007
- ✧ Current study area development has begun to focus on the East Colfax Avenue corridor.
- ✧ The assessed value of properties within the Colfax Business Improvement District increased by more than 250% within the last 15 years.