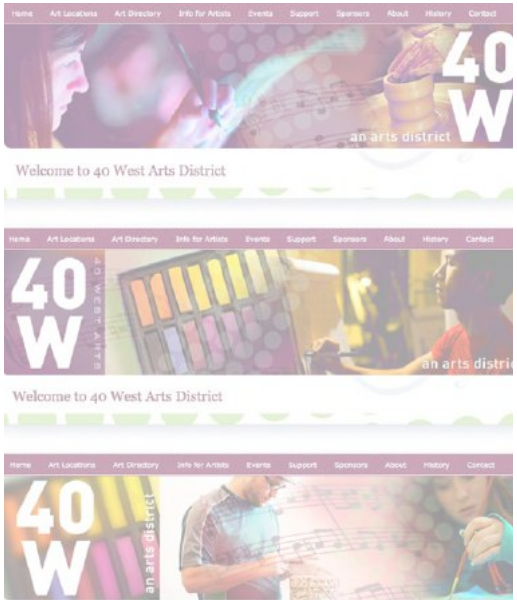
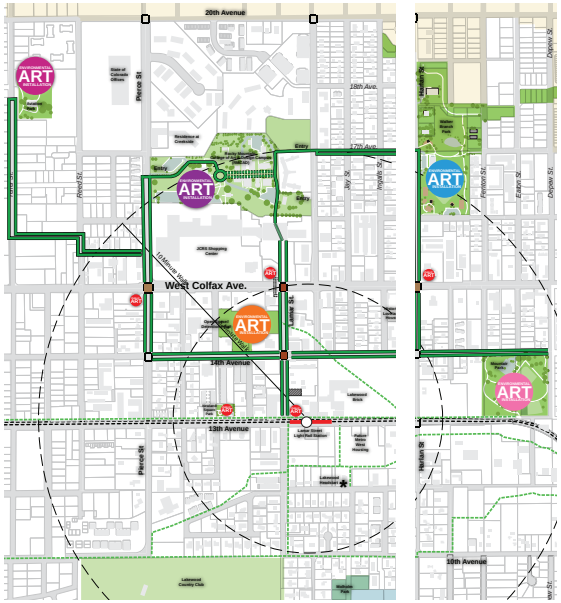
CITY OF LAKEWOOD

40 WEST ARTS DISTRICT

URBAN DESIGN AND MOBILITY CONCEPTS

NOVEMBER 2011





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Spring 2011 Design Systems Class

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RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

This document is one of three documents completed for this area as a part of this planning study. The other documents, including the Arts District Strategy and the Environmental Records Search Summary, are documented under a separate cover but are related to this planning effort.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S BROWNFIELD PROGRAM

This planning effort was funded through a brownfields grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of its initiative to help support livable communities. EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields.

A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of low concentrations of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The types of brownfield sites commonly found in urban and suburban areas include existing or historic dry cleaners, gas stations, and automobile-related commercial uses.

EPA has piloted the use of brownfields funds to be used for area-wide planning because they recognized that creating a planning framework to advance economic development, job creation and community reinvestment in the area surrounding a brownfield site(s) is as critical to the successful reuse of a site as the actual assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of an individual site.

The brownfield finding for the study area and summary of recommended next steps are found in Chapter 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of light rail, and opening of the Lamar Station in 2013 is providing a new opportunity to define a vision for some of the oldest and most historic areas in the City of Lakewood. This Urban Design and Mobility Concepts study outlines ideas for revitalizing the area by forming a new Arts District and providing improvements to the public realm in the form of streetscape improvements, lighting, signage and way finding and the integration of arts throughout the area. This document contains specific recommendations focused on urban design and mobility. A separate Arts District Strategy document provides recommendations for establishing and sustaining a thriving Arts District in the area.

The vision put forth in this document is based on the following concepts:

•Celebrating the Lamar Station as a central feature. The Station provides a destination for rail users and encourages reinvestment in the area due to the area's designation as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area.

•Enhancing the Lamar Street streetscape experience from the station to West Colfax Avenue and connecting to the expanded Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD) campus in the JCRS shopping center.

•Redefining West Colfax Avenue, generally between Pierce and Harlan Streets, as a gateway to the Arts District with enhanced pedestrian crossings, signage and streetscape improvements.

•Implementing lighting, signage and graphics, including wayfinding maps and Arts District information kiosks, to establish a creative and unified identity and branding program.

•Developing the Arts Loop as a themed multi-use bicycle and pedestrian loop throughout the area, connecting key parks and highlighting the arts. (Figure 1)

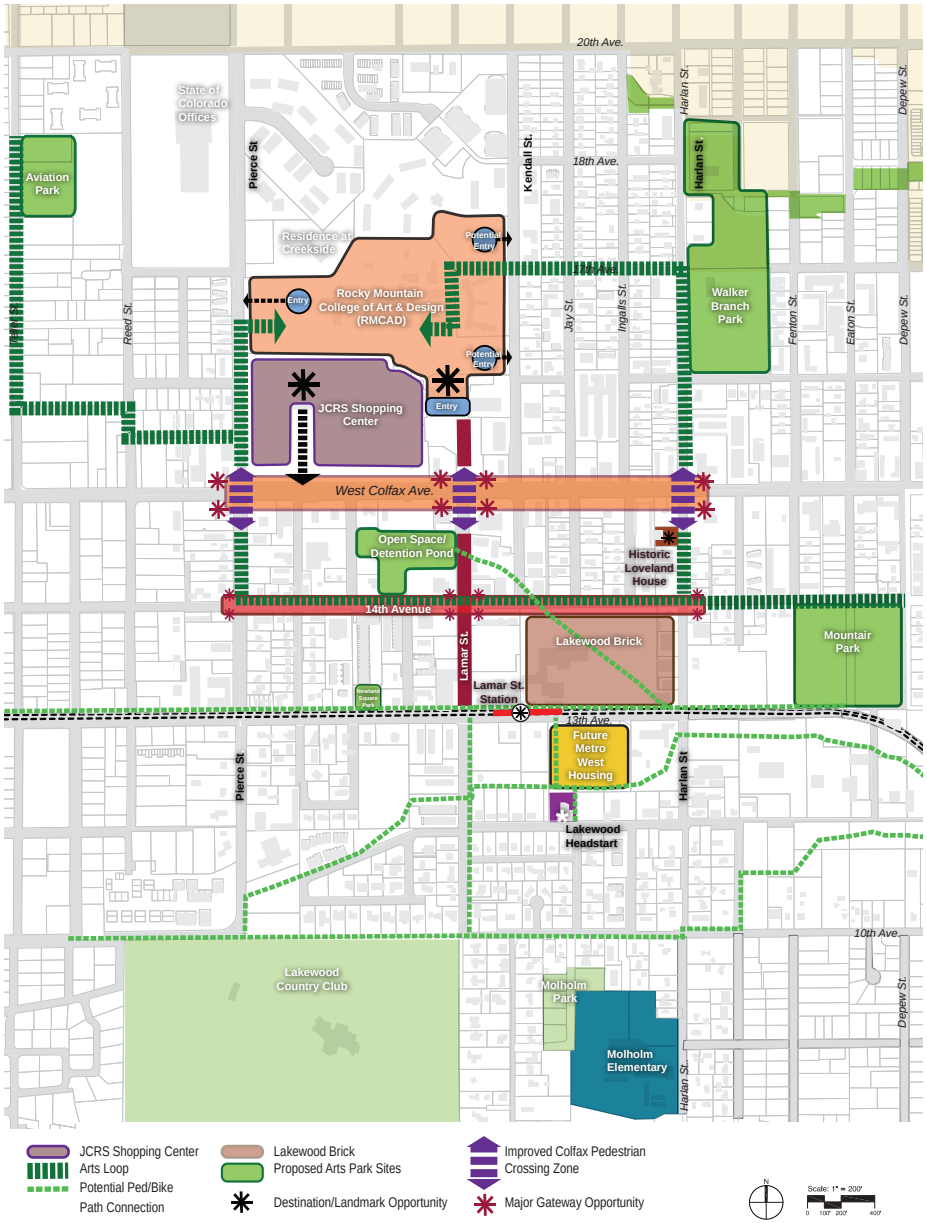


Figure 1: District framework concept

An active streetscape with cafe

An improved streetscape

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study included five key components that build on the previously completed plans and planning efforts in the area. The study focuses on ideas and concepts for areas within the public right of way, otherwise known as the public realm. This study does not address zoning, density, building height or location since those issues are addressed in previously adopted plans and policies. The purpose of the study is to:

1. Engage the broader community and build from adopted plans.

2. Facilitate a conversation with the community about creating an Arts District in the area.

3. Prepare an urban design concept to help implement recommendations in the Lamar Street Station Area Plan.

4. Develop implementation strategies that can stimulate the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, encourage redevelopment of underutilized sites and enhance the character of the area.

5. Conduct a preliminary brownfield inventory to identify potential areas for further investigation and opportunities for future reinvestment.

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

The general study area for the purpose of the brownfield research is loosely defined by Pierce Street to the west, Harlan Street to the east, West 20th Avenue to the north and West 11th Avenue to the south.

However, during the planning process it became evident that defining a specific boundary for the Arts District was not appropriate. Instead, the community and City agreed that establishing a loose and flexible boundary centered on the Lamar Station and West Colfax Avenue would be the best approach, with recognition that the district boundary would form organically over time.

The loose boundary approach allows the community, City and the Arts District to adjust to accommodate new revitalization and improvement efforts in the general vicinity of the station. This approach encourages ongoing participation in the area while establishing an inclusive and participatory policy.

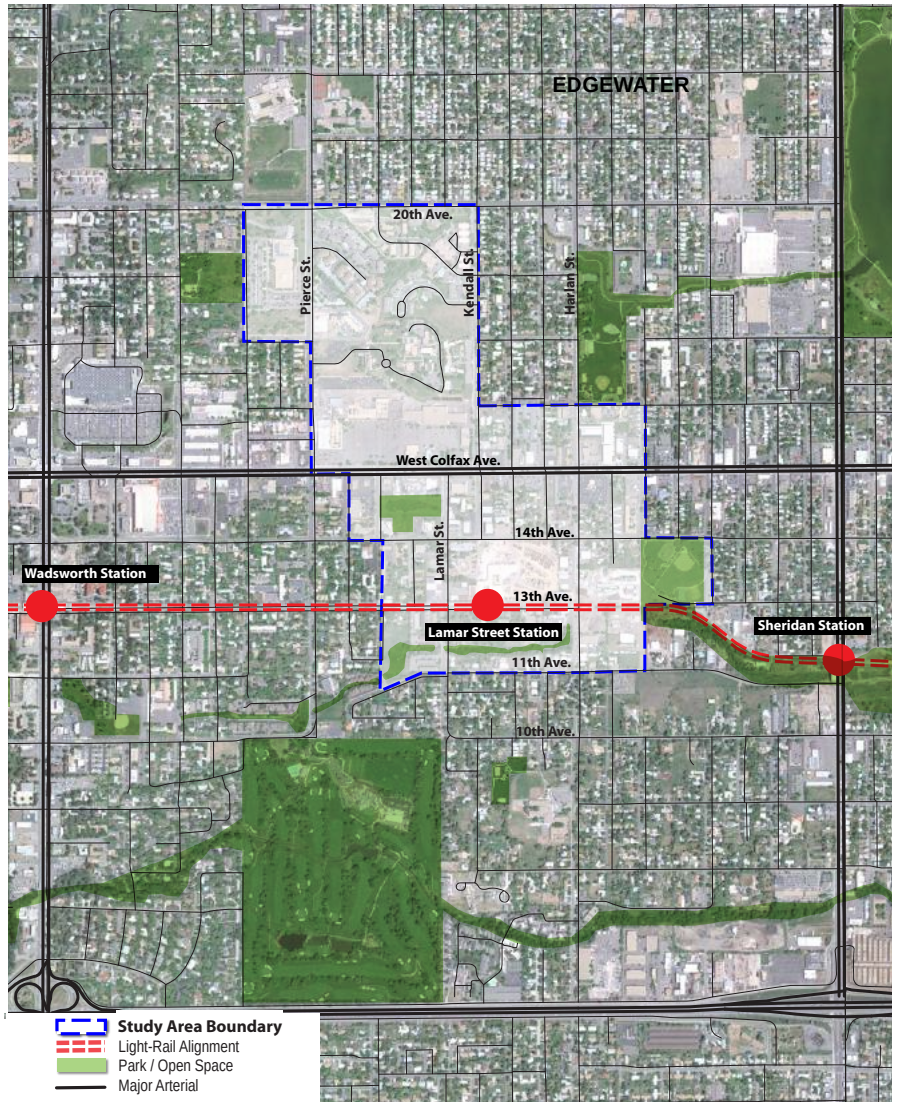


Figure 2: Study area boundary and surrounding context

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process focused on four key areas, including:

1. Environmental Records Search and Report
2. Community Outreach and Engagement
3. Urban Design & Mobility Concepts
4. Arts District Strategy

The outcome of this planning process resulted in this Urban Design & Mobility Concepts document, the Arts District Strategy document, and the Environmental Records Search and Report.

These independent and interrelated areas of focus provided a basis for the comprehensive planning of the area and a solid foundation for the recommendations described in each document.

The initial steps in the planning processes included research and analysis of the brownfield conditions and an inventory to determine the potential strength, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of the area. To initiate the community outreach process, an initial round of community meetings was organized to begin conversations with the public to solicit input and feedback about the area.

After the initial planning phase and community outreach meetings were complete, planning principles, framework ideas and concepts were prepared and presented to the public for input and feedback. The concepts built on the assets of the area and supported the planning principles defined during the initial phase, including concepts emphasizing improved public space along streets, new ideas for parks and connectivity, and the integration of art throughout the area. The initial concepts became the basis for future discussions with the community and provided a working framework of recommendations that were refined as new information and input was received.

After the basic planning concepts were in place, the planning effort shifted into the final phase, including the refinement of planning concepts, preparation of specific recommendations for the public realm, Arts District Strategy and the completion of the Environmental Records Search Report.

*We started by organizing a series of four **community meetings** culminating with a community Open House celebration.*

Community Meeting #1 – Introduction & Analysis
Tuesday, Feb 22 (approx. 22 attendees)

Community Meeting #2 – Alternative Concepts
Tuesday, March 15th (approx. 65 attendees)

Community Meeting #3 – Community Input
Thursday, April 14th (approx. 80 attendees)

Community Open House #4
Tuesday, June 7 !!!! (approx. 200 attendees)

1 2 3 4

*We organized a **community task force** comprised of representatives from local organizations and the surrounding neighborhoods.*

Two Creeks
Business Owners
Residents
Northeast Lakewood
Lakewood-West Colfax Business Improvement District
Property Owners
RMCAD

*We engaged **RMCAD** students and asked them to participate in the process.*

*We posted on the **internet** to share information, collect ideas and feedback.*

www.lakewood.org/LamarArtDistrict

"Great meeting last night - it's exciting to be a part of the process in forming a new Arts District on the west side!"

http://www.facebook.com/LamarArtDistrictPlan

Samples of material generated during community planning process

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

An extensive community involvement process was a core element of the planning effort. The process focused on building momentum and creating a broad-based collaboration between the community, Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD) and the City of Lakewood. The process included a series of four community meetings, small task force meetings, participation from RMCAD students, professors and staff and the use of social media devices such as Facebook.

To achieve this, the planning process and community engagement effort focused on empowering the community to self-organize, with participation from the City, to form a new Arts District organization. The outreach process emphasized a bottom-up community building process that brought together community members and solicited volunteers to become the initial champions of the Arts District organization.

More than 6,000 households received mailings to invite them to participate in the process. Four community meetings and numerous stakeholder group meetings were conducted over a seven-month period. The community meetings included attendance from neighborhood residents, business owners, local artists, RMCAD students and City officials. The final community meeting was attended by over 200 interested individuals.

During the process, the consultant team and City led the effort to transition the project and hand off the organizational responsibilities to the champions group, a volunteer citizen group committed to establishing the Arts District organization. After the third community meeting, the champions group formed and began monthly meetings. Since its formation, the group has conducted monthly meetings, defined their vision, goals and bylaws and filed for non-profit status. They also developed initial branding graphics, including a website, and are moving forward with the Arts District initiatives outlined in the Arts District Strategy Document.

COLLABORATION WITH RMCAD

Integral to the community involvement process was the collaboration with RMCAD and Fred Murrell's Design Systems Class. The collaboration was initiated at the beginning of the Spring Semester, when Fred Murrell became aware of the Arts District study. Under Mr. Murrell's guidance, the students spent the semester working in three teams to prepare branding and naming concepts for the Arts District. The students conducted an extensive analysis of the area, including site reconnaissance and resident interviews, and created inspirational visions for the branding and identity elements. The concepts prepared by the teams were presented to residents, city staff and public officials and included: 'The Yard', 'React' and '40 West'. The successful collaboration strengthened the partnership with RMCAD and resulted in the selection of '40 West' as the name of the new Arts District.

Chalk art activity at community open house and arts celebration

Community open house and arts celebration

Signing 40 West poster at the June 7 open house and arts celebration

Citizens presenting ideas for the Arts District

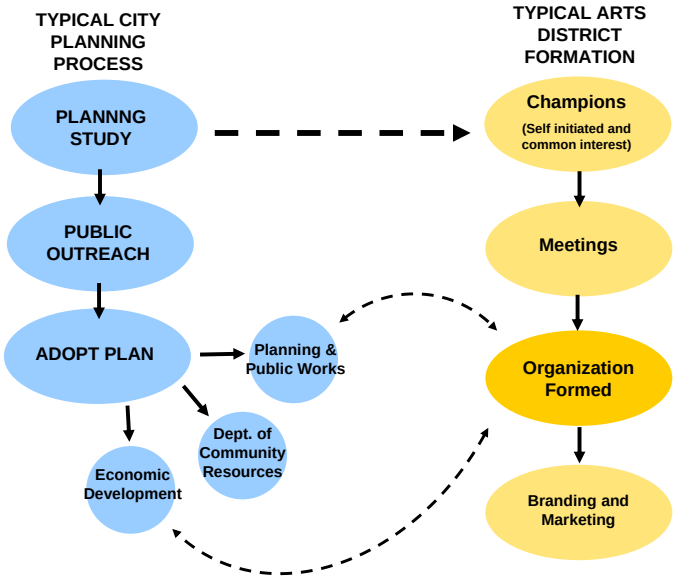
Viewing district concepts at the June 7 open house and arts celebration

40 WEST CHAMPIONS

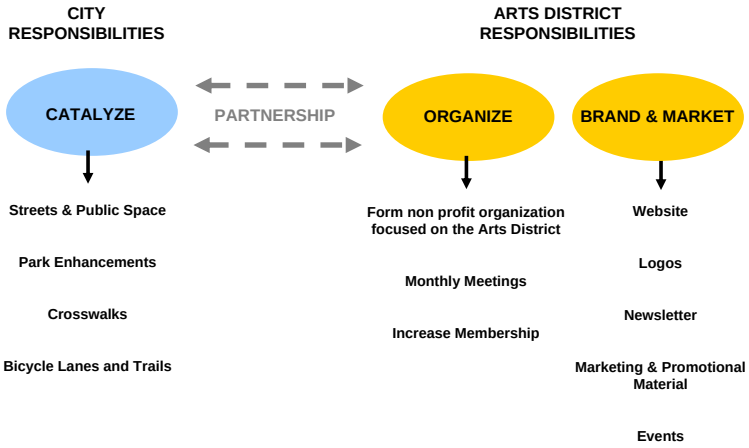
Developing a viable and sustainable Arts District was a primary goal of this effort. This was a unique challenge within the planning process. The team recognized that a physical plan and recommendations have inherent limitations when trying to form an Arts District because, in most cases, Arts Districts are self-organizing entities created by local artists and residents. To address this issue and establish a sustainable Arts District, the planning process needed to result in the formation of a local organization--or community champions-- comprised of residents, artists and business owners. Developing a transitional strategy and identifying community volunteers to initiate the Arts District organization became a major priority for the planning team.

The vision for the 40 West Arts District, as defined by the champions group, is that it becomes an emerging, community oriented, non-profit Arts District that embraces the Arts–Arts of all kind–from fine arts to digital media, cool jazz to string quartets, square dance to traditional crafts–and everything in between. The organization is supported by individuals, businesses, and civic organizations. 40 West's singular goal is to support the arts, artists, and artisans by creating community arts spaces and community arts events in order to bring the joy and energy of creativity to our community. With a balanced approach of supporting both established and emerging artists as well as encouraging hands-on experimentation with the arts for the self-proclaimed non-artists, 40 West exists to enrich the community and support the cultural and economic vitality of the region. (Source 40 West Arts, www.40westarts.com)

Organizational Strategy:
passing the torch to community champions



The Partnership Going Forward: who does what?



PRIMARY PLANNING GOALS

Primary goals were established to guide the planning process and inform specific recommendations. Developed early in the planning process, the goals reflect the specific needs of the community as described during the early public meetings. The planning goals include:

1. Promote the adaptive reuse of existing structures.
2. Highlight RMCAD campus as an important anchor for the Arts District, but recognize that other anchors are needed.
3. Encourage artists to set up shop.
4. Promote clustering of creative industries.
5. Build on existing parks by expanding current park programming.
6. Build on existing schools by establishing ongoing partnerships.
7. Provide recommendations for public realm improvements.
8. Strengthen mobility and connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians.
9. Connect with neighborhoods.
10. Identify and retain sites of historic importance.

Playground at Mountair Park

Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design campus

Adaptive reuse of an existing building

Example of wayfinding and signage

Example of an active streetcape

A well-marked pedestrian crossing

An example of outdoor dining and seating that could occur along Lamar Street

Adaptive reuse of an old building

An example of a walkable neighborhood

A bicycle station

Public art in Aviation Park

A flexible live-work space

Uninterrupted active street frontage

An example of an artist studio

Skate park at Walker-Branch Park

2. RELATIONSHIP TO LIGHT RAIL AND EXISTING PLANS

The opening of the West Corridor Light Rail Line and the completion of the Lamar Station in 2013 will have an immediate impact on the area by providing direct light rail access west to Golden and east to downtown Denver and the entire RTD light rail network. The area is poised to become a prominent transit oriented development area. As identified in the Lamar Street Station Area Plan, transit oriented development areas center on transit stations and promote more sustainable, higher density, mixed-use, walkable pedestrian-oriented development patterns.

Within the West Corridor, the Lamar Station is identified as a walk-up station serving the transit needs of the surrounding residents and neighborhoods. When it opens in 2013, the light rail line will offer residents transit commutes to employment centers, shopping and other destinations within Lakewood and throughout the region.

To be successful, this Urban Design and Mobility Concepts document must build upon previous efforts and approved plans. It is important to consider how this study fits within the overall City of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan and all previously approved plans, specifically the Lamar Street Station Area Plan completed in 2010. Thanks to the committed effort of the City, residents, business and property owners, the area has a solid foundation of planning to build upon. This plan acknowledges these previous efforts and attempts to provide a set of complementary recommendations to continue to improve the area.

Figure 3: RTD West Corridor (courtesy of RTD)

Figure 4: RTD Rail Network (courtesy of RTD)

City of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan

The recommendations in this document support the goals in the Comprehensive Plan by promoting infill development and community stewardship; encouraging high quality infill and redevelopment; promoting transportation alternatives and mobility; honoring the historical character of the area; and integrating parks, open space, trail systems and recreational opportunities.

Lamar Street Station Area Plan

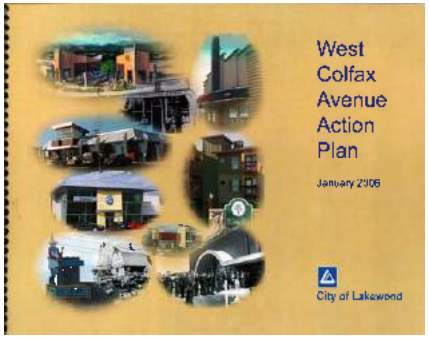
The Lamar Street Station Area Plan put forth principles to guide future redevelopment and investment in the area, including recommendations for land use, zoning and density. The plan also provides recommendations for general neighborhood improvements to help promote connectivity and walkability, including streetscape improvements and trail connections in the immediate vicinity surrounding the station.

The Urban Design and Mobility Concepts are focused on public realm improvements, area-wide character and art-based ideas centered on establishing an Arts District. Although prepared at different times, the two planning efforts work together to establish an overarching vision for the future of the area.

West Colfax Action Plan

West Colfax Avenue plays a major role in Lakewood, and the West Colfax Action Plan establishes a vision statement and guiding principles focused on beautifying and enhancing the economic vitality of West Colfax Avenue from Sheridan Boulevard to Indiana Street. The plan recommends enhancing the image of West Colfax Avenue by creating a vibrant and unique place that encourages business reinvestment, unites neighborhoods, celebrates the historic and eclectic character of the area and balances vehicular needs with those of the pedestrian and transit user. Created in 2006, the plan recommends short-range, mid-range and long-range action steps to further realize the vision.

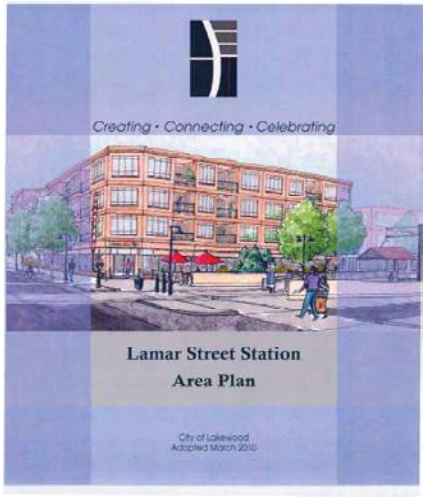
Improvements and reinvestment have already started along the corridor and West Colfax Avenue is a central feature in the 40 West Arts District. The recommendations outlined in this study support and complement the West Colfax Action Plan by recommending new reinvestment along West Colfax Avenue through new pedestrian-friendly streetscape improvements.



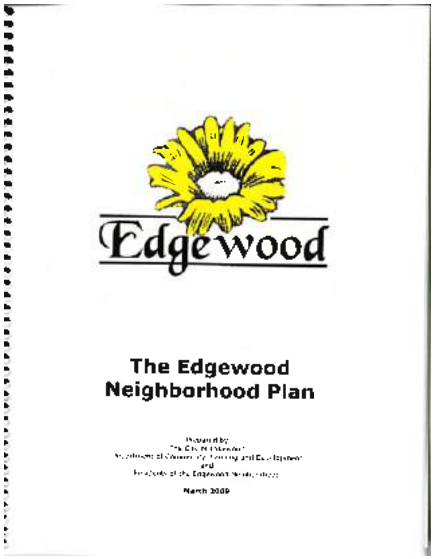
West Colfax Action Plan, 2006

Two Creeks and Northeast Lakewood Neighborhood Plans

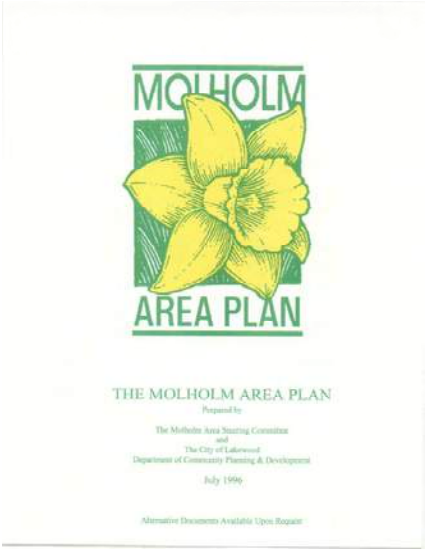
Both the Two Creeks and Northeast Lakewood neighborhoods have adopted plans to help guide the future of the neighborhoods. Recommendations in this study and the Arts District Strategy support the neighborhood plans by acknowledging the historical character of the area, encouraging a stronger sense of community pride, providing positive influences for the residents, enhancing the neighborhood environment and expanding the role of public open space in the area.



Lamar Street Station Area Plan, 2010



The Edgewood Neighborhood Plan, 2009
(Note: The Edgewood Neighborhood changed its name to Northeast Lakewood Neighborhood Organization in 2010.)



Molholm Area Plan, 1996
(Note: This plan covers the area known as the Two Creeks Neighborhood.)

3. URBAN DESIGN & MOBILITY CONCEPTS

The urban design concept builds on the previously adopted plans and envisions an improved public realm framework comprised of streetscape improvements, bicycle route and mobility improvements, integration of public parks and concepts for the overall public space character. The vision is to create a district centered on the Lamar Station that emphasizes the Arts District theme and provides a new public space experience for the community. The streetscape design will reinforce the Arts District character and provide comfortable and attractive pedestrian connectivity within the Arts District and to the Lamar Station. The concepts expand beyond the Lamar Street Station Area Plan and include recommendations for more direct links to the surrounding neighborhoods. The study also establishes priority streets as a way to focus investment and improvements on key streets connecting residents to the station and promoting reinvestment in certain areas. A brief summary of the key concepts is included below, and a more detailed description can be found in the following pages.

1. Streetscapes – prioritized streetscape improvements along streets, including Pierce, Harlan, Lamar, West Colfax and West 14th Avenue.

2. Intersection Treatments - proposed new pedestrian crossing improvements are recommended at West Colfax Avenue and Lamar Street and at West 14th Avenue and Lamar Street.

3. Environmental Graphics, Wayfinding and Signage - way finding, signage and environmental graphics to guide visitors and residents through the Arts District and to help establish a sense of place.

4. Lighting – an overall lighting strategy for key streets and West Colfax Avenue to promote pedestrian safety and reinforce the character of the Arts District.

5. Arts Loop and Public Art – a new "Arts Loop" consisting of an on-street visually distinct path connecting key parks in Northeast Lakewood.

6. Connectivity & Mobility Concepts - providing increased connectivity, improved pedestrian crossings, bike sharing and car sharing would enhance the mobility to and from the Lamar Station and make it easier to access the platform and destinations in the area.

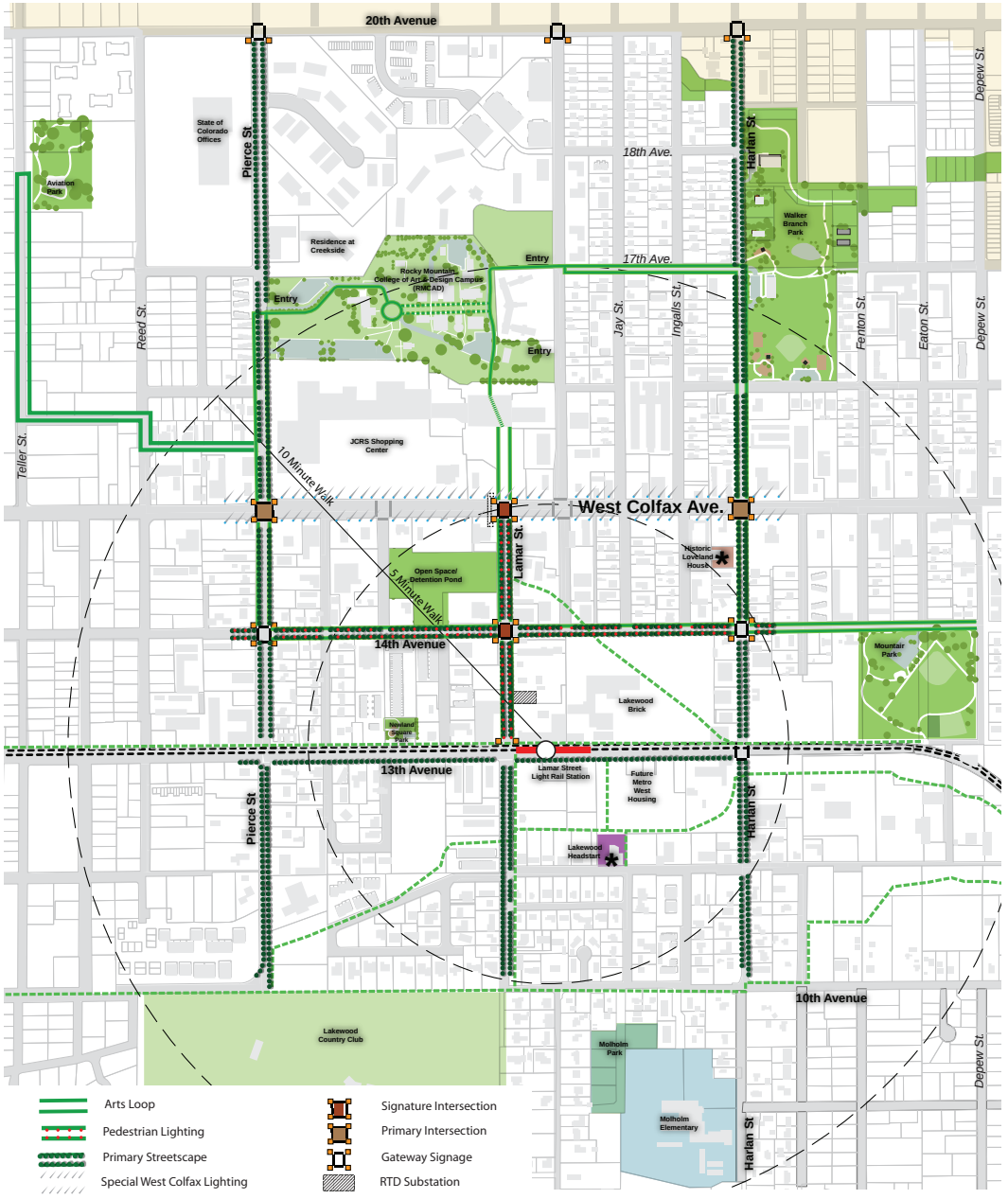


Figure 5: Urban design concept

STREETSCAPES

Streetscape improvements recommended for key streets in the district provide the backbone to the public space network, connecting residents to the light rail station, West Colfax Avenue businesses, RMCAD, neighborhoods and parks, and establishing a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The streetscape along Lamar Street is envisioned to include new brick paving, expanded sidewalks, lighting, wayfinding signage, banners and expanded landscape areas. This concept encourages pedestrian-friendly areas with active storefronts, shops, restaurants, café areas.

In addition to Lamar Street, the prioritized streetscape improvements include two other major north south streets and two major east west streets. Pierce and Harlan Streets form the major north south connectors within the Arts District. The recommended improvements, from West 20th Avenue on the north to West 10th Avenue on the south, include continuous sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, new landscaping and pedestrian lighting.

West Colfax and West 14th Avenues are the priority east west streetscape improvement corridors. The two streets provide major pedestrian access to the eastern and western sections of the Arts District.

West Colfax will become a centerpiece of the Arts District and a major gateway to the area because of its prominent location and historical significance. The recommended streetscape improvements, including new pedestrian crosswalks, signage and lighting, will transform it from a pedestrian barrier to a new seam merging areas north and south.

West 14th Avenue will provide a more intimate streetscape experience and complement improvements along West Colfax by becoming a neighborhood street potentially spurring new reinvestment, including shops and restaurants.

Implementation of the improvements will likely occur through a combination of public and private investments as new areas develop or are improved. A specific timeline has not been established.

Streetscape elements with brick paving

Example of expanded sidewalk areas

Example of gateway markers

Example of active streetscape

An active streetscape

Streetscape Design Concepts

The streetscapes throughout the area will become the primary public realm network connecting the community to the station and to each other. Prototypical streetscape concepts have been created for Lamar Street and the surrounding streets to define a consistent character for the area.

The streetscape concepts include expanded sidewalk zones, new tree lawns and landscape areas, clear walking zones for pedestrians, adequate space for café areas and the integration of brick as a unifying material. Figure 6 depicts how the new streetscapes should be integrated with Arts Loop bike lanes along Lamar Street.

The two concepts illustrated in Figures 7 and 8 depict variations on the amount of brick used in the streetscape design due to potential budget and funding limitations during implementation. The configuration assumes a detached sidewalk and 6' tree lawn. With an anticipated increase in pedestrian traffic along Lamar Street, sidewalks are recommended to be 10' wide. Sidewalks along West 14th Avenue are recommended to be 6' wide.

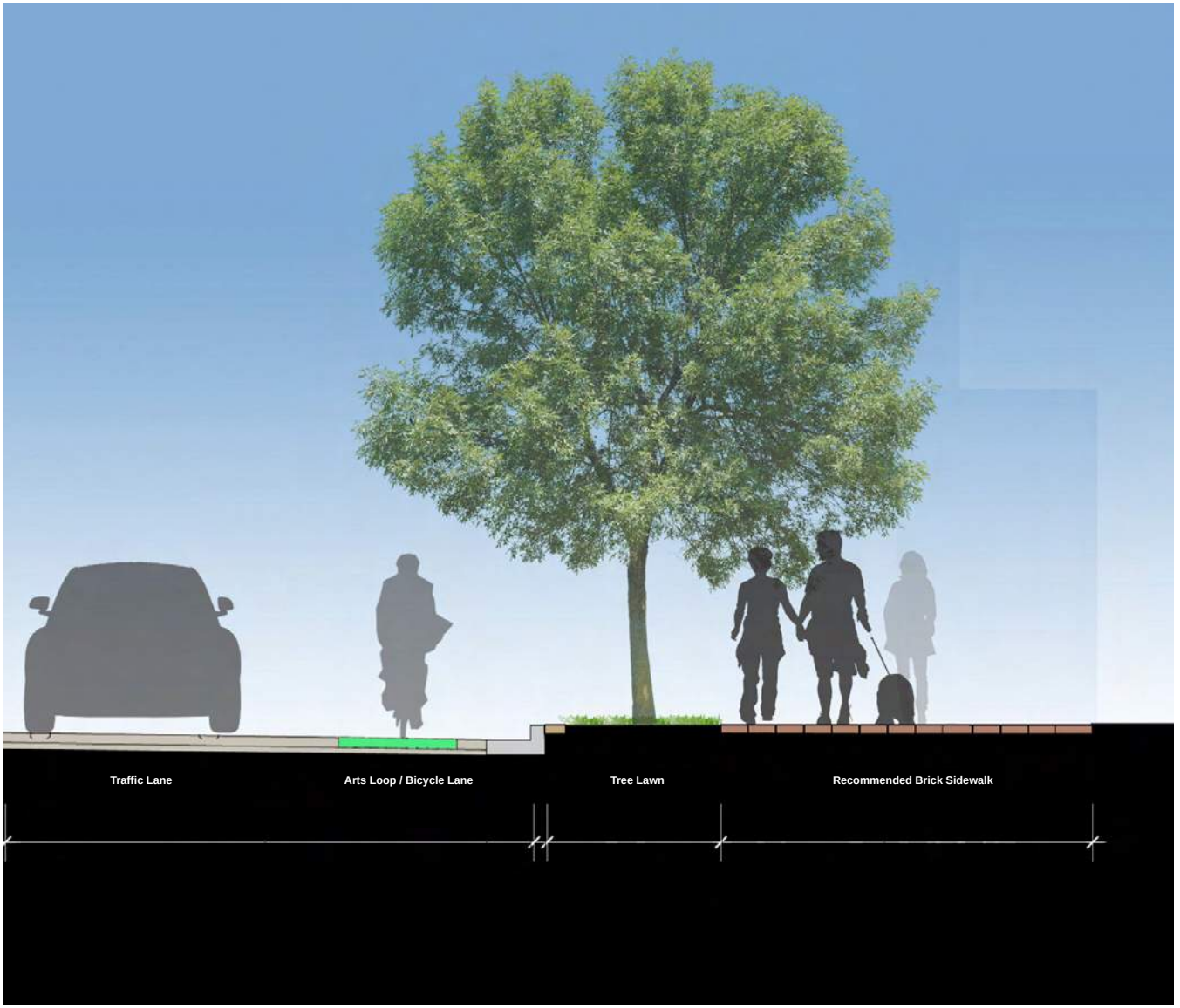


Figure 6: Conceptual streetscape section

Brick paving is recommended to reflect the historic presence of Lakewood Brick

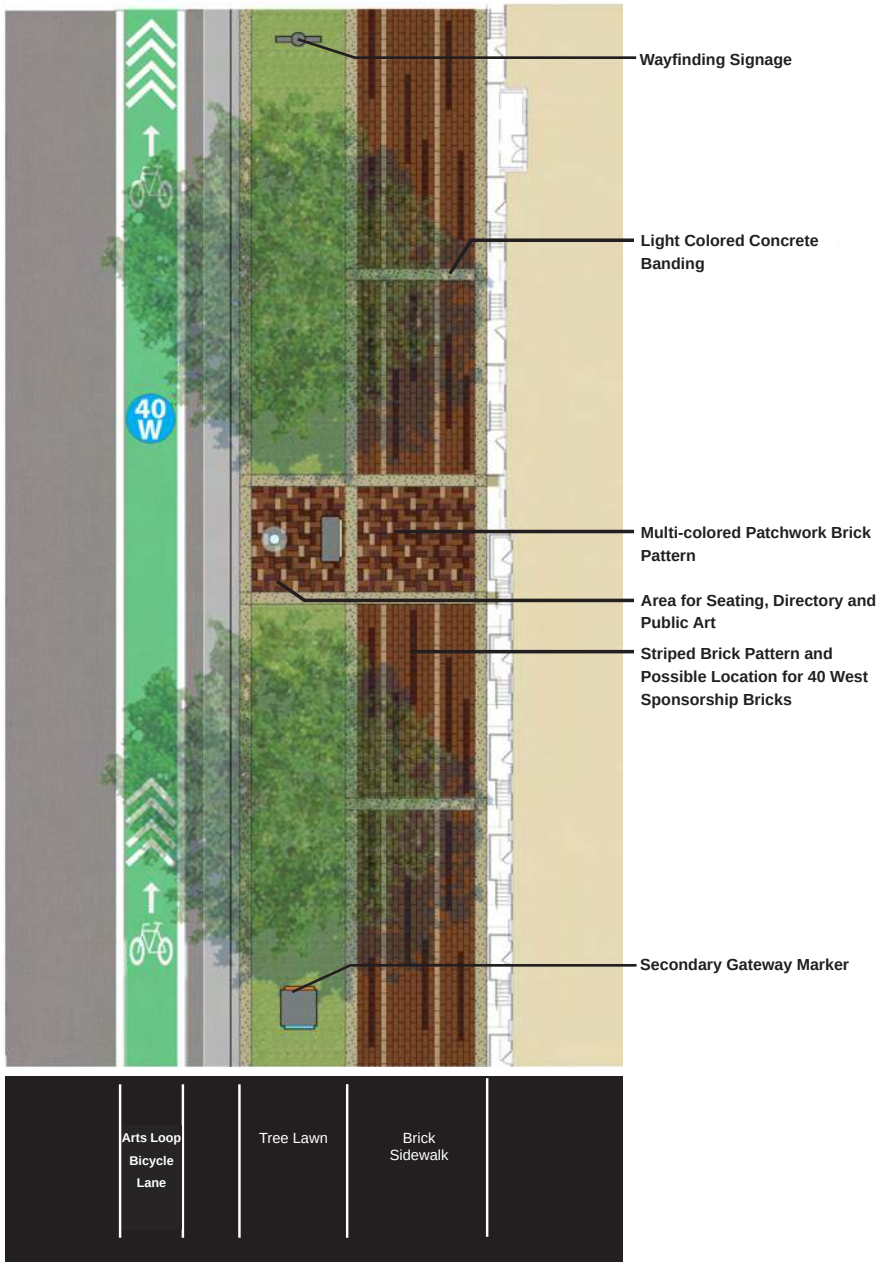


Figure 7: Brick streetscape concept

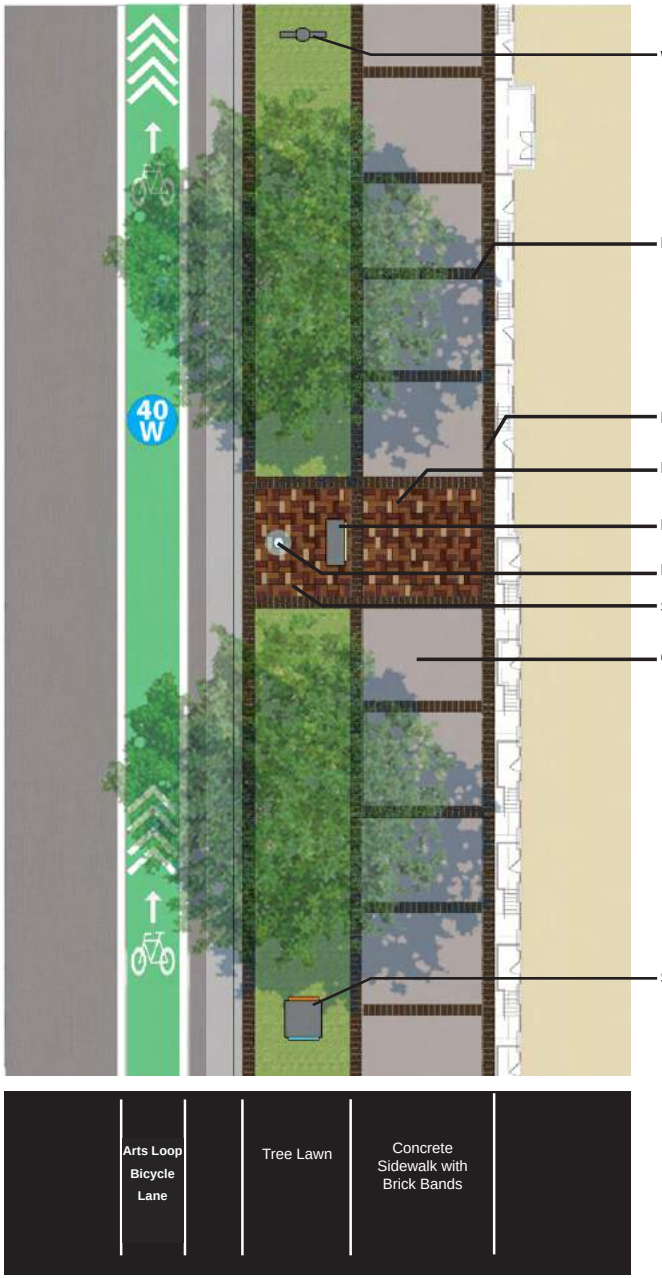


Figure 8: Brick and concrete streetscape concept

INTERSECTION TREATMENTS

Concepts for two key intersections have been developed to demonstrate how Lamar Street and West Colfax Avenue can be improved to create a pedestrian-friendly and bicycle- friendly environment. The concepts depict an integrated solution to balance the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists with vehicular needs. The concepts include new crosswalks for pedestrians and bicycles, corner improvements and additional landscape planting and furnishings to create a more comfortable pedestrian environment.

Focusing on the West Colfax Avenue and West 14th Avenue intersections along Lamar Street between the Lamar Station and RMCAD reinforces the overall goals of this study by concentrating the initial public space improvement recommendations on the core of the Arts District and the primary connection to Lamar Station.

Figure 9: Lamar Street sidewalk, bike lane and pedestrian crossing concept

Bike lane and Arts Loop graphic along Indianapolis Cultural Trail

Bike lane along Indianapolis Cultural Trail

Lamar Street and West Colfax Avenue

Lamar Street and West Colfax Avenue will become the epicenter of the district and provide a new streetscape experience connecting Lamar Station to West Colfax Avenue, RMCAD and Northeast Lakewood neighborhoods. The two streets are intended to be the premier public spaces in the district and a destination for visitors and residents alike.

The streetscape along Lamar Street is envisioned to include new brick paving, expanded sidewalks, lighting, wayfinding signage, banners and expanded landscape areas. This concept encourages pedestrian-friendly areas with active storefronts, shops, restaurants and café areas. New crosswalks with colored or patterned paving are recommended at the intersection of Lamar Street and West Colfax Avenue to encourage pedestrian mobility and safety. A new traffic signal is also recommended at this intersection. An ambitious lighting and signage program is recommended in the next section, emphasizing the Arts District theme and creating a recognizable and safe destination.

Figure 10: West Colfax Avenue and Lamar Street intersection concept

Lamar Street and West 14th Avenue

The intersection of Lamar Street and West 14th Avenue will see increased pedestrian traffic once the Lamar Station opens in 2013. Improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through the intersection should be a major priority since it is a primary connection between West Colfax Avenue and the station. High traffic speeds along West 14th Avenue make it difficult for pedestrians to cross safely. The intersection should be improved to create a pedestrian and bicycle friendly crossing that increases safety for non-vehicular modes of transportation.

One intersection option at this intersection is a roundabout. A roundabout would slow traffic and provide safe crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists through the intersection. A roundabout at this location would also allow for the display of attractive art or landscaping that could greatly enhance the aesthetics of this important roadway and pedestrian corridor.

Another alternative could be to install a traffic signal at this intersection. A signalized intersection would provide a protected crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Figure 11: Lamar Street and West 14th Avenue intersection roundabout concept

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS, WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

The environmental graphic, wayfinding and signage concepts for the district recommend artful streetscape elements and information in the form of district maps and signage. As a part of the streetscape improvements, they would add to the distinct character of the area by incorporating colorful and playful graphics and signage. The family of recommended environmental graphics is illustrated in Figures 12 and 13 and includes banners, information kiosks, large and small district markers, and small marquis for shops and businesses. The concepts for the signage represent initial ideas inspired by the work produced by the RMCAD students during the Spring 2011 studio. The examples feature the 40 West Arts District logo and a variety of color options to provide a highly graphic and visual marker for the area. Recommendations locations for these elements are illustrated in Figure 14.

The approach illustrated on the following pages is conceptual. These elements would need to be refined through a more detailed design process in the future. Working with the various stakeholders, including the City of Lakewood, 40 West Arts and the proposed Lakewood West Colfax Business Improvement District, these concepts can be designed and implemented with a family of streetscape elements, open spaces and public realm improvements.

It should be noted that the types of landscaping and the tree and planting palettes can also be major factors in establishing a unique look and feel for the area.

LIGHTING

Recommended lighting for the district includes pedestrian lights along the key streets, as illustrated in Figure 15, and colorful gateway markers highlighting important intersections or key sections of streets. The location of proposed lighting reinforces the primary streets and gateways, and illuminates main pedestrian routes to the Lamar Station and throughout the district. The lighting can help distinguish the area and provide a safer environment by creating a comfortable evening environment for residents and visitors.

Pedestrian lighting is recommended along the key streets to increase safety and provide better connections to the station in the evening. The pedestrian lighting is an important element in defining the character of the streetscape, and the fixtures and styles selected should complement the overall character of the Arts District. Pedestrian lighting with a modern and contemporary style is recommended for the area. The use of neon should also be encouraged where appropriate to complement the historic neon signage along West Colfax Avenue.

Example of pedestrian light fixtures

Artistic lighting and gateway features

Street lighting used as a special feature

Arts and culture district signage

Example of a wayfinding directory

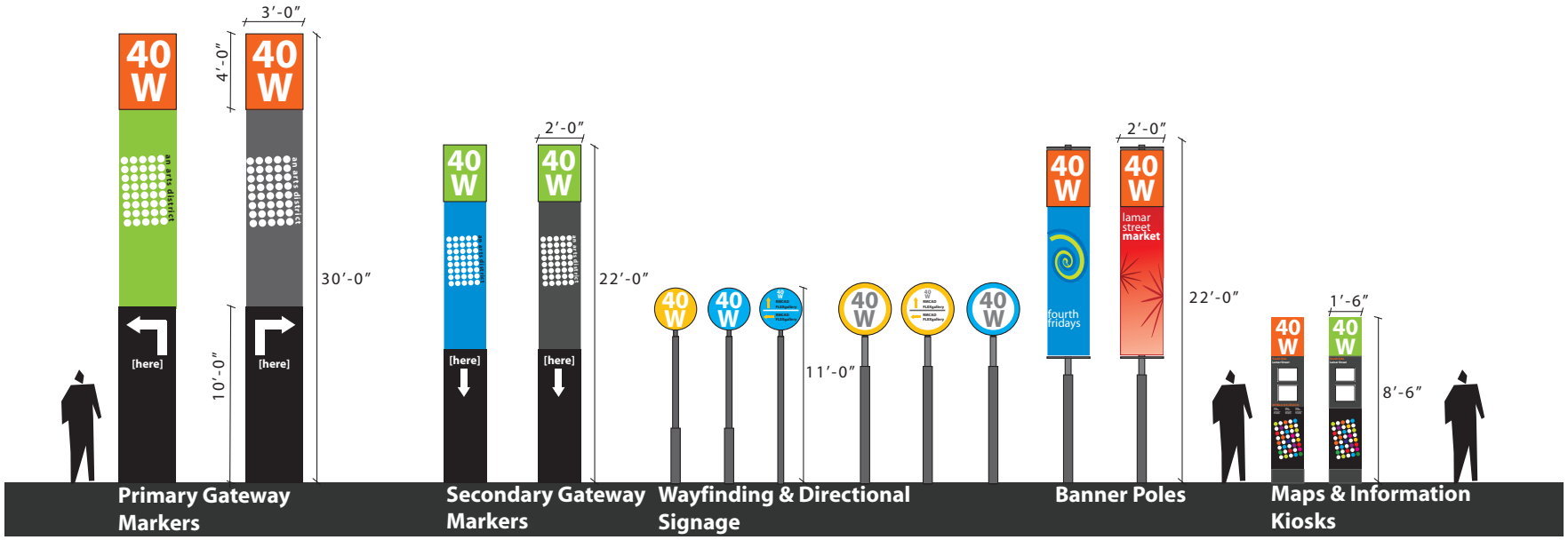


Figure 12: Signage and wayfinding elements

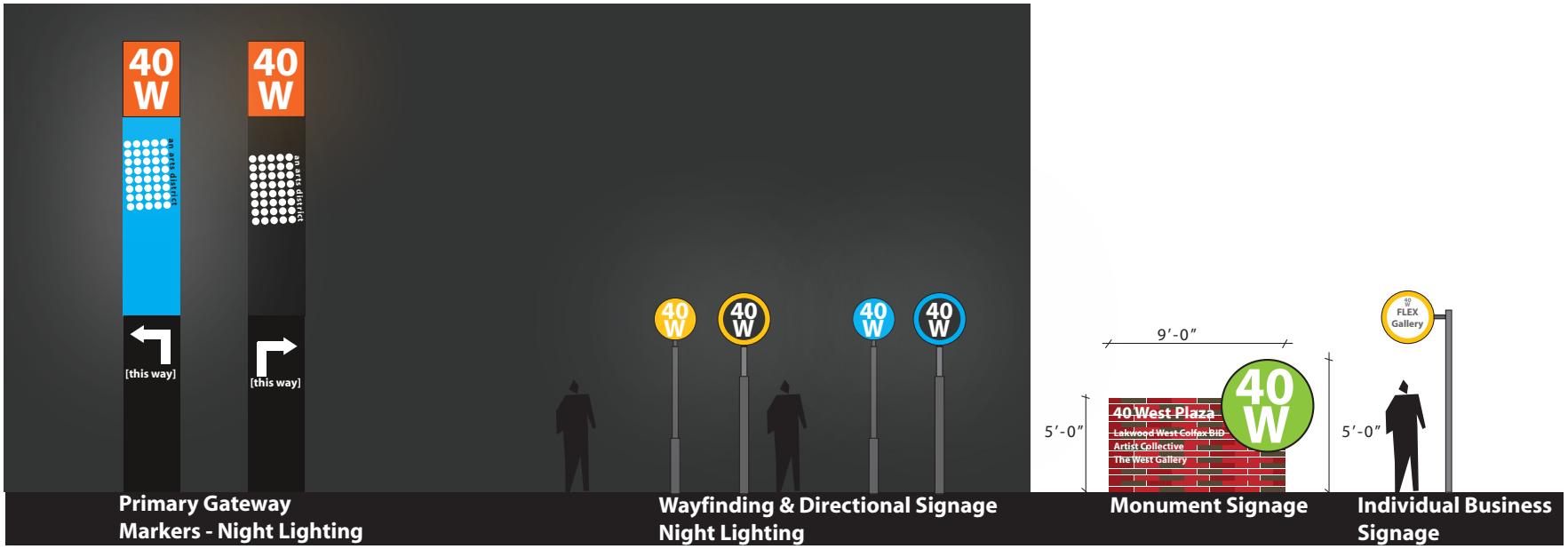


Figure 13: Night lighting, monument sign and individual business sign concepts

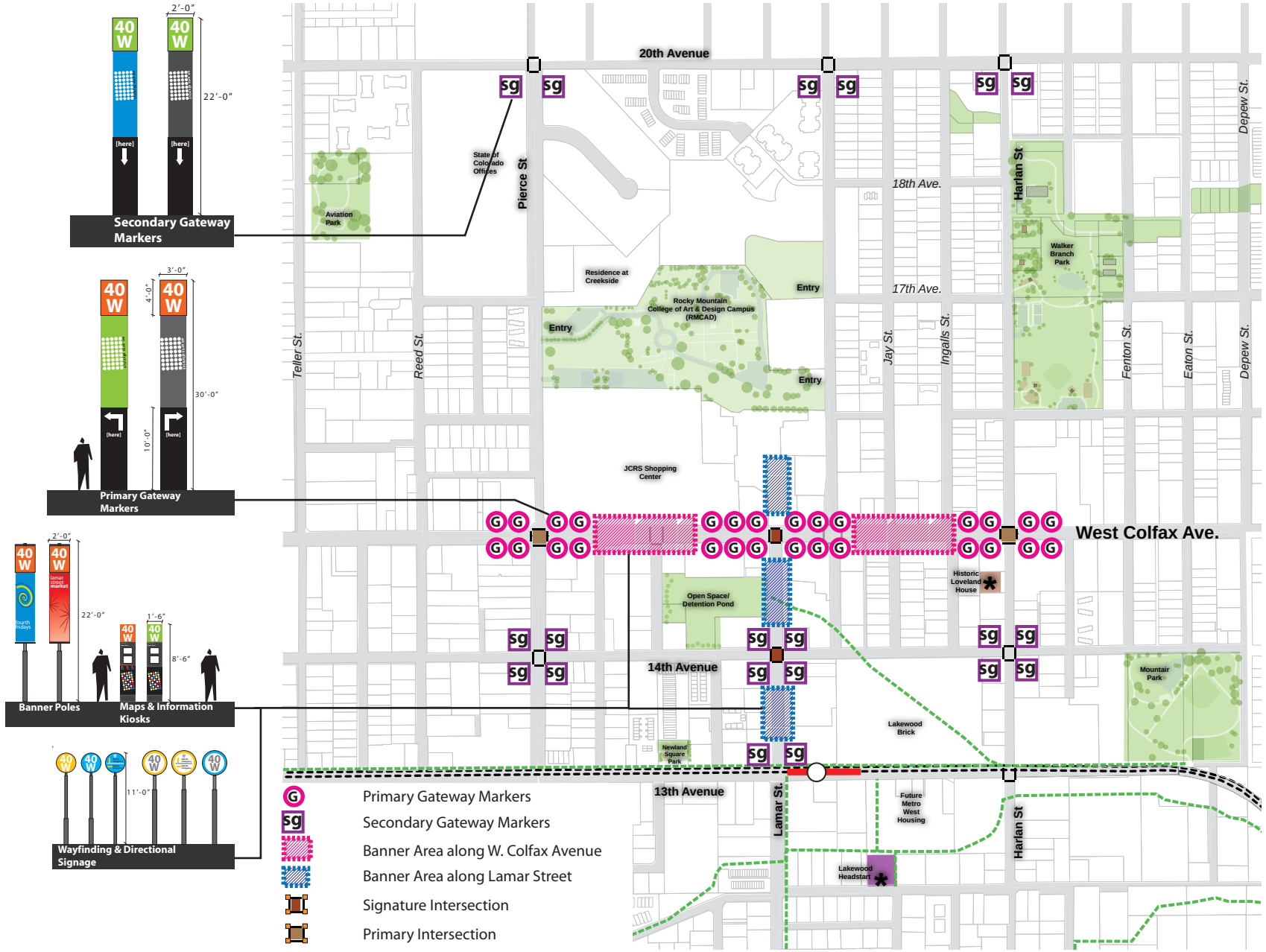


Figure 14: Signage concept

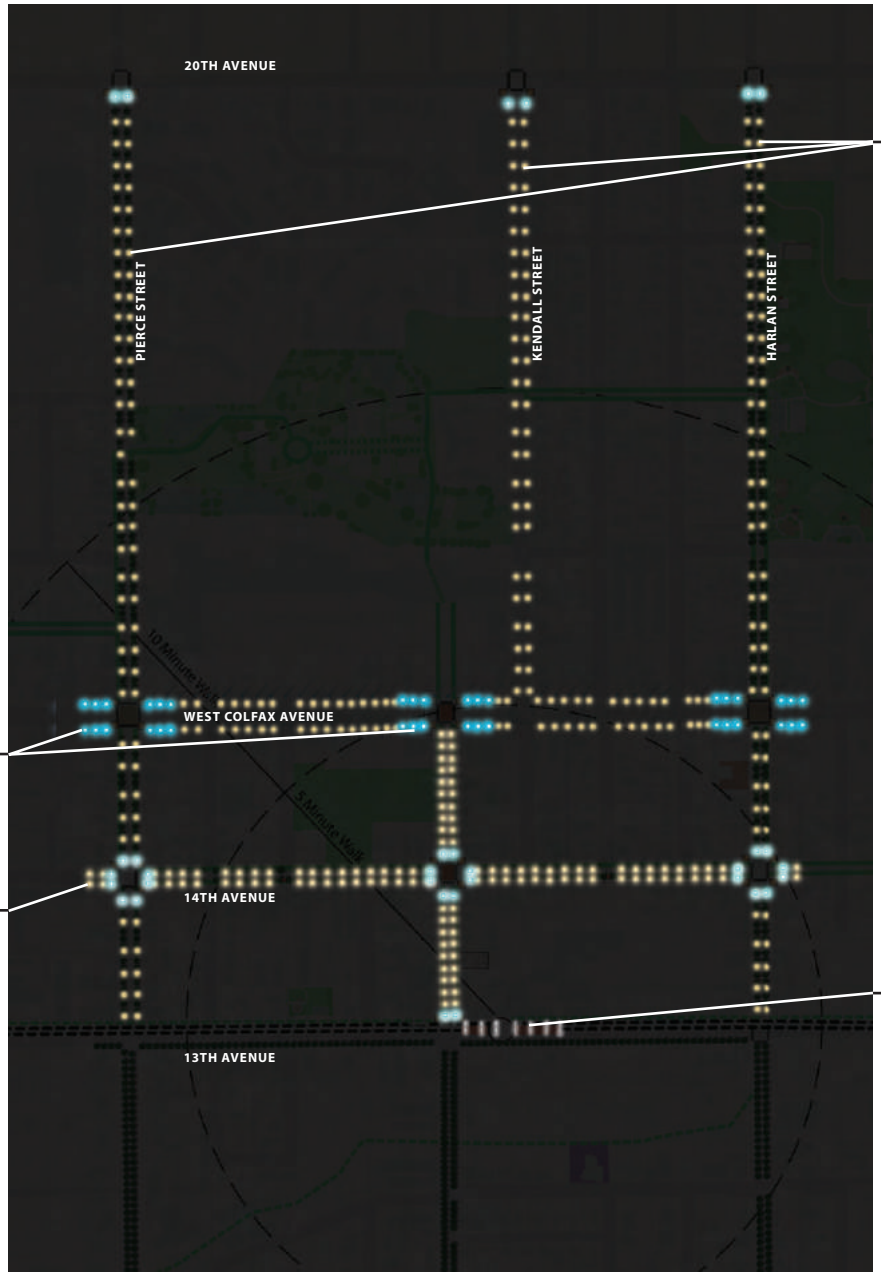


Figure 15: Lighting concept

ARTS LOOP AND PUBLIC ART

The proposed creation of a new Arts Loop is a distinguishing component of the Arts District concept. The Arts Loop is envisioned as a continuous and distinctly colored multi-use, on-street path circling the District, connecting people to public and environmental art located in existing parks and open spaces in the area.

Environmental art is art works intended to enhance or become part of an outdoor environment. They are often produced by artists manipulating the natural landscape in the form of large or temporary installations and can often include pieces organized in assemblages that surround the observer.

The parks and open space destinations include: Aviation Park, Walker Branch Park, Mountair Park, the RMCAD Campus and the open space detention pond located between Lamar Street and Newland Street. The Arts Loop would feature a combination of permanent public art and seasonal environmental art installation, and is envisioned as a unique art experience within Lakewood. The Arts Loop would be a significant art experience in the region featuring a regular rotation of site-specific public environmental art installations.

Examples of environmental art:

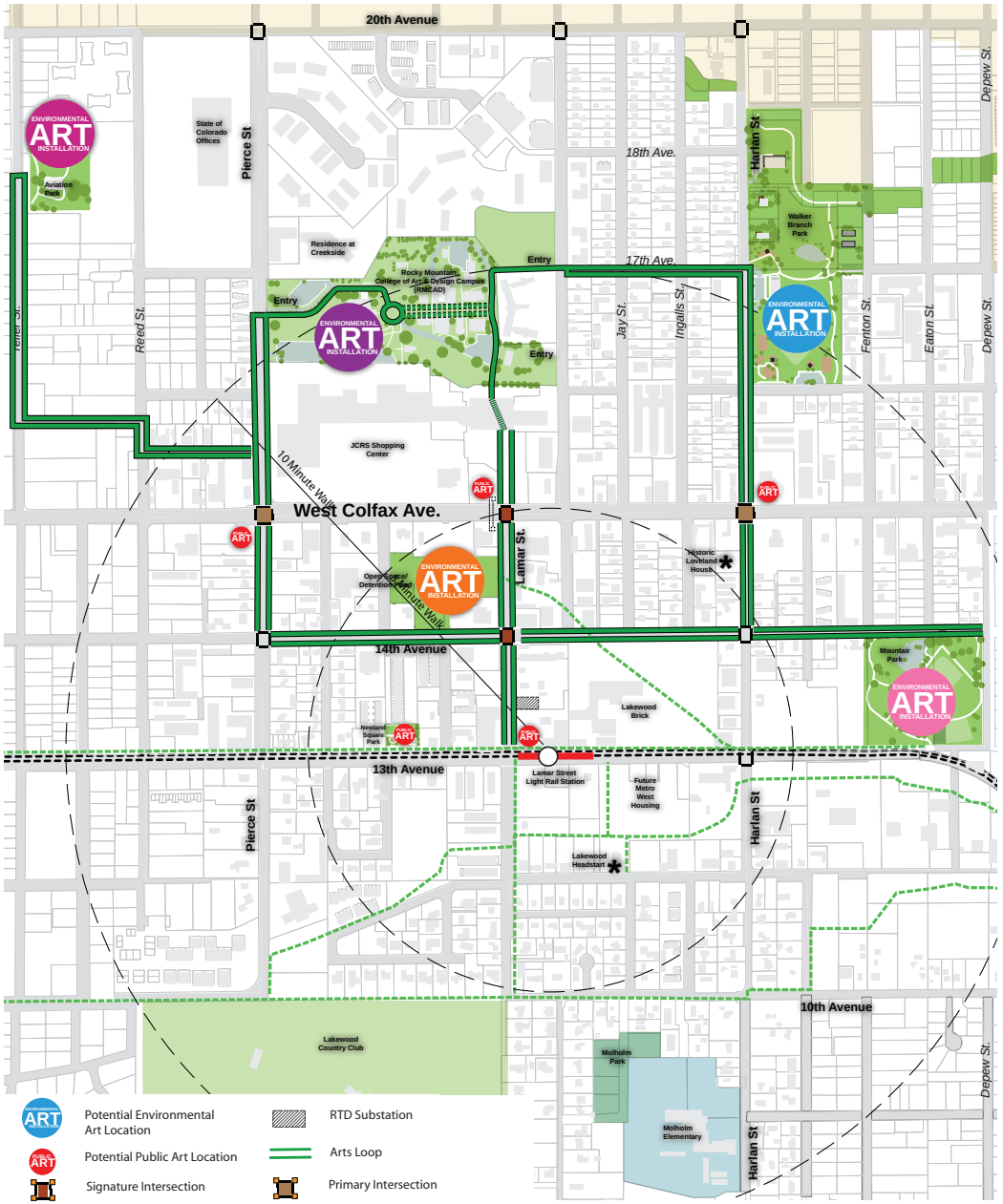


Figure 16: Arts Loop concept

CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY CONCEPTS

Lakewood has an exciting opportunity to help increase the success of the West Corridor by enhancing station area mobility. Providing increased connectivity, improved pedestrian crossings, bike sharing, car sharing, and/or shuttle/circulator service would enhance the mobility to and from the Lamar Station platform and make it easier to access the station platform and destinations in the station area.

Bike sharing and car sharing are innovative approaches to urban mobility, combining the convenience and flexibility of a private vehicle or bicycle with the accessibility and reliability of public mass transit. The bike share and car share programs recommended for the Arts District include multiple stations in key locations throughout the area. The proposed car share locations have been selected to take advantage of high levels of visibility and their close proximity to medium to high density building sites. Proposed bike share station locations have been strategically located along the Arts Loop and at the Lamar Station. A future bike share program should be compatible with Denver's bike share program.

Bike and car share programs are typically owned and managed by private companies or non profits, and are not envisioned to be operated by the city.

Bike share station

Bike share user

Car share pavement marking

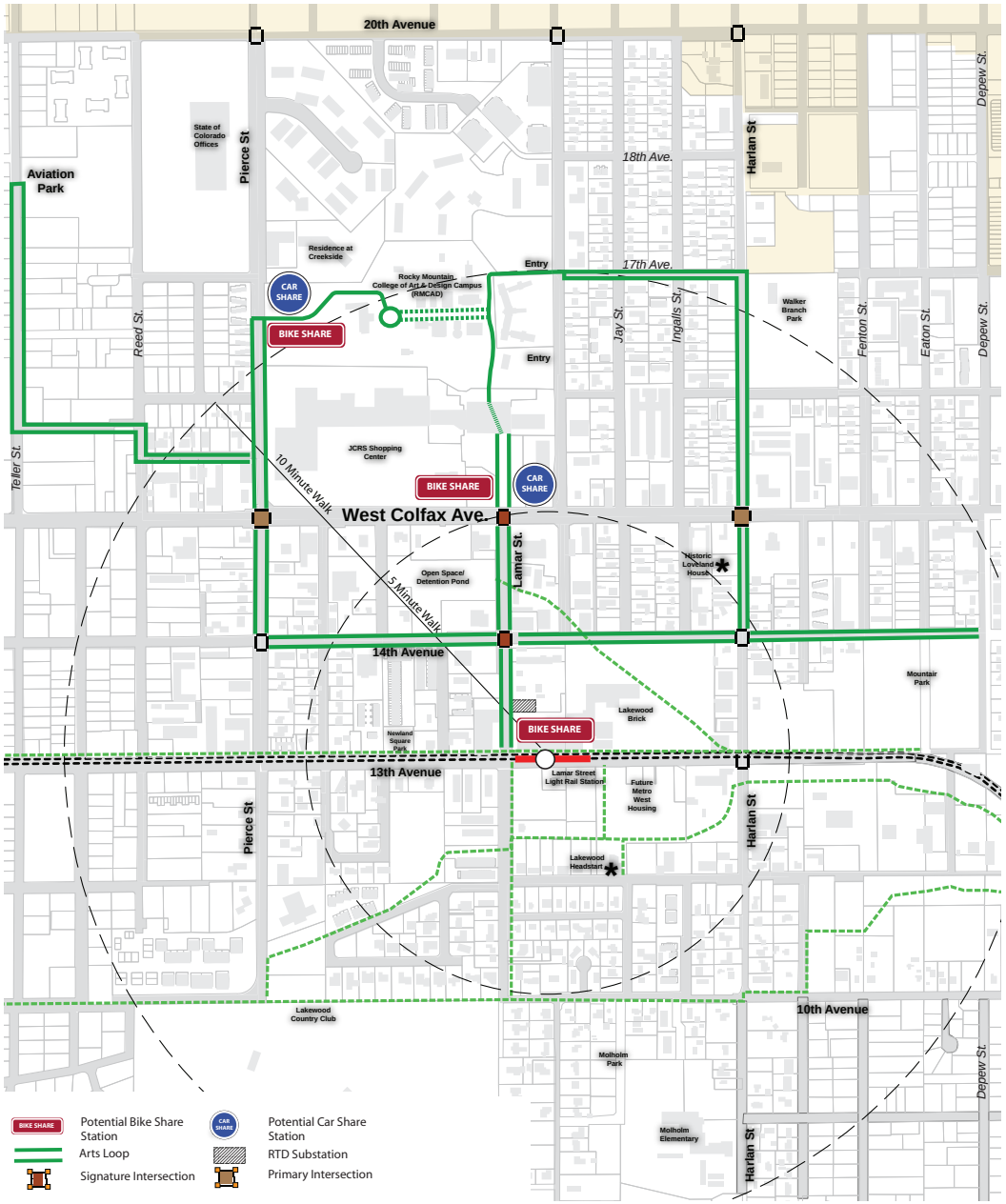


Figure 17: Connectivity and mobility concept

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

An environmental database research study was undertaken as part of the overall land use analysis to identify the potential for the existence of any brownfield properties in the Lamar Station area and to evaluate the redevelopment potential of any potentially contaminated sites. Overall, the research did not find any areas with significant brownfield related issues. It mostly found smaller localized brownfield reports commonly found along major transportation corridors and in infill areas with former commercial and light-industrial uses. Types of properties in the area that have some history of contamination-related issues include current or former dry cleaners, gas stations/Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites, historic landfills, and businesses that used and stored some amount of hazardous waste on site.

Based on the results of detailed file searches at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), most of the brownfield sites within the district have been documented and addressed and do not require any action at this time. For the remaining sites where contamination has been documented or where cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater is not yet complete, recommendations are made in a separate report for further investigation and analysis.

The environmental analysis is included to help further the Arts District concept vision by providing useful information related to any brownfield properties in the area. The findings confirm that there is a reduced risk to property owners in the area and provide useful information to developers or property owners interested in the Lamar Station area. The information also helps facilitate future development and investment by providing a comprehensive summary of the brownfield related issues, determining that there are no major environmental barriers in the area preventing redevelopment and identifying areas where further due diligence is required.

The study found there are numerous opportunities for adaptive reuse in the area due to the historic land uses along West Colfax Avenue. The images on the right are local examples that illustrate how the reuse and/or redevelopment of brownfield sites in existing neighborhoods can become a community amenity.

Example from Westminster showing the redevelopment of a former service station into a new commercial building

Example from Denver showing the reuse of a former dry cleaner site into a new neighborhood breakfast cafe

5. IMPLEMENTATION

To attract private investment, encourage redevelopment and implement the 40 West Arts District concepts, the area will benefit from common signage and streetscape themes to provide a higher level of "place making" quality and identity. A combination of financing tools, especially through partnerships with the proposed Lakewood West Colfax Business Improvement District, the City of Lakewood and other public funding mechanisms can facilitate the urban design and mobility objectives. Ongoing implementation of small-scale, incremental, improvements is also recommended to reflect the organic nature of the changes in the Arts District.

The 40 West Arts District should develop creative partnerships to fund and implement the urban design and mobility concepts, including the environmental graphics and wayfinding elements. This can best be achieved by combining a variety of funding sources and partnerships that will help to make it a unique and attractive location for creatives, artists, new businesses and residents.

Implementation of the public realm concepts can be an important economic reinvestment tool for the City of Lakewood and a revitalization catalyst for the area.

Potential reinvestment tools and mechanisms to help implement the 40 West Arts District concept include:

Jefferson County Enterprise Zone

The Jefferson County Enterprise Zone, as a part of Colorado's Enterprise Zone program, provides tax incentives to encourage businesses to locate and expand in designated economically distressed areas of the state. Businesses located in an Enterprise Zone may qualify for up to nine Enterprise Zone Tax Credits that encourage job creation and investment in the Enterprise Zone. (Source: http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/OEDIT/OEDIT/1167928191402)

40 West Contribution Project

Through the Enterprise Zone program, 40 West Arts District can augment the benefits of an arts district and contribute to the revitalization of the area by offering tax credits for contributions given to support activities, events and improvements for branding of the district administered through the organization.

Lakewood Infrastructure Contribution Project

The Lakewood Infrastructure Contribution project offers tax credits for contributions or donations related to public infrastructure.

Targeted investments and qualifying improvements may include sidewalk connections, floodplain mitigation, a signalized intersection, and well lit walkways and streetscapes.

Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund

Specific sites in the area may qualify for the State of Colorado Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund. Applicants can apply for low interest loans offered through the program if their project meets the specific criteria outlined by the program.

Private Development and Reinvestment

As with many emerging arts districts across the nation, the 40 West Arts District is expected to stimulate new development and reinvestment in the area. In many instances, new creative businesses, entrepreneurs and arts-related users will emerge as a new market sector. Through private investment, properties may be repurposed or repositioned to take advantage of the synergies created by 40 West Arts District. The new development opportunities and reinvestment can contribute to implementing the urban design and mobility concepts by completing streetscape improvements as a part of individual private projects within the area.

PRIORITY 1 / IMMEDIATE TERM:

The initial stages of implementation should focus on Lamar Street and the intersection of West Colfax Avenue and Lamar to bring immediate identity and branding to the area. This includes new pedestrian crossings across West Colfax Avenue, including the Arts Loop across the intersection and along Lamar Street between West Colfax and the Lamar Street Station. The proposed Lakewood West Colfax Business Improvement District and City staff should establish a partnership to facilitate the implementation of the improved streetscape and pedestrian oriented improvements, signage, lighting and other public amenities that begin to implement the vision for the area.

PRIORITY 2 / ONGOING:

Ongoing implementation steps should include improvements along West Colfax Avenue, the remaining priority streets identified in the concepts, and new opportunities for public art (temporary or permanent) at the station and throughout the Arts District. Streetscape improvements along the remaining identified priority streets and avenues should be planned and designed to create overall unity, but implemented as funds and opportunities become available.