

Introduction – Part I

Purpose of this Document:

- From the onset, this plan had two central objectives: It was not only intended to function as a framework to codify and advance a unifying community vision, but also—practically speaking—it was to demonstrate to those looking to invest along West Colfax that we could create momentum, were well organized, and could rally around projects aligned with our vision.

In 2014, spurred on by other ongoing community planning effort, a collection of engaged citizens convened to consider the vision of the West Colfax corridor for the next generation. Asking “What do we want to achieve in the next 25 years by the year 2040?” Charting a course for anything for the next 25 years is a lofty goal, particularly for Lakewood’s storied West Colfax corridor.

The group that set out on this journey faced many unknowns. It involved collaboration among 60+ civic, business, neighborhood leaders and city staff and was both practical and bold: the group first identified the categories of known issues impacting the future of the corridor, and in little more than a year the West Colfax Vision 2040 Action Plan was ready to be presented to City Council with a set of goals and action items that were bold but achievable.

The timing was right. The community was beginning to coalesce around a series of meaningful milestones: the formation of new business improvement district (2011), the insights and adoption of the catalytic 40 West Arts Urban Design and Mobility Concepts (2012), the long-awaited opening of RTD’s W Line Light Rail (2013), the two blockbuster announcements that FirstBank and Terumo BCT both would build new headquarters—collectively amounting to more than \$200+ million in new construction in the corridor, and the elation of 40 West Art earning the designation as a state-certified creative district (2014)—a first for Lakewood and Jefferson County.

The West Colfax community, with its “quirky” 150-year history, was a subset of the collective Colfax lore, and it needed a clear vision for the future to rally behind—and a plan to capture and share it. Longtime corridor resident (and Lakewood City Councilor at the time) Cindy Baroway, chaired this endeavor, and her supporting cast of stakeholders—neighborhood leaders, business, and civic leaders—set out to create it. Under Cindy Baroway leadership, a cohesive core group was assembled and collaborated with scores of locals who took part in the many work sessions that resulted in the original plan’s formation. What is now Part 1 of The West Colfax 2040 Action Plan was adopted by City Council in Aug. 2015.



CALL OUT OR SIDEBAR QUOTE:

“I am writing in recognition of the positive impact of the West Colfax 2040 Vision Action Plan and other efforts that are led or supported by the Lakewood-West Colfax BID. As an owner of Lamar Station Plaza, a critical commercial property in Lakewood’s West Colfax corridor, I can attest to the many positive impacts that the BID efforts have had on our property and others in the area. Arts programs and events like the Colfax ArtFest, the ArtLine Placemaking Initiative, and First Friday Colfax Arts Crawls create important pedestrian traffic that greatly contribute to the patronage and success of our commercial businesses. These activities and the sense of community that it helps create, embodied in the Vision 2040 Plan, have also helped us to attract new businesses to our retail center and have helped define a new image for the corridor, bringing new customers that will continue to rejuvenate and build the identity and vibrancy of the West Colfax community.”



Thomas Yockey, Founder/Board Member
Broad Street Realty and Investment
WCCA & 40W Member/BID Board Member

Lamar Station Plaza is in the 40 West Arts District core and home Casa Bonita, recently purchased by the creator of South Park and slated to reopen in summer 2022.

Introduction – Part II

Purpose Part II of this Document:

- The 2020-2021 five-year review of the Vision 2040 Plan is to provide an inclusive community forum to integrate input, distill ideas, isolate priorities, marshal resources, and report status on the West Colfax Vision 2040 Action Plan. The purpose in convening this group was to ensure the Vision 2040 Plan remains current and continues to serve its original intentions—to bolster momentum around a shared vision for an ever-better future for historic West Colfax.

Key Focus Areas for the 2020-2021 Plan Review: (Part II)

- Conduct a review of the goals and action item in the original plan.
- Add new content for context to make the document more user friendly.
- Add new goals and action step that address new priorities in new ways.
- Work with partners with a 360-degree view of the corridor to activate emerging opportunities in the targeted nodes of activity, particularly targeting the corridors west end.
- Promote land uses and land use policies that align with our community’s vision
- Liaison with the city and help neighborhood associations, residents, property owners, and business operators to advocate for desired land use outcomes
- Renew efforts around historical preservation to capture the quintessential Colfax character for posterity

The Part II review was led by two co-chairs who supported Baroway in the creation of the original plan, Bill Marino and Kevin Yoshida, director and board chair of the Lakewood-W. Colfax BID, respectively. They first formed a core team to discuss the process and then rolled out a plan that involved recruiting West Colfax Ambassadors to serve on a review committee. This collection of people was called the Vision Implementation Group or (the “VIG” for short). More than two dozen ambassadors signed up to take part in a nine-month review process, with the purpose stated above.

Starting in August 2020, amid a global pandemic, this 2020-2021 Vision Group met every month via Zoom, reviewed every goal, assessed the current circumstances, and then collaborated on priorities for the next five years, with an emphasis on activating opportunities along the corridor’s west end.

In the prior five-year, much energy was focused on the section of West Colfax east of Wadsworth—for good reasons. At that time, it was widely agreed this section had the greatest need—and much has been accomplished with the emergence of 40 West Arts District and the revitalization efforts and significant investment by Broad Street and others to transform the old JCRS Shopping center into the new more vibrant Lamar Station Plaza. As we progress into the next five-year period, the same level of effort and attention and new investment is needed for revitalization west of Kipling.

When we embarked on the Vision 2040 project more than five years ago—a global pandemic was the stuff of a Stephen King novel. While our world struggles with profound upheavals in public health, in the economy, and in social justice, the 2020-2021 Vision Group gathered as a community to discuss the progress since the original plan was adopted. Who would have fathomed the strange world we experienced in 2020 and 2021—and likely, effects will have impact long after this update is completed.

But we cannot be stymied. We know there is more work to do. While we have much to celebrate from the last five years, all six original categories of the current plan have unmet goals—and many unfulfilled dreams yet to achieve—from targeted revitalization efforts and critical flood plain improvements that will spur re-development to streetscape upgrades that will improve pedestrian safety and add to the aesthetics of our placemaking efforts. The corridor still needs more sidewalks, more lighting, and more new businesses to fill empty spaces to add to the vibrancy – and yes more density around our light rail stations to bring the people that our local small businesses need to grow and thrive. We are actively planning for the implementation of a major CDOT grant from Sheridan to Teller along West Colfax, new city budgeted for beautification further west, and for enhancements that will improve the ArtLine, 40 West Arts award-winning four-mile walking and biking amenity that serves as an economic development driver and a recreational and cultural feature for residents and visitors. (See page XX for an update.)

How do we continue the forward motion . . . how do we stay focused on delivering results for our community? With the same fundamental approach: we do it with heart, and we do it together. All are welcome in the spirit of community and collaboration. And within this spirit—we promise to keep asking “what if” and to always dream big. It’s no failure to fall short of a big dream—but certainly we cannot achieve great things if we don’t first think it’s possible.

CALL OUT OR SIDEBAR QUOTE:

“The Lakewood-West Colfax BID is a “Can do” organization. They introduced us to other businesses in the district—and we were immediately welcomed. What a terrific way to get to know the other businesspeople! The BID team helped us all along the way as we were working to attract investors for WestLine Flats—the Community’s’ positive vision for the future was an integral part of our story. This made a significant difference for us. We ended up painting a mural on the side of our building, “The Lakewood Lion.” This iconic mural has become a defining feature of our apartment community. WestLine Flats was a big success, in part because of the assistance and vision articulated by the Lakewood-W. Colfax BID.

Jeff Temple

Investor/Founder, West Line Flats Apartments
WCCA Member



The Lakewood Lion mural by Giuseppe Percivati viewable from W Line light rail heading Westbound on rooftop terrace of WestLine Flat, has become a favorite along 13th Avenue