

# Creating Sustainable Places



**VIBRANT**

**CONNECTED**

**GREEN**

## Implementation Guidebook

*for Sustainable Development in Greater Kansas City*

# Creating Sustainable Places Partners

*The Creating Sustainable Places consortium includes a broad coalition of local governments, representing over 90 percent of the Greater Kansas City area's population, as well as partners from the business and development community, universities, housing organizations, equity organizations, professional organizations and nonprofits.*

## Local Government Partners

Cass County, Mo.  
Clay County, Mo.  
Jackson County, Mo.  
Johnson County, Kan.  
Leavenworth County, Kan.  
Platte County, Mo.  
Unified Government of Wyandotte  
County/ Kansas City, Kan.  
City of Belton, Mo.  
City of Blue Springs, Mo.  
City of Gardner, Kan.  
City of Gladstone, Mo.  
City of Grain Valley, Mo.  
City of Grandview, Mo.  
City of Independence, Mo.  
City of Kansas City, Mo.  
City of Leavenworth, Kan.  
City of Lee's Summit, Mo.  
City of Liberty, Mo.  
City of Merriam, Kan.  
City of Mission, Kan.  
City of North Kansas City, Mo.  
City of Oak Grove, Mo.  
City of Olathe, Kan.  
City of Overland Park, Kan.  
City of Pleasant Hill, Mo.  
City of Prairie Village, Kan.  
City of Shawnee, Kan.

City of Raymore, Mo.  
City of Raytown, Mo.  
City of Westwood, Kan.  
First Suburbs Coalition  
Metropolitan Official Health Agencies  
of the Kansas City Area (MOHAKCA)  
Mid-America Regional Council  
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

## State Supporters

Kansas Department of Commerce  
Kansas Department of Health and Environment  
Kansas Department of Transportation  
Missouri Department of Economic Development  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Missouri Department of Transportation

## Equity and Engagement Partners

Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO)  
Hispanic Civic Engagement Project  
MORE2  
National Civic League\*  
One KC Voice  
PolicyLink\*  
Urban League

## Business and Development Partners

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce  
Home Builders Association  
Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute\*  
Urban Land Institute\*\*

## Housing Partners

Local Initiative Support Corporation\*\*  
Kansas City, Mo., Housing Authority  
NeighborWorks\*\*

## University Partners

University of Missouri–Kansas City  
University of Kansas  
Kansas State University  
Kansas City Design Center

## Professional Organization Partners

American Planning Association —  
Kansas City Chapter  
American Public Works Association\*\*  
4A Collaborative

## Nonprofit Partners

BikeWalkKC  
Bridging the Gap  
Community-Wide Information Network  
KC Healthy Kids  
KCPT Public Television  
Metropolitan Arts Council  
Metropolitan Energy Center  
Nonprofit Connect  
Rosedale Development Association

\* National organization

\*\* National organization and local affiliate

# Table of Contents

*This Implementation Guidebook was published in January 2012. The information it contains is also available online at [www.marc.org/sustainableplaces](http://www.marc.org/sustainableplaces). Please visit the website for the latest updates.*

<b>Part I: The Creating Sustainable Places Initiative</b>	
A. Introduction .....	3
B. Background.....	4
C. Vibrant, Connected and Green.....	5
D. Guiding Principles.....	6
E. Process and Outcomes .....	8
F. Regional Framework .....	9
<b>Part II: Understanding and Planning for Sustainable Development</b>	
A. Benefits of Sustainable Development.....	12
B. Scales and Types of Sustainable Development.....	13
C. How is Sustainable Planning Different? .....	15
D. The Planning Process .....	16
<b>Part III: Implementing Sustainable Development</b>	
A. Developing a Sustainable Planning Framework .....	20
B. Characteristics of Sustainable Development .....	36
C. Visualizing Sustainable Development Over Time .....	42
D. Conducting Successful Public Engagement.....	50
E. Tools and Their Uses.....	57
F. Regional and Local Indicators.....	61
<b>Part IV: Best Practices</b>	
A. East Colfax Corridor, Denver, Colo. ....	68
B. Belmar, Lakewood, Colo. ....	72
C. Destination Midtown, Omaha, Neb. ....	76
D. Columbia Pike Corridor, Arlington, Va. ....	80
E. RTA Healthline (Euclid Corridor), Cleveland, Ohio .....	84
<b>Index of Terms.....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Coordinating Committee.....</b>	<b>91</b>

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*Part I:  
The Creating Sustainable  
Places Initiative*

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## Introduction

### *The Regional Vision:*

*“Greater Kansas City is a sustainable region that increases the vitality of our society, economy and environment for current residents and future generations.”*

Adopted by the MARC Board of Directors, January 2009

**CREATING SUSTAINABLE PLACES** is an initiative designed to help the Greater Kansas City region develop a path to a more sustainable future. The vision, strategy and principles of Creating Sustainable Places are built on more than 10 years of planning and discussion at the local and regional levels.

One of the primary goals of Creating Sustainable Places is to move beyond planning to implementation — spurring decisions that create real change in real places.

This Implementation Guidebook is intended to serve as a resource for local governments and community partners who are ready to take the next step toward sustainability. It will also be used to:

- Guide sustainable projects toward implementation in each of six designated corridors. These projects will demonstrate the benefits and feasibility of sustainable development and illustrate the processes, approaches and tools needed to make it work.
- Establish a framework for replicable, multi-jurisdictional planning and implementation processes based on the “triple bottom line” of social, economic and environmental interests. This requires new approaches to planning and implementation that recognize the interdependence of communities in our region, especially along shared corridors, and the importance of holistically addressing the multiple dimensions of sustainability.
- Offer a variety of realistic strategies for successful planning and implementation. Sustainability is not one-size-fits-all, and different communities may take different paths to achieving their goals.

The Implementation Guidebook offers tools, indicators, templates and best practices that will not only be used in six key corridors, as part of the three-year Creating Sustainable Places initiative, but can also be used by any community to create more sustainable places.

## **B** Background

*Beginning with Creating Quality Places, a regional planning initiative launched in 1999, the Greater Kansas City region has engaged in a decade of discussion about how to grow and develop in more sustainable ways. In 2009, more than 80,000 residents participated in Imagine KC, a public forum produced in partnership with KCPT public television, to help develop a vision for the future.*

**WORKING TOGETHER** over the past decade, citizens and leaders throughout the region have developed a shared vision for a sustainable region — one that balances a thriving economy, social equity and a healthy environment, meeting today’s needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

This vision is captured in the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development — a compilation of regional and local policies and plans with common themes and goals related to sustainability. The plan defines activity centers and transportation corridors as key elements of what makes a region vibrant, connected and green. It also outlines the work flow for the Creating Sustainable Places initiative.

Although its foundation has been many years in the making, Creating Sustainable Places was officially launched in October 2010, when a consortium of more than 60 regional partners, led by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), received a \$4.25 million planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to advance the implementation of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

MARC’s Board of Directors appointed representatives from local governments, businesses, nonprofits, equity organizations, universities, professional associations and housing organizations to the Coordinating Committee that oversees the initiative. Committee members are working with regional leaders, stakeholders and community members to help the region achieve more sustainable development patterns, using multiple approaches based on a three-step process:

1. Developing a deeper public understanding of the benefits of and strategies to achieve sustainability.
2. Identifying existing tools and creating new ones that will facilitate successful sustainable development.
3. Putting plans into action to create a more sustainable future.



## *Vibrant, Connected and Green*

*Vibrant, connected, green places are sustainable places that are enduring, resilient and adaptable — they are places that stand the test of time and will be as attractive 50 years from now as they are today. Sustainable places provide every resident with a high quality of life without harming our ability to do the same for future generations.*

**VIBRANT** places provide easy access to jobs and services; offer housing, recreation, shopping and transportation choices; foster connections between neighbors and social engagement; and promote access to arts and culture. Vibrant places make efficient use of public and private assets and resources and are attractive to residents and businesses, not just today and tomorrow, but over the long haul.

**CONNECTED** places are linked by corridors that provide transportation choices, accommodating walking, biking and public transportation as well as the automobile. These corridors attract development and help connect residents to jobs and services.

**GREEN** places create real economic, social and environmental value for residents, businesses and communities. The conservation, restoration and addition of important green places creates a positive impact on our natural world while creating places that promote healthy life styles and healthy residents.



## **Guiding Principles**

*The Creating Sustainable Places initiative is guided by a set of principles, adopted by the Coordinating Committee, that address the elements of a sustainable community: equity, economy, environment, places and processes. These principles should be reflected in plans, projects and implementation strategies for the six key corridors that are part of the initiative. The principles will also serve as a guide for local governments working toward a more sustainable future.*

### **Equity**

**Residents of all races, economic means and abilities are welcome and equipped to participate in all aspects of community life.**

*A region is most likely to be sustainable, and nationally and globally competitive, if all its residents are active participants in its economy, community and public life.*



### **Environment**

**The environment and our natural resources and assets are preserved, protected and restored.**

*Natural assets such as wetlands and open space provide benefits, including clean air and water, that are essential for the health and vitality of the region's residents and places.*



### **Economy**

**A competitive, robust economy is supported and promoted by fostering innovation, supporting quality education, and enhancing access to quality jobs.**

*A sustainable region requires a productive, resilient, adaptable and innovative economy. Full participation in the economy by a well-educated workforce with easy access to next-generation job opportunities strengthens the economy, increases quality of life, and makes the region more sustainable. Increasingly, the strength of a region's economy is measured by how well it competes across the country and the world, not by how much it competes within itself.*



## Places

Sustainable places, wherever they occur, are vibrant, efficient, and enduring and are characterized by:

**Reinvestment:** *Investment in existing communities and neighborhoods ensures that they remain or become vibrant, connected, green places.*



**Transportation Choices:** *Travel choices help reduce family transportation costs, reduce air pollution, and connect families to jobs and services.*



**Housing Choices:** *Housing choices for all ages, lifestyles, incomes, races and ethnicities help connect families and jobs and support a robust economy and healthy housing industry.*



**Development in Corridors and Activity Centers:** *Vibrant corridors, with housing, employment, and commercial development, support public transportation, create new development opportunities, provide increased lifestyle choices, make efficient use of existing public and private assets, and help knit the region together.*



**Design for Healthier Lifestyles:** *Places designed for healthier lifestyles and access to healthy foods improve the health of residents, reduce health-care costs and contribute to vibrant neighborhoods.*



**Preservation of Unique Community Characteristics:** *Distinctive communities and historic and cultural assets increase the vibrancy of the region and contribute to its overall economic health.*



**Resource Conservation and Energy Efficiency:** *Sustainable places conserve resources for future generations and simultaneously reduce costs and increase economic and fiscal efficiency.*



## Processes

Partnerships are created and strengthened between government, the private sector, regional institutions, and the public to better coordinate public policy and private investment in support of sustainability.

*As society becomes more complex and resources more limited, it is increasingly necessary that all sectors collaborate to maximize the benefits of strategic investments and minimize long-term costs.*



Stakeholders and the public, especially residents who have not typically engaged, are involved in the development of plans and policies.

*An ambitious vision cannot be accomplished if the region's residents are not engaged and supportive of its principles, plans and policies.*



Organizational and institutional processes promote learning from past experience and building capacity for effective change.

*In a sustainable, competitive region, local institutions are enduring, resilient and adaptable, and have the capacity to address major issues and changing conditions. A key element is the ability to continuously learn from past efforts and from successful practices in other institutions and regions.*

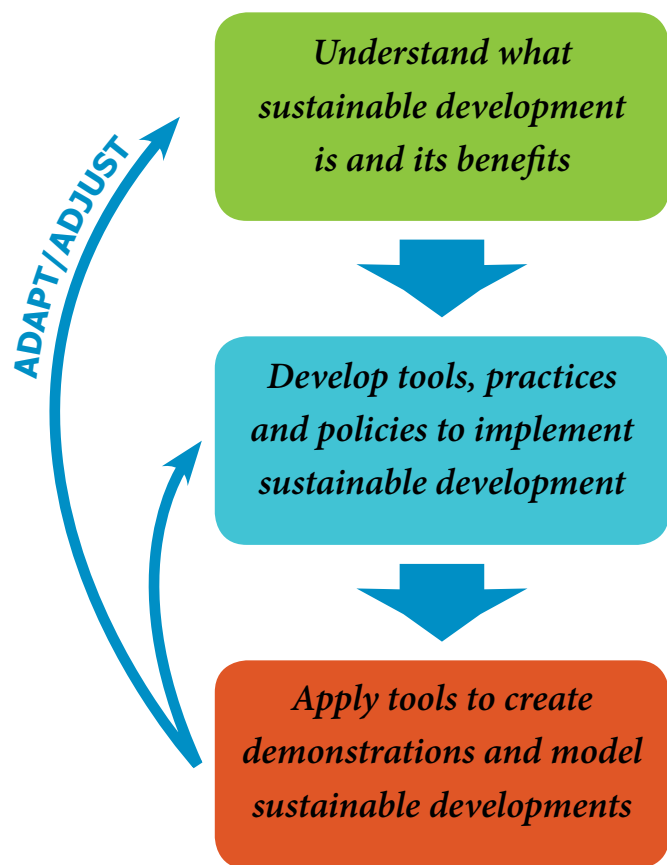


Decision-making processes are integrated to simultaneously maximize environmental, economic, and social benefits through multi-benefit solutions.

*The interdependence of issues requires integrated solutions that maximize benefits, leverage resources and minimize unintended consequences.*



## **E** *Processes and Outcomes*



The Creating Sustainable Places initiative will use an adaptive process to foster a collective understanding of what it means to be sustainable; develop tools to facilitate sustainable development, and create successful demonstrations of sustainable practices and projects.

Outcomes for the six specific corridors identified as part of the initiative include:

- Planning and implementation strategies built on a foundation of community engagement.
- Ways to measure success and a strategy to monitor results and adjust strategies as needed.
- A clear articulation of how to implement specific, short-term, sustainable development projects.
- A sustainable development strategy that reflects the region's Guiding Principles and is integrated with strategies of adjacent jurisdictions.

Additional outcomes for the overall three-year initiative include:

- A broader understanding of what sustainable development is and why it is important for the region's future.
- A set of credible tools, practices and policies that facilitate sustainable development, are affordable, and are easy to apply.
- Identification of sustainable development projects — and the processes that led to them — that can serve as models.
- Guidelines that can be used by any community to create more sustainable places.
- An updated Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.
- A set of regional and local sustainability indicators that can be monitored and used to inform policy change, and a system to share indicator data with the public, institutions and organizations.

## F Regional Framework

*The activity centers, transportation corridors, conservation areas and neighborhoods in Greater Kansas City provide a framework for future growth and development within the region. While the Creating Sustainable Places initiative includes tools and resources that can be applied anywhere in the region, in the short term, implementation planning will focus on six specific corridors. Over the next three years, Creating Sustainable Places will expand its focus to include a more robust set of corridors, centers and conservation areas.*

### Creating Sustainable Places Demonstration Corridors\*



*The six demonstration corridors highlighted above were selected for the Creating Sustainable Places demonstration because they are all part of the Smart Moves regional transit plan and are a key focus of other transit investments, including the federal TIGER grant.*



\*Draft corridor alignments, subject to change as planning progresses.

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*Part II:  
Understanding  
and Planning for  
Sustainable Development*



## *Benefits of Sustainable Development*

*Creating a more sustainable region will not happen overnight. It will require hard work — deliberate, coordinated action to promote incremental changes that will help us achieve our ultimate goals. This hard work will pay off with the many benefits of sustainable development.*

**IT SAVES MONEY** — More compact, durable and adaptable development, along with redevelopment in existing areas, will reduce the financial burden of building and maintaining additional public and private infrastructure.

**IT CREATES A STRONGER ECONOMY** — By reducing energy and infrastructure costs, creating more vibrant markets, expanding the pool of qualified workers and fostering innovation, we create a stronger, more stable and more resilient economy.

**IT PRESERVES AND ENHANCES THE ENVIRONMENT** — By reducing emissions, managing stormwater, preserving natural areas and conserving resources, we create healthier, more resilient and more attractive places to live.

**IT FOSTERS A HEALTHIER POPULATION** — With more options for walking, biking and exercise, better access to healthy foods, and cleaner air and water, we will foster healthier lifestyles, reducing health care costs and stress on the health care system.

**IT PROMOTES STABLE, ENDURING NEIGHBORHOODS** — By encouraging compact, mixed-use centers and corridors, a systems-based approach to planning, and inclusive public decision-making, we help support thriving, attractive, enduring neighborhoods.

**IT EXPANDS ACCESS** — By improving access to jobs, education and basic services, and providing quality, affordable housing in all parts of the region, we can improve the quality of life and also help build a stronger, more competitive economy.

**IT PROVIDES MORE CHOICES** — By encouraging more housing choices and transportation options, and fostering the development of convenient, affordable places for people to live, work and play, we enhance the livability and attractiveness of our communities.

**IT ENSURES A THRIVING FUTURE** — With enduring and adaptable communities, and an innovative, resilient economy we will help ensure that the region will provide a high quality of life for our children and grandchildren.



## **B** Scales and Types of Sustainable Development

*Sustainable development occurs at the regional, local and site levels, and within each level it occurs in places — centers, corridors, conservation areas and neighborhoods. While projects occur independently, each contributes to a more sustainable region and to our collective success.*



**AT THE REGIONAL SCALE**, sustainability initiatives typically focus on systems such as air and water quality, transportation and natural resources. These systems support local initiatives and goals through regional plans and strategies that cross political and natural boundaries. Regional coordination helps ensure that local projects reinforce each other and make the most efficient use of resources.



**AT THE LOCAL SCALE**, communities are translating their own sustainable visions, goals and values into tangible policies, regulations and actions that reflect local values. These policies, regulations and actions work to reinforce regional sustainability goals and are in turn supported by regional systems.



**AT THE SITE SCALE**, sustainability initiatives are driven by local policies and regulations and innovation within the design and development community. A range of green building programs may be applied, such as LEED, EnergyStar, BuildGreen and others. Site planning practices may incorporate water-conserving landscaping, low-impact development approaches and other techniques.

**CORRIDORS** function primarily as travel routes that help connect communities, neighborhoods and other places within the region. Corridors may also serve as destinations in and of themselves. Enhanced options for multi-modal travel (walking, biking and transit), live/work opportunities, shopping, essential services, and amenities (entertainment, cultural venues and outdoor gathering spaces) all contribute to the place-making potential of a corridor. The high concentrations of activity and visibility found along corridors can help attract investment and a broad mix of uses, supporting economic development efforts.



### **CONSERVATION AREAS**

in urbanized areas and at rural/urban interfaces can help improve air and water quality, stabilize stream banks, reduce risks of flooding, and protect wildlife habitat. Woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and other features play an equally important role as part of an integrated green infrastructure network. Conservation areas add to the aesthetic and recreational value of places, with opportunities for trail and bikeway systems and the preservation of native trees and other vegetation and wildlife habitat.

**CENTERS** are places where people shop, work, live, recreate, learn and gather, within a compact, pedestrian- and transit-friendly environment. Centers are easily accessible and located in highly visible locations — often on major corridors — where they may be easily accessed from surrounding neighborhoods and other parts of the region.



The size, mix of uses and intensity of development in each center varies with the availability of land, access, surrounding development, transit services and other considerations. Centers may have an employment focus, with supporting office and retail services, or a largely retail focus, with supporting residential and office uses.

### **NEIGHBORHOODS**

are the fabric that weaves corridors, centers and conservation areas together. Sustainable development depends on strong neighborhoods.

The connections between corridors, centers and conservation areas and adjacent neighborhoods are critical, both for vibrant, healthy communities and for a sustainable region that improves the quality of life for everyone, now and into the future.



## How is Sustainable Planning Different?

*A sustainable planning strategy embodies many aspects of the more traditional planning process. Like many regional and local plans, it promotes compact growth, multi-modal transportation options, housing choices and mixed-use development. How, then, is a sustainable planning strategy different?*

Simply put, a sustainable planning strategy builds on traditional planning processes and goes beyond them:

- It recognizes that a place is most successful when it simultaneously enhances its economic productivity, social equity, and environmental quality. Further, it recognizes that all of these dimensions of a successful place can be enhanced together; they do not have to be traded off one for the other.
- It emphasizes an integrated, systems-based approach rather than focusing on addressing issues or topic areas individually — such as taking an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning, or integrating planning efforts for stormwater facilities, natural systems and street design. This requires a greater emphasis on a local planning framework that enables communities to better respond to development proposals that may not be consistent with sustainability objectives.
- It addresses communities within the region as interrelated and interdependent — leading to more strategic thinking about how to leverage available resources and individual successes and how to avoid creating unintended consequences.

Sustainable planning is built around specific principles, such as the Guiding Principles outlined on pages 6–7. These include specific sustainability concepts, such as concentrating development along corridors and in specific activity centers; building at higher densities in these places; connecting them with multiple forms of transportation; paying close attention to preserving natural areas and integrating them with the built environment; providing housing choices and mixed-use development; preserving the historic character of communities; and encouraging active, healthy lifestyles.

## **D** *The Planning Process*

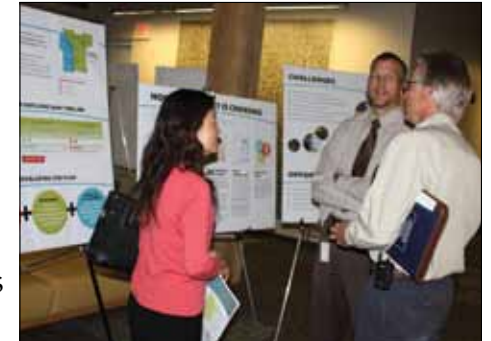
*Sustainable planning can be adapted to reflect the particular desires and conditions of each community. Available resources, local policies and politics and unique characteristics of each place will all influence the process. However, certain fundamental elements should be included in any sustainable planning process.*

It is only through successful planning and implementation that we can truly reap the benefits of sustainable development in centers, corridors, conservation areas and neighborhoods across the region.

Detailed strategies and resources for planning and implementation are provided in **Part III — Implementing Sustainable Development** and **Part IV — Best Practices**. But the basic steps in the planning process and elements of a sustainable development strategy are straightforward and consistent.

### **Steps for a Successful Planning Process**

- Develop a governance structure and an engagement strategy. Identify key leaders and stakeholders, and establish a process for keeping them engaged.
- Define the boundaries of the planning area.
- Build a foundation for future work by summarizing existing conditions; developing an understanding of the market; identifying needs, opportunities and barriers; and building on existing plans.
- Develop a vision that articulates what stakeholders want for the planning area. Follow the Creating Sustainable Places guiding principles (pages 6–7) or develop your own guiding principles.
- Establish priorities and assemble a plan based on the community's vision for the area. Identify necessary investments, activities, timelines, resources and responsibilities.
- Develop an implementation strategy and a process to continually manage implementation.
- Establish benchmarks to monitor progress and a process for periodic review.





**WAYS TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Identify and apply appropriate tools
- Prioritize capital improvements in targeted locations
- Ensure that existing programs and other investments in the planning area reinforce the strategy
- Invest in pre-development studies to advance project implementation
- Identify and fund demonstration projects
- Foster public/private partnerships
- Align development regulations with sustainable planning objectives
- Build awareness and market your opportunities
- Establish a timeline for reviewing and updating the strategy

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*Part III:  
Implementing  
Sustainable Development*

## **A** *Developing a Sustainable Planning Framework*

This section outlines a seven-step process for developing a sustainable planning framework, and describes each step. A more detailed “how-to” checklist at the end of the section provides users with additional information to consider and actions to take.

- 
- 1. DEFINE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**
  - 2. DEFINE THE PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY**
  - 3. BUILD A FOUNDATION**
  - 4. DEVELOP A VISION**
  - 5. ASSEMBLE A PLAN AND PRIORITIES**
  - 6. DEVELOP AND EXECUTE AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**
  - 7. MONITOR PROGRESS**

### **STEP 1: DEFINE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

Critical steps in defining a sustainable planning framework include organizing a project committee, developing a community engagement strategy, establishing a technical advisory committee, and engaging local elected and appointed officials. Each of these steps is described below.

#### **■ ESTABLISH A PROJECT COMMITTEE**

The first step in developing sustainable plan or development strategy for a corridor or place is to form a project committee to oversee the work. The project committee should be representative of key stakeholder interests, including local governments, community institutions such as churches and schools, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and key community demographics and interests.

The project committee will be responsible for community engagement, developing priorities, reviewing plans, and approving final plans and the implementation strategy. The project committee may also take responsibility for implementation of the plan after its adoption.

The project committee will need strong staff support, most likely from the local government or possibly from a partnership of organizations.

#### **■ DEVELOP A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Community engagement is a key component of any sustainable planning framework. Engagement of stakeholders and under-represented populations ensures that all interests are reflected in the plan and greatly increases the likelihood that the plan will be implemented. See “Conducting a Successful Public Engagement,” pages 50–56, for a detailed discussion of how to engage the community in the local area



*“Encourage a shift in thinking away from traditional silos towards a more sustainable, systems-based approach that recognizes interrelationships between different focus areas.”*

planning process in a manner that supports the creation of a more sustainable region. This discussion should be used as a foundation for the development of a community engagement strategy that is adaptable, inclusive, targeted and action oriented.

### ■ **ESTABLISH A TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OR WORKING GROUP**

A technical advisory committee or working group comprised of interdisciplinary staff from different departments, agencies, institutions and others should be established to help foster discussion of current practices, technical analysis, data availability and collection, and other technical aspects of the process.

It is crucial that this committee include departments such as Public Works, Environmental Services, Economic Development, Public Health and others that would not typically be involved in local planning processes at this stage — or at all. This will encourage a shift in thinking away from traditional silos towards a more sustainable, systems-based approach that recognizes interrelationships between different focus areas and incorporates them into day-to-day decision-making.

The technical advisory committee should be involved from the plan’s onset and serve as a resource for the project committee, helping to guide its initial steps. Although its most significant role may be in the development of the plan,

the advisory group should also be actively engaged in plan monitoring and implementation.

Establishing a practice of regular interdisciplinary coordination during the planning process will increase the likelihood that this practice will be maintained over time, helping ensure a successful outcome and serving as a model for future planning efforts at the local level.

### ■ **ENGAGE LOCAL ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS**

For a planning process to be successful, local elected and appointed officials should be engaged early on so they can learn about the initiative and its goals. Involving local leaders will help determine whether a strong commitment exists to:

- Follow through on implementation steps once the plan is completed
- Adhere to the plan’s vision and ask developers to comply with the vision
- Consider the plan when making capital investment decisions.

Once this commitment is confirmed, local elected and appointed officials should be updated at key points in the process by local staff and members of the project team to keep them informed, seek their feedback, and continue to build support for potential plan outcomes.

## **STEP 2: DEFINE THE PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY**

Planning area boundaries should be defined based on the type of place (e.g., center vs. corridor) and local conditions. Boundaries for an urban center may be smaller and much more constrained than a center in a suburban context where land is plentiful and the development pattern is not quite as established.

While a general rule of thumb (based on walkable distances) for the width of a center or corridor is one-quarter to one-half mile from the core or major roadway spine, respectively, a variety of site characteristics should be considered. (See specifics in the Sustainable Planning Framework Checklist, page 29). One important guideline is to try not to split neighborhoods or critical environmental features.

The planning area boundary will typically be defined up front by the project committee as a starting point for discussions with the community, local officials and the technical advisory committee. Refinement of the boundary may be necessary based on feedback received during these initial discussions.

## **STEP 3: BUILD A FOUNDATION**

Building a solid foundation for the plan involves evaluating trends and existing conditions, understanding the market context, and understanding the current policy and regulatory context — including existing and proposed regional investments and plans that will impact the area. Together, these steps establish a clear understanding of key issues, opportunities and potential constraints within the planning area and begin to define potential linkages between the planning area and other places and systems within the region. Each of these steps should be addressed as part of the process; however, the level of emphasis placed on particular topics should be tailored to community goals, local site conditions, key issues and available resources.

## **EVALUATE TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Building on the initial site-analysis work completed during Step 2, conduct a thorough assessment of the planning area's physical, environmental and social characteristics as informed by economic and demographic trends, land-use and housing patterns, environmental values and assets, and other indicators listed in the Sustainable Planning Framework Checklist. Include an assessment of the planning area's neighborhoods and how the area relates to regional systems such as transportation, utilities and economic resources. Regional datasets and base maps can be used as a foundation for this analysis.

## **UNDERSTAND THE MARKET CONTEXT**

A clear picture of market trends within the planning area, its surrounding neighborhoods and the community is necessary to understand the short-term and long-term potential for sustainable development and set the stage for a plan that is visionary, but also implementable. Population and employment trends, household incomes, housing characteristics and other factors must be evaluated to assess:

- How much growth is projected within the planning area, surrounding community and region?
- How much of that growth is likely to take place within the planning area over the next five to 10 years and beyond?
- How much of the existing stock of commercial and residential development is likely to need replacing or upgrading over this period, both inside and outside the planning area?
- What is the projected demand for new types of development within the planning area? Are they consistent with sustainable development objectives?

*“Catalyst sites provide a more immediate opportunity to implement sustainable development on a targeted scale.”*

Areas that have already begun to lay the groundwork for sustainable development at the local level through previous planning efforts, updated regulations or incentives will typically have a greater potential to attract sustainable development in the shorter term. In other areas, established development patterns, population density, income levels, existing or planned transit access, and many other factors will play into the discussion of market feasibility. Sustainable development can take on many different forms depending on its location and context — urban, suburban, rural — and the potential feasibility of different development types and mixes will vary accordingly.

One of the most important questions to address as part of this step is whether potential catalyst sites exist within the planning area. Catalyst sites are sites that provide a more immediate opportunity to implement sustainable development on a targeted scale. Catalyst sites may involve a motivated property owner and/or developer; a large, single-owner parcel (particularly if it is publicly owned); public/private partnership opportunities; incentives, such as the presence of a Tax-Increment Finance (TIF) district; or some combination of these conditions. Often, catalyst sites function as demonstration projects for the planning area and potentially for the larger community and region. Where catalyst sites are identified, the resulting plan should include more detailed concepts and provide strategic steps to implement these opportunities as a way to leverage additional investment in the planning area.

## ■ UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT POLICY AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

Review existing plans, policies and regulations applicable to the planning area early in the process to establish an understanding of efforts that have already been completed. Where community-endorsed sustainable plans or regulations already exist — for the planning area or the community as a whole — this process should build on these existing plans.

At a policy level, review existing comprehensive plans, sub-area plans, parks and open-space plans, department strategic plans, and other policy documents with an eye toward identifying opportunities to implement and/or leverage established plans and policies that are consistent with regional objectives.

Previously adopted plans can also be reviewed to see how they might be made more sustainable, while retaining the basic elements of the plan. This review may also reveal new opportunities for coordination between internal departments on the implementation of sustainable plans and policies. For example, if the public works department recently adopted a Complete Streets policy, but has yet to build its first new street under the new policy, perhaps the planning area can be used to showcase the benefits as new development occurs.

At a regulatory level, this step provides an understanding of what potential barriers to sustainable development may exist in current regulations. Outdated regulations in many communities may inadvertently discourage or preclude

sustainable development. For example, existing zoning and development regulations in many communities across the country were developed to support auto-oriented development patterns during the 1950s and 1960s and do not allow for the higher-intensity development, mix of uses, diverse housing types and other characteristics of sustainable places.

While applicants may have the option of requesting exceptions to existing regulations through an alternative process to allow sustainable development practices — such as a planned development process — these processes can be time-consuming, with potentially unpredictable outcomes, making it a costly and risky alternative to pursue.

Additionally, many sustainable development practices such as the integration of solar panels or community gardens or the use of pervious paving materials are not addressed in existing regulations at all, presenting additional barriers for applicants.

This step may also reveal critical gaps in current regulations related to environmental protection, such as stream corridor setbacks or tree preservation requirements. Aligning zoning and development regulations with the resulting plan's vision and policies should be a key implementation strategy to remove barriers, create incentives and establish new regulations as necessary.

## ■ IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Once existing conditions have been reviewed, identify the major barriers to developing and implementing a sustainable development strategy. These barriers will be specific to each place or corridor, but may include some of the following:

- Do the current development regulations prohibit or inhibit sustainable development projects?

- Is there a gap between the costs and revenues? If so, are the available financial incentives sufficient to fill that gap? What costs do those incentives impose on others?
- Is there adequate information available on existing and potential green infrastructure and how it can be incorporated into the overall sustainable development strategy?
- Will property ownership and cooperation from property owners be an issue?
- Will there be public resistance to sustainable development because it is different from what people are used to? Are the existing tools for visualizing and explaining sustainable development sufficient to overcome such skepticism?

Once potential barriers to sustainable development have been identified, each potential barrier should be specifically addressed in the sustainable development plan and implementation strategy. This includes identifying tools that can be used to address the barrier and how they can be deployed and integrated into other planning work. (See “Tools and Their Uses,” pages 57–60.)

## ■ SUMMARIZE KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Building on the information gathered through previous steps and discussions with project stakeholders and the community, prepare a clear and concise summary of key issues and opportunities, highlighting connections to the Creating Sustainable Places guiding principles (pages 6–7).

This summary will serve as a foundation for subsequent discussions with the community, technical advisory committee, and local elected and appointed officials. It can also provide a periodic “checkpoint” to help keep the process focused on desired outcomes.

*“It is important at the vision stage to “aim high”— high enough to create some tension between the community’s assessment of where it is and where it would like to go.”*

## **STEP 4: DEVELOP A VISION**

Once the project committee has developed the foundation of information and current conditions, it will be in a strong position to work with the community to develop a vision for the plan area and a set of principles to guide development. While plans and visions will vary in content, organization and packaging, they should link to the key elements of the guiding principles outlined in Part I — equity, environment, economy and places.

Building on the key issues and opportunities identified in Step 3, explore the following questions with project stakeholders and the community:

- What does sustainability mean to the community within the planning area?
- What are the potential benefits of a sustainable planning framework to the community and region over time?
- What is the community’s desired future for the planning area?
- How can the vision and guiding principles for the planning area be crafted to reinforce regional guiding principles?

It is important at the vision stage to “aim high”— high enough to create some tension between the community’s assessment of where it is and where it would like to go. A vision should be both exciting and energizing. Generally, to unleash the greatest creativity and effort, a vision must describe a future beyond that which the community already knows it can achieve. (Think of

John F. Kennedy’s vision of setting foot on the moon within a decade.) However, if the bar is set too high, a vision can instead be discouraging, viewed as a fantasy, and lead to premature declarations of failure when it is not quickly achieved.

The community will need time to wrestle with this question of how high to set the bar. Grand visions can be achieved, but typically only by making incremental progress over a long-enough period of time. It is important to describe a path to the vision that can be viewed as realistic by members of the community, even if some important questions remain. This path — especially the earlier parts of it — can be fleshed out in more detail in the planning and implementation stages.

After developing the vision for the planning area, it is helpful to adopt a complementary set of guiding principles. Principles are a way to more clearly define what the community wants to see happen and how they want it to happen. The Creating Sustainable Places guiding principles are a good place to start. Are these principles ones you would like to see implemented in your community? What other principles are important for accomplishing your vision?

## **STEP 5: ASSEMBLE A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND PRIORITIES**

With the vision and guiding principles in place and the foundational information has been collected and analyzed, it is time to develop a Sustainable Development Plan for the area that defines specific goals and policies. In addition, the plan

should establish a physical framework for future land uses, multi-modal circulation and environmental considerations within the planning area.

The Sustainable Planning Framework checklist identifies essential topics to address — within the context the Creating Sustainable Places principles — as goals and policies are developed. In some cases, topics may relate to more than one element, reinforcing the integrated nature of the sustainable planning framework. Linkages between elements should be acknowledged to help guide the discussion of implementation strategies in Step 6.

Another important element of this step is to identify priorities. For corridors, this could include identifying intersections or centers which have the greatest opportunity for concentrated, mixed-use development. These areas may be strategically in the best position for development because of current land use and zoning, property ownership, and connections to transportation and utilities.

Priorities generally have the following characteristics:

- They are ripe for action because they are in areas where other private and public investments are occurring, or where property owners and developers are ready to make investments.
- They are projects that can have the greatest impact on the vision and guiding principles.
- They are projects that have the greatest support from the community and stakeholders.

## **STEP 6: DEVELOP AND EXECUTE AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

In order to be successful, plans must include clear priorities for implementation. An oversight structure should be put in place to ensure continuous attention to implementation.

A sustainable planning framework should identify where efforts will be focused, now and over the long-term, to leverage available resources and achieve desired outcomes.

Each implementation strategy should identify recommended actions to implement the plan in the near-term (one to three years), mid-term (three to five years), and long-term (five years and beyond). The strategy should include efforts that are already funded or otherwise underway, as well as new steps or actions to be taken. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities and essential partnerships for carrying out the strategy should also be identified through ongoing discussions with the technical advisory committee and other project stakeholders. Each implementation strategy should be tailored to fit local conditions.

Strategies for implementation of sustainable development plans at the local level may include some of the following:

### **■ IDENTIFY AND APPLY APPROPRIATE TOOLS**

Many tools are currently available in the region — or in development — to help advance sustainable development objectives at the local and regional level. (See pages 57–60.) These tools should be used as appropriate to support all aspects of the implementation strategy.

### **■ PRIORITIZE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN TARGETED LOCATIONS**

Public investment in needed infrastructure — such as streetscape enhancements, upgrades to aging water and wastewater facilities, transit service enhancements, or the retrofitting of existing streets to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians — can be a powerful incentive for private investment. Private investors may be hesitant to invest in an “up-and-coming” area if there appears to be a pattern of disinvestment on the part of the local municipality.

*“In areas where sustainable development is a relatively new and potentially untested concept, demonstration projects can help serve as a real-world testament to its feasibility.”*

Targeting investments within the planning area demonstrates the municipality’s commitment to support the plan’s implementation and reassures private investors. Obtaining local government commitment to invest in infrastructure or programs in advance of the planning can also greatly increase community participation.

#### ■ **USE EXISTING PROGRAMS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS TO REINFORCE GOALS**

Local governments and other agencies and institutions frequently make investments and operate programs within each planning area. Take advantage of these opportunities to reinforce the implementation plan. For example, code enforcement and nonprofit and utility programs could work together to broaden energy efficiency programs. If a street investment is planned for the area, using Complete Street standards could reinforce implementation goals.

#### ■ **INVEST IN PRE-DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

More detailed market and pre-development studies may be needed to move catalyst projects or other demonstration projects to implementation. Investing in these studies can help expedite the implementation process and serve as an incentive for potential investors and/or developers.

#### ■ **IDENTIFY AND FUND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS**

In areas where sustainable development is a relatively new and potentially untested concept, demonstration projects can help serve as a real-world testament to the feasibility of

sustainable development. Demonstration projects may be focused on one aspect of sustainable development — such as renewable energy or urban agriculture — or they may encompass the implementation of an entire sustainable development project, such as a catalyst project identified during the planning process.

#### ■ **FOSTER PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

The feasibility of specific projects can be enhanced substantially through the use of creative public/private partnerships. Although partnerships will vary, they might involve low-cost loans, tax-abatement programs, land transfers, or other incentives provided by the municipality to support the construction of a particular sustainable development project by a private entity.

#### ■ **ALIGN REGULATIONS WITH SUSTAINABLE PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

Existing zoning and development regulations can be a significant barrier to sustainable development. Aligning zoning and development regulations with the plan’s vision and policies is essential to remove barriers, create incentives and establish new regulations as necessary.

Regardless of the specific approach taken — new form-based codes, new mixed-use districts, new sustainability provisions, targeted amendments to existing regulations, or some combination of these — the regulatory framework for the planning area should make it easier to build projects that

are consistent with sustainable planning objectives and more difficult to build projects that are not.

Each community should also consider whether applicants will be required to do certain things or simply encouraged to do them through the use of incentives. Many communities initially take an incentive-based approach to sustainable development practices to help offset potentially higher costs associated with new technologies, materials and approaches.

### **■ BUILD AWARENESS AND MARKET YOUR OPPORTUNITIES**

A key step in every implementation plan should be marketing the plan to the community, decision makers, stakeholders and the public. Concurrent with the plan's completion, information should be made available — online or in printed materials — to allow property owners and the development community to quickly assess potential opportunities in the planning area. These materials should highlight key aspects of the plan, identify catalyst project potential, summarize priority recommendations, and identify resources available to support the implementation of the plan. The local jurisdiction should use these materials as economic development tools and update them to reflect progress in the planning area.

### **■ ESTABLISH A TIMELINE FOR REVIEW AND UPDATES**

Stakeholders and the technical advisory committee should meet annually, or as needed, to review the implementation strategy and its progress. Convening this meeting should be the responsibility of a specific person or agency.

## **STEP 7: MONITOR PROGRESS**

An essential part of any successful implementation strategy is a system for monitoring progress. This is done at two levels:

1. Measure the actions identified in the implementation strategy to verify that they are being undertaken as proposed and in a timely fashion.
2. Use higher-level indicators to measure whether the actions are having the anticipated impact. These indicators should reflect the vision and guiding principles for the plan area. For example, if walkability was identified as an important guiding principle, use indicators to measure whether the area has become more walkable.

The project committee, with the help of the technical advisory committee, should develop a set of action measures, benchmarks and indicators that are readily measurable over time. (See “Regional and Local Indicators,” pages 61–65.) Report on and discuss these measures periodically and make adjustments in the plan and strategy based on the results. In addition, it is very important to report results to the community and to celebrate successes when they occur. This helps to maintain momentum and reinforce the benefits of the sustainable development plan.

## **THE SUSTAINABLE PLANNING FRAMEWORK CHECKLIST**

The Sustainable Planning Framework Checklist on the following pages provides a more detailed guide to accomplishing each of these steps. Each plan developed as part of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative will be expected to generally follow these steps, but this checklist can also serve as a general guide for other sustainable development planning work in the region.



# SUSTAINABLE PLANNING FRAMEWORK CHECKLIST

## STEP 1: DEFINE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### Objectives:

- Establish a governance structure to oversee the planning and implementation process.
- Develop a community engagement strategy that is targeted, inclusive and action oriented.
- Establish a technical advisory committee or working group to support the planning process and assist with plan implementation.
- Engage local elected and appointed officials in the planning process.

### 1a: Establish a Project Committee

Organize a project committee:

- Stakeholder composition
  - Neighborhood leadership
  - Business leadership
  - Property owners
  - Special and under-represented populations
  - Local government and agencies
- Set out process description and time frame
- Secure staff support

### 1b: Develop a Community Engagement Strategy

Develop a community engagement strategy consistent with steps provided in the community engagement section:

- Organize a leadership team
- Prepare for the engagement
- Make it happen
- Use community input
- Evaluate the effort

### 1c: Establish a Technical Advisory Committee or Working Group

Establish a technical advisory committee or working group comprised of:

- Local government staff
- Transportation representatives (MoDOT, KDOT, MARC)
- Environmental representatives (MARC, MDNR, KDHE)
- Utilities

Clearly define the role of the group in the process:

- Advise project committee
- Incorporate regularly scheduled meetings into the project work plan and timeline
- Engage in the implementation strategy
- Set the stage for long-term follow up

### 1d: Engage Local Elected and Appointed Officials

- Engage local elected and appointed officials in the process prior to plan initiation to assess the level of commitment to:
  - Follow through on implementation steps once the plan is completed
  - Adhere to the plan's vision and ask private investors to adhere to the plan's vision
  - Consider the plan when making capital investment decisions
- Provide updates at key points in the planning process

## STEP 2: DEFINE THE PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

### Objectives:

- Establish a planning area boundary that reflects the unique characteristics of the planning area and its surrounding context.
- Establish a foundation for a discussion of trends and existing conditions in Step 3.

Evaluate the role of the following in the planning area and its surrounding context as the basis of defining a physical boundary for the process:

- Physical barriers (e.g., highway, river) that logically bound the planning area on one or more sides
- Areas of stability (areas that are already developed and are unlikely to change within the planning horizon)
- Areas of potential change or infill/redevelopment opportunities (areas that are vacant or are underutilized in terms of the intensity or condition of existing development)
- Public/private ownership (multiple parcels or larger tracts of land under a single ownership or public ownership that may present potential opportunities for future public/private partnerships and/or redevelopment)
- Natural resource areas (e.g., streams, rivers, wetlands, forests, prairies, greenways)
- Established residential neighborhoods
- Major landmarks, institutions, or special areas (e.g., educational, cultural, employment)
- Watersheds
- Access and connectivity
  - How is the corridor or center accessed?
  - Does it intersect with other major travel corridors?
  - Does it draw people from a larger commute shed?

## STEP 3: BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR THE PLAN — TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

### 3a: Evaluate Trends and Existing Conditions

### Objectives:

- Evaluate existing economic, environmental and social conditions and trends within the planning area.
- Assess current plans and studies.
- Identify opportunities and potential constraints with respect to sustainable development.
- Establish a baseline of information that may be used to support monitoring of the plan's recommendations over time.

Assess the economic, environmental and social trends and conditions within the planning area and surrounding context:

- Social trends
  - Population
  - Households
  - Age
- Economic trends
  - Income
  - Growth projections
  - Housing characteristics (e.g., median home price, occupancy, vacancy)
  - Employment projections

- Environmental trends
  - Hydrography (including riparian corridors, floodplains, impaired streams and watersheds)
  - Topography (steep slopes)
  - Wildlife and habitat (threatened and endangered species, critical habitat)
  - Ground cover (high quality natural resources, canopy cover, native vegetation)
  - Soils
  - Brownfield designation
  - Other

Inventory and assess current land use and public infrastructure and capacity:

- Existing and planned land use
- Current zoning
- Underutilized lands analysis
- Public/private ownership
- Existing and planned bikeways, parks, trails, and greenways
- Infrastructure (capacity, condition, planned improvements)
- Existing and planned roadways and multi-modal access (including existing levels of service, vehicle miles traveled)
- Existing and planned transit service (including ridership)
- Existing and projected service levels (police and fire, utilities, schools)
- Jurisdictional composition if multi-jurisdictional
- Other

### **3b: Understand the Market Context**

#### **Objectives:**

- *Establish an understanding of market trends within the planning area and surrounding community.*
- *Determine how much future growth is likely to be absorbed within the planning area over time.*
- *Evaluate potential market support for sustainable development within the planning area in the short and longer term.*

Building on the trends and existing conditions analysis completed as part of 3a, conduct market analysis:

- Retail market areas
- Residential market areas
- Building permit trends
- Distribution of household income
- Residential demand (for sale, rental)
- Retail supply and demand
- Office supply and demand
- Strengths and opportunities
- Vacancy rates

Develop land-use program and phasing:

- Growth scenarios
- Expected residential, retail and office demand
- Acreage requirements

Identify potential catalyst site parameters:

- Location
- Potential programming
- Ownership
- Partnerships
- Other

### 3c: Understand the Current Regulatory System and Context

#### Objectives:

- Evaluate existing economic, environmental and social conditions and trends within the planning area.
- Identify opportunities and potential constraints with respect to the *Creating Sustainable Places* guiding principles.
- Establish a baseline of information that may be used to support monitoring of the plan's recommendations over time.

Review existing community plans (comprehensive plan, sub-area plans, regional plans, parks and recreation plans, transportation plans, and others) applicable to the planning area with an eye towards:

- Existing policies that are supportive of sustainable development practices and can be leveraged within the planning area
- Potentially conflicting policies that will need to be addressed
- Opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration on sustainable development initiatives

Review existing regulations (zoning, design standards, overlay districts) applicable to the planning area to identify:

- Barriers to sustainable development (e.g., sustainable uses, densities, or development practices are not permitted)
- Potential incentives to support sustainable development practices (e.g., density or height bonuses, reduced parking requirements)
- Potential need for new regulations to support sustainable development practices (e.g., neighborhood conservation districts, stream corridor setbacks, cluster development provisions)

### 3d: Identify Barriers to Success

#### Objectives:

- Identify barriers that could prevent implementation of the plan or its sustainable components.
- Identify potential tools that can help better understand these barriers and overcome them.

Based on a review of the existing markets, regulations, and other conditions and circumstances:

- Identify and define specific circumstances or conditions that might prevent the implementation of the sustainable development plan
- For each potential barrier, develop a specific strategy to address and overcome that barrier
- As a part of each strategy, using the tools section of this guidebook (pages 57–60) and other resources, identify tools that could be used to help address the issue

### 3e: Summarize Key Issues and Opportunities

#### Objectives:

- Based on analysis conducted during Steps 3a-3d, identify a targeted set of key sustainable issues and opportunities for the planning area.
- Engage stakeholders in a discussion about these issues and opportunities and how they may be addressed using a cooperative approach.

Identify targeted key issues and opportunities for the planning area that:

- Reflect the *Creating Sustainable Places* principles contained in this guidebook (pages 6–7).
- Have been vetted with the community, elected and appointed officials, and other project stakeholders

## STEP 4: DEVELOP A VISION

### **Objectives:**

*Develop a vision, guiding principles and supporting policies for the planning area that:*

- *Clearly reflect the outcomes of the community engagement process.*
- *Establish a clear linkage between planning area policies and the Creating Sustainable Places guiding principles.*
- *Reflect a balance between economic, environmental and social considerations.*

Using the Community Engagement process developed in Step 1 and the information gathered in Step 3, ask the community to discuss the following questions:

- What does sustainability mean to the community within the planning area?
- What are the potential benefits of a sustainable planning framework to the community and region over time?
- What is the community's desired future for the planning area?
- How can the vision and guiding principles for the planning area be crafted to reinforce regional guiding principles?

Use the answers to these questions and the Creating Sustainable Places vision and guiding principles to develop a vision and guiding principles for the plan area that addresses the following:

- Equity
- Environment
- Economy
- Places, including:
  - Reinvestment
  - Transportation choices
  - Housing choices

- Corridors and activity centers
- Healthier lifestyles
- Preserving unique community characteristics and assets
- Energy conservation

## STEP 5: ASSEMBLE A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND PRIORITIES

### **Objectives:**

- *Based on the vision and guiding principles, develop a land-use and development plan for the area.*
- *Identify priority projects and investments.*

Develop a land-use plan and development strategy for the planning area that addresses the community's vision and guiding principles. Potential elements of this plan and development strategy could include:

**Equity** — Consider how the sustainable development plan and implementation strategy addresses:

- Mix of housing options (price, type, size, accessibility)
- Transit access to employment centers within community and region
- Opportunities for community interaction (indoor/outdoor gathering spaces, parks, open spaces)

**Environment** — Consider how the sustainable development plan and implementation strategy addresses:

- Conservation and restoration of open space, greenways and other natural resources (forests, stream corridors, wetlands, prairies) within the planning area
- Low-impact development approaches to stormwater management that improve water quality, protect stream corridors and enhance on-site infiltration of runoff

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled and emissions through live/work opportunities, multi-modal transportation options, and a broad mix of uses within walking distance

**Economy** — Consider how the sustainable development plan and implementation strategy addresses:

- Provision of innovative employment and educational opportunities
- Long-term business viability within the plan area
- Connecting residents of the plan area to jobs
- Business development, attraction and retention within the plan area
- Live/work opportunities

**Places** — Consider how the sustainable development plan and implementation strategy addresses:

- Encouragement of reinvestment within the plan area, including:
  - Identification of catalyst sites and the development of conceptual land-use and urban design concepts and strategies to help leverage the potential of these sites
  - Support for the rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of existing buildings within the planning area
  - Identification of clearly defined opportunities for infill and redevelopment (location and desired uses)
- Promotion of transportation options, including:
  - A circulation and access plan that provides frequent local street connections, walkable blocks, connections to the surrounding street network
  - Adoption of Complete Streets design standards
  - Local and regional transit connections

- Promotion of a mix of housing options designed to meet the needs of all ages, lifestyles, incomes, races and ethnicities, including consideration of incorporating the following into the plan:

- Small-lot, single-family homes
- Townhomes/row homes
- Mansion apartments/condominiums
- Accessory dwellings (“granny flats”)
- Loft apartments/condominiums above retail
- Mix of unit sizes
- Mix of price points/rental rates
- Accessible units

- Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the inclusion of:

- Improved access to healthy foods
- Farmers markets
- Community gardens
- Greenways and trails
- Parks and recreational opportunities
- Adoption of Complete Streets design standards

- Preservation of unique community characteristics

- Adoption of neighborhood design standards
- Adoption of conservation districts
- Identification and preservation of historic and cultural assets

- Promotion of energy and resource efficiency by considering:

- Adoption of energy and conservation codes
- Promotion of transportation choices
- Promotion of alternative energy generation within the plan area

Identify program, investment, and development priorities that:

- Are the most ripe for action because:
  - They are areas where other private and public investments are occurring
  - There are property owners and developers ready to make investments
- Have the greatest impact on the vision and guiding principles
- Have the greatest support from the community and stakeholders

## STEP 6: DEVELOP AND EXECUTE AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### Objectives:

- *Develop a locally tailored strategy to support plan implementation.*
- *Identify and engage available tools to support plan implementation and overcome identified barriers.*

Put in place an implementation oversight structure, possibly the continuation of the project committee

Explore the feasibility of the following strategies to support plan implementation:

- Prioritize capital improvements in targeted locations
- Invest in pre-development studies and to advance catalyst project implementation
- Identify and fund demonstration projects
- Foster public/private partnerships
- Align development regulations with sustainable planning objectives
- Offset potentially higher costs associated with new technologies, materials and approaches.

- Build awareness and market your opportunities
- Establish a timeline for review and updates to the implementation strategy

Identify appropriate tools to support plan implementation using “Tools and Their Uses,” pages 57–60, as a guide:

- Existing MARC tools
- Economic feasibility
- Visualization
- Triple-bottom-line calculator
- Green Infrastructure/Natural Resources Inventory
- Sustainable development codes
- Health impact assessments
- Complete Streets
- Retail center reuse strategies

## STEP 7: MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

### Objectives:




- *Track indicators and measures of success to assess progress towards established targets.*
- *Increase awareness of the benefits of sustainable development practices.*

- Identify a set of planning area indicators/measures
- Establish a timeline for tracking progress
- Assign tracking responsibilities
- Prepare an annual summary that reflects progress towards established targets and report to the community
- Adjust the sustainable development plan and implementation strategy based on the indicators

# **B** *Characteristics of Sustainable Development*




Sustainable places share common characteristics, yet no two places are alike. Characteristics may vary depending on the context where they are applied — urban, suburban or rural — and the community in which they are located. The following tables identify some common characteristics and typical distinctions of sustainable development, based on national best practices, in urban, suburban and rural contexts.

## **CHARACTERISTICS: MIX OF USES**




URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
		
<b>Diversity</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadest mix of uses; varies by emphasis of corridor or center (e.g., commercial or employment) and location.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to moderately diverse mix of uses; varies by emphasis of corridor or center (e.g., commercial or employment) and location.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited mix of uses within and outside of defined centers.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Between Uses</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses are typically vertically mixed (e.g., residential or office above retail)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses may be vertically or horizontally mixed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses may be vertically or horizontally mixed.</li> </ul>



## CHARACTERISTICS: DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
		
<b>Density</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate to high; typical FARs of 2.0 to 6.0+ and residential densities of 15 to 45+ du/ac; density generally consistent throughout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low to moderate; typical FARs of 0.5 to 2.0 and residential densities of 6 to 15 du/ac; highest density concentrated in targeted locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low; typical FARs of less than 1.0 and residential densities of 4 to 6 du/ac within defined centers, much lower outside of defined centers.</li> </ul>
<b>Form and Character</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typical building heights of 4-6 stories; but may be much higher in some locations.</li> <li>Buildings frame and enclose streets and public spaces throughout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typical heights of 2-3 stories.</li> <li>Buildings frame and enclose streets and public spaces within defined centers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typical building heights of 1-2 stories.</li> <li>More rural character that may include the adaptive reuse of existing structures or draw from historic building forms.</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured or tuck-under parking typical; very limited surface parking aside from on-street parking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuck-under or surface parking typical, located behind buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface parking typical, located behind or to the side of buildings.</li> </ul>




## CHARACTERISTICS: MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
		
<b>Mode Choices</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Light rail</li> <li>● Bus rapid transit</li> <li>● Commuter rail</li> <li>● Street car</li> <li>● Bus</li> <li>● Pedestrian</li> <li>● Bicycle</li> <li>● Private automobile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High-frequency bus and bus rapid transit serving key corridors</li> <li>● Pedestrian</li> <li>● Bicycle</li> <li>● Private automobile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commuter bus in limited locations</li> <li>● Pedestrian</li> <li>● Bicycle</li> <li>● Private automobile</li> </ul>
<b>Streets and Blocks</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highly connected transportation network</li> <li>● Short block lengths and narrower street widths</li> <li>● Frequent pedestrian and bicycle connections and access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extensive street pattern; limited connectivity within regional street network</li> <li>● Longer block lengths and street widths</li> <li>● Moderate pedestrian and bicycle connections and access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sparse street pattern; limited connectivity within regional street network</li> <li>● Rural street cross-sections typical (no sidewalks or curb and gutter)</li> <li>● Limited pedestrian connectivity outside of defined centers</li> <li>● Limited bicycle access (e.g., highway shoulders)</li> </ul>




## CHARACTERISTICS: HOUSING DIVERSITY

URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very diverse mix of housing types (lot sizes, configuration, unit sizes and price points) and building typologies at the block and district level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderately diverse mix of housing types (lot sizes, configuration, unit sizes and price points) and building typologies within a defined area; typically not mixed at the block level</li> <li>• In established areas, diversity of housing may be limited to defined centers or corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited housing options; predominantly single-family detached on large lots.</li> <li>• May be some opportunity for smaller-lot detached or attached housing options in defined centers or in cluster subdivisions.</li> </ul>

## CHARACTERISTICS: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

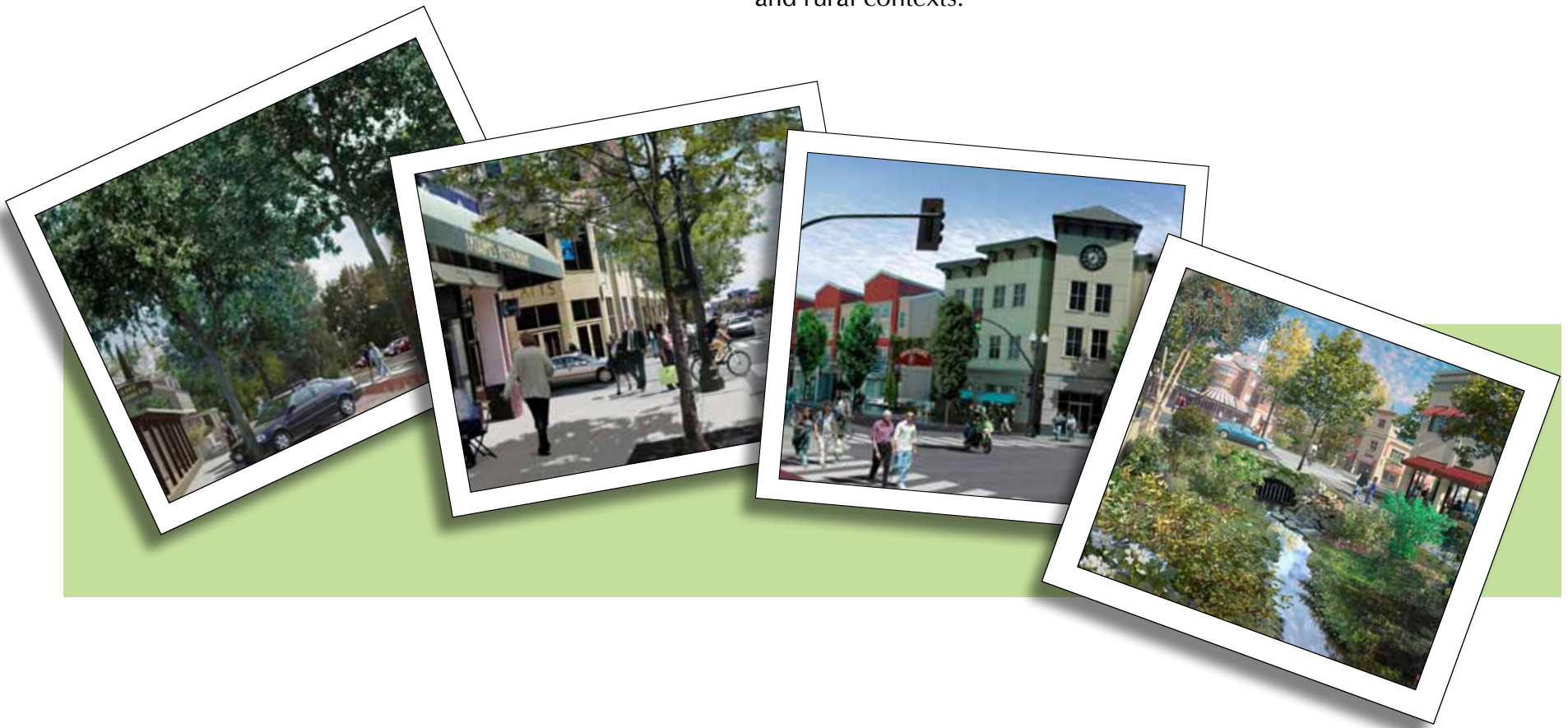
URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically includes a combination of features such as water conserving landscaping, low-impact development approaches, energy conserving features, generation of alternative energy, community gardens, etc.</li> <li>• May be implemented on a building-by-building or district basis or as part of a larger redevelopment master plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May include a combination of features such as water conserving landscaping, low-impact development approaches, energy conserving features, generation of alternative energy, community gardens.</li> <li>• May be implemented on a building-by-building basis as part of a master planned community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May include a combination of features such as water conserving landscaping, low-impact development approaches, energy conserving features, generation of alternative energy, community gardens.</li> <li>• May be implemented on a building-by-building basis as part of a master planned community</li> </ul>

**CHARACTERISTICS: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE/INTEGRATION OF NATURAL SYSTEMS**

URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parks, streets, landscaping, community gardens and other site features integrate low-impact development approaches, helping to manage stormwater quantity and quality.</li> <li>● Linkages to greenways and other regional amenities provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conservation areas, forests, community gardens and greenways are integrated as development amenities, along with “green” streets and other low-impact development approaches, helping to manage stormwater quantity and quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conservation areas, agricultural lands, forests and greenways are relatively undisturbed due to low-intensity of development.</li> </ul>

## *Visualizing Sustainable Development over Time*

Many places in the region are not currently consistent with the characteristics of sustainable development outlined on the previous pages. While some locations may offer the opportunity to build new, more sustainable centers and corridors from scratch, in most instances, transformation in existing places will occur incrementally as the result of a clear policy and regulatory framework, strategic public and private investment, and targeted infill and redevelopment. The examples on the following pages illustrate how incremental change is likely to occur within established areas in urban, suburban and rural contexts.



## EXAMPLE #1: TRANSFORMATION OF A TYPICAL URBAN CORRIDOR/CENTER OVER TIME

1A



### 1A: Typical Urban Corridor Today

Many urban corridors in the region today are underutilized and in need of revitalization. Existing land uses occur at significantly lower densities than could reasonably be supported. Vacant buildings and/or parcels may exist to varying degrees. Surface parking is prominent and transit service is typically limited. Street widths are relatively narrow and feature attached sidewalks without a tree/lawn buffer to screen pedestrians from passing traffic.

1B



### 1B: Enhanced Urban Corridor with Catalyst Project

This corridor's prime corner has been targeted as a catalyst site for a major infill and redevelopment project in conjunction with a new form-based zoning code designed to remove barriers to higher density development through reduced setbacks and parking requirements. The resulting four-story, mixed-use building changes the character of the corridor, helping other property owners visualize the opportunities presented by the zoning code changes.

Images: Urban Advantage

## EXAMPLE #1, continued



### 1C: Urban Corridor with Streetscape Enhancements

Public investment in streetscape enhancements (street trees, pedestrian crossings/bulb-outs, decorative lighting, etc.) has created a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly environment along the corridor.



### 1D: Sustainable Urban Corridor

Additional private investment along the corridor has been triggered by the significant public investment made in streetscape enhancements and the success of the initial catalyst project. Existing buildings and storefronts have been rehabilitated using sustainable development practices and additional infill and redevelopment has occurred, increasing the corridor's population and employment base and overall mix of uses. As a result, the corridor has become a destination for the surrounding neighborhoods and community and is now capable of supporting enhanced transit service.

Images: Urban Advantage



## EXAMPLE #2: TRANSFORMATION OF A TYPICAL SUBURBAN CORRIDOR/CENTER OVER TIME

2A



### 2A: Typical Suburban Corridor/Center Today

Many suburban corridors and centers in the region are also underutilized and in need of revitalization. Existing land uses are often physically separated from one another and adjacent neighborhoods and occur at significantly lower densities than could reasonably be supported. Vacant buildings and/or parcels may exist to varying degrees. Surface parking is often prominent and transit service is often limited. Wide streets facilitate high traffic volumes and often include narrow, attached sidewalks — or no sidewalks at all — making walking or biking an unpleasant and potentially unsafe experience.

2B



### 2B: Enhanced Suburban Corridor/Center with Catalyst Project

A large, functionally obsolete shopping center along this suburban corridor is targeted as a catalyst project to spur reinvestment in this inner-ring suburb. The project's first phase creates a new urban-style edge along the street frontage with a multi-story, mixed-use building; establishes a new street through an underutilized parking lot; and enhances the corridor's visual appearance with streetscape enhancements and an attractive design.

Images: Urban Advantage

## EXAMPLE #2, continued

2C



### **2C: Enhanced Suburban Corridor/Center with Infrastructure Improvements and New Mixed-Use Center**

A second phase of the catalyst project helps to establish an intense concentration of active uses within the mixed-use center and along the corridor. This new concentration of uses creates a vibrant, live/work environment for area residents. In addition, public street improvements include repurposing the generous roadway right-of-way, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access and safety and incorporating center median landscaping.

2D



### **2D: Enhanced Suburban Corridor/Center with High Frequency Transit Service**

Population and employment densities created by the addition of the new mixed-use center and other infill and revitalization efforts along the corridor are sufficient to support a new high-frequency transit line that links the center and corridor to the surrounding community and region.

Images: Urban Advantage

## EXAMPLE #3: TRANSFORMATION OF A TYPICAL RURAL CORRIDOR/CENTER OVER TIME

3A



### 3A: Typical Rural Corridor/Center Today

An existing center/corridor is sparsely developed. Existing buildings are modest in scale and design, reflecting the agricultural heritage of the community. The rural roadway cross-section does not delineate areas for parking, pedestrians or bicycles.

3B



### 3B: Enhanced Rural Corridor/Center

Public investment in streetscape enhancements helps to establish a sense of place and a defined center along the corridor. New diagonal parking accommodated within the generous roadway right-of-way serves existing businesses and more clearly delineates vehicle and bicycle travel lanes. Landscaped medians, sidewalks and other improvements enhance the center's appearance and encourage pedestrian activity.

Images: Urban Advantage

## EXAMPLE #3, continued

3C



### 3C: Enhanced Rural Corridor/Center with Catalyst Project

Taking advantage of a low-interest loan program for façade improvements offered by the local community, an existing building is transformed into a new restaurant and outdoor dining destination.

3D



### 3D: Enhanced Rural Corridor/Center with Additional Infill Development

Leveraging increased activity levels spurred by the catalyst project, additional business and property owners participate in the community's revitalization efforts, further enhancing activity levels and spurring infill residential opportunities.

Images: Urban Advantage

## EXAMPLE #4: CONSERVATION AREA RESTORATION

4A



### 4A: Damaged Stream Corridor

An existing stream corridor was piped as part of initial commercial development along this corridor 30 years ago, eliminating wildlife habitat and native vegetation, and reducing the stream's ability to convey and treat stormwater flows.

4B



### 4B: Stream Corridor Restoration

As part of a larger redevelopment effort, the stream corridor is daylighted and restored. The center's new green infrastructure serves both functional and aesthetic purposes.

## **D** *Conducting Successful Public Engagement*

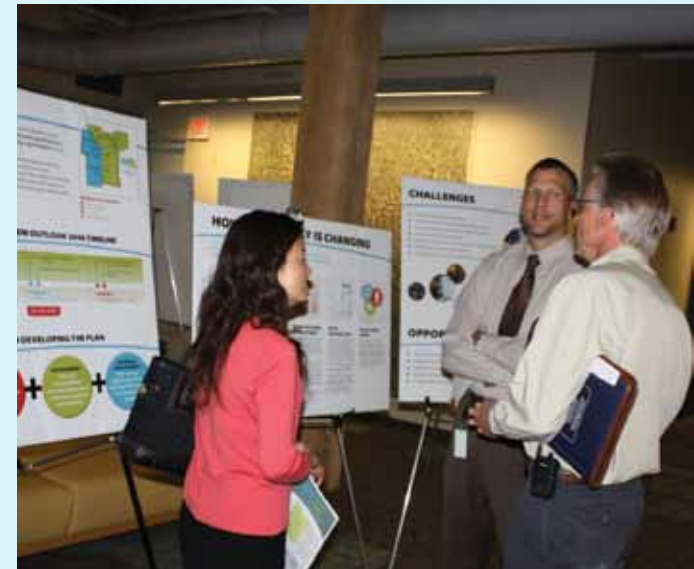
Community engagement is based on the belief that people whose lives are affected by planning and investment decisions should be involved in the decision-making process. Local governments must be proactive about identifying those who should be involved in the process; providing a wide variety of opportunities for them to get involved; and clearly communicating how their input will be used.

The Creating Sustainable Places initiative promotes collaborative public engagement processes that are:

- **ADAPTABLE.** Each community, corridor, neighborhood or place has its own unique conditions — different scales, issues, development types (such as residential and commercial) and demographics (such as race, age and income).
- **INCLUSIVE.** The engagement process should strive to include all parts of the community, especially those who may have been under-represented in the past. While this is essential to building trust in the process and outcomes, it may require extra effort and creative techniques to reach some people or interest groups.
- **TARGETED.** For large areas or long-range planning, it may be necessary to target individual neighborhoods first, making sure as many voices as possible are heard, and bring different points of view together into a unified vision.
- **INSPIRING.** People who feel their input and participation is valued will be more inspired to help solve problems and develop new ideas. Knowing that they have a role in the decision-making process gives the public a sense of ownership in the end product.
- **ACTION-ORIENTED.** Change happens in places, not plans. The engagement process should not only ensure that different voices are heard, but that tangible outcomes will result from public participation.

It is often much easier to describe what public engagement should be than to actually follow the steps in real planning and implementation projects. Successful engagement takes time and money.

**Before undertaking any engagement process, it is important to clearly define the public's role. What is the decision or issue to be addressed? Who are the decision makers? How will public input contribute to the decision?**



## CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Before beginning any engagement process, planners should ask critical questions that will help devise a relevant engagement strategy for each area or issue. These questions include:

### 1. WHO LIVES HERE?

Basic demographic data (race, ethnicity, income, age) can provide the approximate makeup of a community. Match this data with the real-world aspects of the community that will be involved.

### 2. WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

Every community has people with a greater investment in and influence over the area. It's critical to engage these key stakeholders in the public process, as they may have access to large civic organizations. Informal networks, such as coffee-shop gatherings, can also be useful for connecting to the community.

### 3. WHAT NETWORKS ARE ALREADY IN PLACE?

Tapping into the existing networks of a community can increase the participation in the public process and provide free publicity. It is also important to coordinate with any existing groups that are conducting community engagement activities in the planning area to leverage efforts and/or avoid potential conflicts.

### 4. HOW WILL YOU ENSURE AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS?

Identify leaders of traditionally under-represented groups and actively engage them in the project leadership to provide credibility and encourage others from the community to participate. Throughout the process, it is important to continually ask "Who are we missing?" and adjust as needed to ensure an inclusive and credible engagement. The Creating Sustainable Places equity partners may be used as a resource for specific areas/plans.

### 5. WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY?

How can you best describe the makeup of the planning area? For example, is it mainly commercial uses, supported by a residential area of influence? Or is it a mix of housing, retail and offices? Why do people live and/or work in the community?



### 6. HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE GEOGRAPHY?

Defining the boundaries of the planning area is critically important to the success of the plan. Distinguish potential participants in two categories:

**The Targeted Zone** — This is the area of primary focus. In a corridor, for example, this linear strip of land will extend a defined distance from the centerline of the street. A similar delineation could be made for an activity center or other planning geography. All individuals living or working within this area are immediately affected by the plan and should be actively involved in the process.

**The Area of Influence** — This can be defined as the supporting development surrounding the focused planning area. Lines may be arbitrary, but whenever possible there should be clear criteria for establishing boundaries. Even though people are outside of the targeted zone, they still may have an important stake in its future and should be encouraged to participate.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES, RESOURCES AND TECHNIQUES



1. ORGANIZE A LEADERSHIP TEAM
2. PREPARE FOR THE ENGAGEMENT
3. MAKE IT HAPPEN
4. USE COMMUNITY INPUT
5. EVALUATE THE EFFORT

Using the five fundamental components listed here as a guide, communities can define who should be engaged, how they will be engaged, and what is to be achieved. The community engagement process is also an opportunity to develop relationships and build community networks that will last long past the immediate planning effort.

## STEP 1: ORGANIZE A LEADERSHIP TEAM

A successful engagement process depends on having a committed leadership team. Frequently it will be the responsibility of a single entity — often the local government — to put this team together.

The leadership team should represent broad community interests. When selecting team members, be sure to think beyond just those who are typically engaged in community activities to foster new leadership.

Putting together a successful leadership team requires working with existing community leaders and getting them excited about the prospects of the planning process. Potential leaders will want to know that their commitment of time will result in real positive changes for the community.

In addition to a leadership team, each project should have a local government project manager, or contract manager if a consultant is hired, to manage the engagement process.

Once organized, the leadership team and host organization should develop a clear understanding of what they want to achieve and any time and budget constraints that must be considered.

## STEP 2: PREPARE FOR THE ENGAGEMENT

It is essential that communities involved in public engagement programs adequately prepare themselves by asking critical questions related to process objectives.

To establish a realistic and compelling vision for the area, the process must reflect the values of the people in the planning area and area of influence. For example, if the corridor area of focus is dominated by commercial uses, the participants must reflect this interest. The process should also involve residents who support the targeted commercial zone and live within its area of influence. If communities take ownership of the process, they are more likely to take ownership of the outcomes.

Early in the preparation phase, determine if there are existing gatherings that should be included in the engagement process. All credible groups that meet process objectives (e.g., are representative and inclusive) should be considered.

In addition to the planning team, the community-planning process requires competent facilitators. This role can be filled by community leaders, staff from a local government; or paid consultants. The facilitator will be responsible for making sure that the process flows smoothly and that it is transparent to all parties and interests.



Begin by establishing a work plan for each of the following areas. The complexity of the planning effort will determine the level of detail needed.

## ■ PUBLICITY

**How will you get the word out to the different interests in the community and what is the message you want to get out? Will you need different publicity for different groups?**

The publicity effort should focus on creating awareness about the opportunity to participate in the planning process. Messages should balance self-interest (“What’s in it for me?”) with a broader view of community need/potential. Many people don’t have the same emotional attachments to corridors or other larger planning areas that they do to their own neighborhoods. The message must:

- Clearly state the objective — what are you trying to achieve?
- Be positive (versus threat-based);
- Focus on appreciating existing assets;
- Use approachable language, avoiding jargon and technical terms; and
- Be culturally relevant. In some cases there may be multiple culturally relevant messages within the same planning area, including multilingual material.

Publicity is not just about announcing meetings. It should also provide ongoing communication to keep the community informed — including celebrating progress.

## ■ OUTREACH

**How will you reach specific groups and interests? Who can help you reach out to these different interest groups?**

Publicity alone is usually not enough to motivate participation, unless it is coupled with a thoughtful outreach program. Publicity is about creating broad awareness, while outreach is the targeted delivery of the message(s). Research and experience suggest that personal delivery is most effective in motivating the desired action: participation. The more effective outreach efforts make use of human infrastructure (area/block captains, street teams, neighborhood associations, etc.). This requires recruiting volunteers who care about the community and its future.

An outreach strategy should consider geography, demographics and organizations.

- The **geographic approach** divides the planning area into logical sub-areas for which an area captain takes responsibility to invite participation.
- The **demographic approach** tries to identify the socio-economic characteristics of the planning area to make sure all types of people are reached (e.g. non-English-speaking, low-income, persons with disabilities).
- The **organizational approach** seeks to work through formal groups that already have networks, such as a chamber of commerce, Rotary Club or neighborhood organization.

In many cases, it may be hardest to reach those with greatest need. The outreach program should be designed to reach all types of people in a given planning area.

## ■ VOLUNTEERS

**Volunteers can be critical to getting the word out and reaching different interest groups. They can also help with logistics and facilitate meetings and discussions. How will you recruit and manage volunteers?**

It is not reasonable or desirable to undertake an ambitious engagement process without the involvement of local volunteers. Communities that take ownership of the process are more likely to take ownership of the outcomes. Ownership requires an investment of time and emotion.

In addition to publicity and outreach, volunteers may be needed to help with meeting logistics — arranging facilities, setting up meetings and registering participants. These basic tasks can encourage those without public confidence to contribute and possibly grow into other roles. Volunteers may also canvas neighborhoods to obtain input from people who can't or won't come to a community meeting.

Small-group activities may offer the most comfortable environment for participation. This approach requires numerous small-group facilitators. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient resources for extensive use of professional facilitators, but community members can be trained and provided with a script. Developing facilitators within the community has the added benefit of building capacity in the community, with skills that can be used in other contexts.

## ■ LOGISTICS

**Where will you hold meetings? What equipment will you need? What about such things as food, child care and transportation?**

Convening the community requires a logistics plan that addresses facilities, equipment and supplies. Selecting a meeting location is a critical decision, as the location needs to be conducive to attracting participants and appropriate for the meeting format. When possible, consider locations on “neutral ground,” such as libraries, community centers or schools, rather than municipal or state buildings. Also consider what time of day and what day of the week work best for participants, and any special needs such as food, child care and transportation.

The meeting format will drive equipment needs (e.g., projectors, hand-held voting devices) and supply needs (e.g., markers, flip charts, comments forms, name tags).

## ■ PROCESS DESIGN

**How will you get input from the community? Will it be through large group meetings, smaller discussions, surveys, the Internet? How will these work together? What will you do with the input and how will you report this back to the community?**

The number and type of meetings and the techniques to be used in each meeting should be established based on the overall planning and engagement objectives. All communities have unique geographies, demographics, issues and potential. The process should reflect this individuality.

The typical engagement process should have three parts: 1) orientation and brainstorming; 2) testing of goals and conceptual planning and development ideas; and 3) sharing detailed, draft plan/recommendations. The process is often iterative, with the work of one meeting serving as the foundation for the next.

As you prepare for a successful community engagement, some other important considerations include:

- Set a positive foundation that is inspirational and empowering. There is often a tendency to focus on problems. Instead, use an “appreciative inquiry” orientation to look at the whole community from a positive aspect.
- Understand that the process, even though project-focused, has the potential to build pride and foster enduring relationships, both building blocks of a sustainable community.
- Appreciate the value of celebrating progress along the way.
- Commit to flexibility in reaching the reluctant and or disadvantaged members of the community. It may be necessary to go to some people, rather than waiting on them to come to you.

### **STEP 3: MAKE IT HAPPEN**

With the preparation done, use a carefully managed approach to carry out the work plans for engagement — conduct the planned publicity and outreach campaigns and engage the community through meetings or other selected methods.

Depending on the particular circumstances, the work plans for logistics, publicity and outreach may be developed and

executed by volunteers, the leadership team, community partners, local government staff, or some combination of all of these.

Managing individual public events will require facilitation skills that are unique to a particular meeting methodology. Facilitation guides should be prepared before meeting and facilitator training conducted within a week of the actual facilitation.

### **STEP 4: USE COMMUNITY INPUT**

The information and ideas that are generated through public engagement must be translated into meaningful direction, plans and proposed actions. It is important to report outcomes back to the community, and let people know what is going to happen next.

Community engagement events will generate input that must be analyzed and applied in future planning steps. In longer planning processes, public engagement is often iterative, with the substance of one meeting serving as the foundation for the next.

Once the public input is compiled and an analysis prepared by staff, it may be productive and insightful to have community members help make sense of the input. Share the outcome with the planning team in a manner that tests the validity of the analysis.

Community input and analysis should lead to specific actions or plan elements. It is especially important to develop an implementation process once the plan is completed and take steps to ensure continued community involvement in that implementation process. Also, once the analysis is complete and accepted by the leadership team, it should be fully reported to the community.

## STEP 5: EVALUATE THE EFFORT

Once the process is complete and plans are developed, the leadership team should ask for feedback on the engagement process its results. Did residents and stakeholders feel their voices were heard? Was anyone left out? Did stakeholders feel their ideas and opinions were reflected in the adopted plan?

Within six months of the conclusion of the planning process, an evaluation of community engagement efforts should be

conducted. This will provide important information for future planning efforts. The evaluation should consider the mix of participants (representation, relevant demographics, etc.), participant satisfaction (analysis of exit questionnaires), and quality of input. To the greatest extent possible, the evaluation should be done using measurable, reportable outcomes.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES



### BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

- Tap into existing networks/ organizations
- Spread the word about meetings
  - Advertise through radio, print ads, government cable channels
  - Use email and text messaging
  - Use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)



### SHARE INFORMATION

- Have a presence at community events
- Develop a speakers bureau
- Distribute fliers and other materials
- Hold large meetings and open houses with guided presentations
- Hold small group meetings/ focus groups with facilitated discussion
- Use visualization tools (photo simulations, computer generated 3D environments)



### COLLECT/COMPILE INPUT

- Offer electronic voting at meetings
- Offer virtual town halls online (e.g., Mind Mixer)
- Conduct surveys, online or at meetings

## **E** *Tools and Their Uses*

*Tools can help participants visualize possibilities, communicate with each other and with community stakeholders, and make informed community decisions.*

Successful implementation of the Creating Sustainable Places vision depends on informed decision making. Providing the most accurate, timely information in a format that is easily understandable to a large, diverse group of people is always a challenge. Tools can help improve decision making by cutting through some of these challenges. Tools are available to help participants visualize possibilities, communicate with each other and with community stakeholders, and make community decisions.

Early in the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, MARC and its partners identified the lack of technical resources and tools as a common obstacle to promoting a more sustainable region. For example, a common barrier to promoting sustainability is understanding the economic impacts of various proposals — how will a proposed development affect the bottom line for the developer and government agency? How can local governments assess the full range of environmental, economic and social impacts of a development proposal — for both the developer and the government agency?

In order to help close the gap on this lack of technical resources and tools, the Creating Sustainable Places initiative includes a digital toolbox which consolidates some of the most prevalent and useful tools for planners into one resource, with helpful summary information and case studies.

The following page describes the contents of the digital toolbox in general terms. Because technology changes rapidly, the toolbox will be housed online at [www.marc.org/sustainableplaces](http://www.marc.org/sustainableplaces), allowing for frequent updates as new tools are developed and identified.

In addition, we have highlighted tools which we believe to be most effective in completing the planning process outlined in this guide.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TOOLS

While a vast array of tools exist, our digital toolbox includes those found to be most useful and effective in promoting a more sustainable region.

In particular, we looked for tools that are:

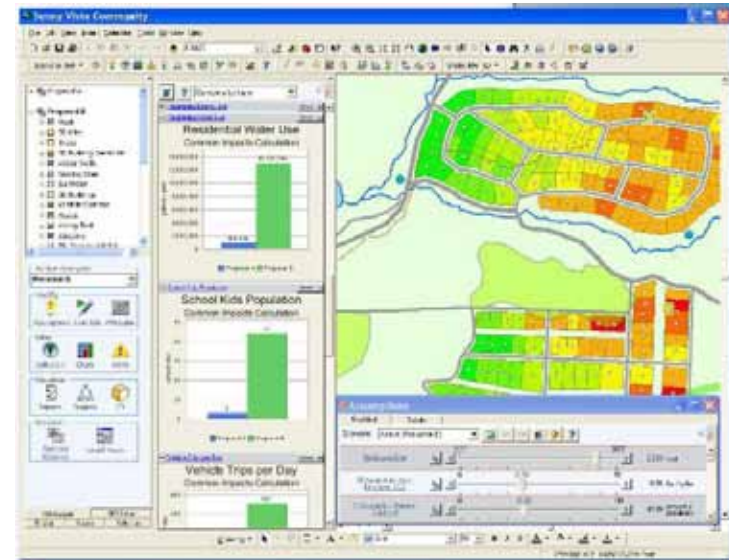
- **RESPONSIVE:** Each tool should address one or more of the Creating Sustainable Places guiding principles, and also be helpful and useful in simplifying planning processes.
- **USER FRIENDLY:** The tools must be easy to understand and work with so that end users are confident applying them.
- **INTERRELATED:** To be most effective, the tools should work well and relate to each other so that users don't duplicate work and effort.
- **RESPOND TO VARYING SCALES:** Tools are needed for different geographic scales — regional, corridor and project. Some tools can adjust and work for all three scales, while others will be more localized and work best for a specific project or site.

The digital toolbox will be updated regularly in an ongoing effort to provide the latest and greatest tool information, including case studies, as these tools are employed.

### Explore the digital toolbox at [www.marc.org/sustainableplaces](http://www.marc.org/sustainableplaces)

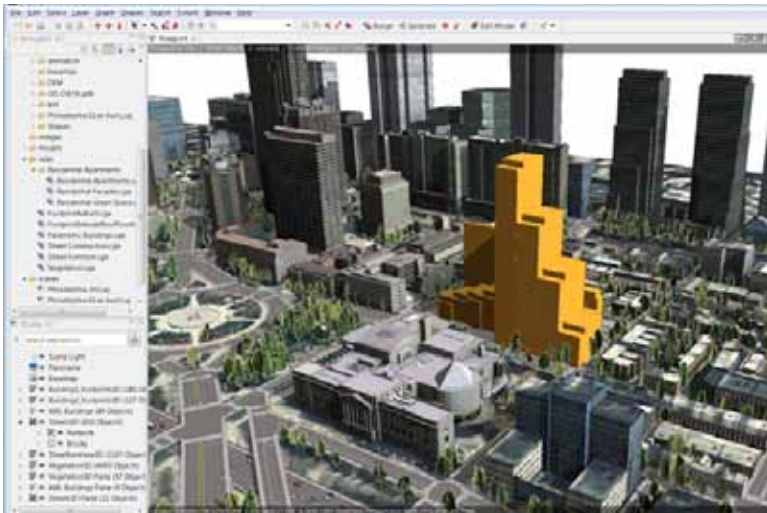
- Envision Tomorrow
- Google Sketchup
- CommunityViz
- City Engine
- WalkScore
- TransitScore
- i-Tree
- MetroQuest
- Green Values®
- ...and more!

- **PLANNING DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS** — These tools are generally GIS-based software applications that allow different community scenarios and their impacts to be mapped, quantified and understood. They are often the primary tool used to implement the Creating Sustainable Places planning process, and are supplemented by other tools that address specific needs.



- **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS** — These are tools that should be considered when developing an implementation strategy. They are typically not software-based applications, but rather key financial and development code models that have proven successful.

- **VISUALIZATION TOOLS** — These tools allow for different sustainable concepts to be visualized, often in 3D, in order to better communicate the physical impacts of community decisions.



- **ENGAGEMENT TOOLS**

— These tools are designed to make sharing, gathering and collecting stakeholder input easier and to help implement the community engagement strategy.



- **OTHER HANDY TOOLS** — A range of other helpful tools and references exist that shouldn't be overlooked when creating and implementing a sustainable community plan:

- **Calculators** — Online calculators can quickly quantify the benefits and costs of a project or green infrastructure feature.
- **Checklists** — A range of checklists exist to help ensure that every step of the process is completed.
- **Reference data** — While vast amounts of data are available, the toolbox identifies some key datasets that should be explored and can be plugged into other tools.
- **Guides** — This guidebook outlines the basic Creating Sustainable Places planning process but your plan may require diving further into a specific area of interest, such as transit-oriented development or green infrastructure. The toolbox includes other guidebooks and information for more detailed topic areas.

## TOOLBOX SPOTLIGHT: ENVISION TOMORROW

After researching various technology platforms, the Creating Sustainable Places initiative selected Envision Tomorrow as its primary support tool. Other communities such as Salt Lake City, Tulsa and Tucson are already using Envision Tomorrow, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development — which funds the Sustainable Communities grant program — has also selected it as the preferred technology platform for grantees.

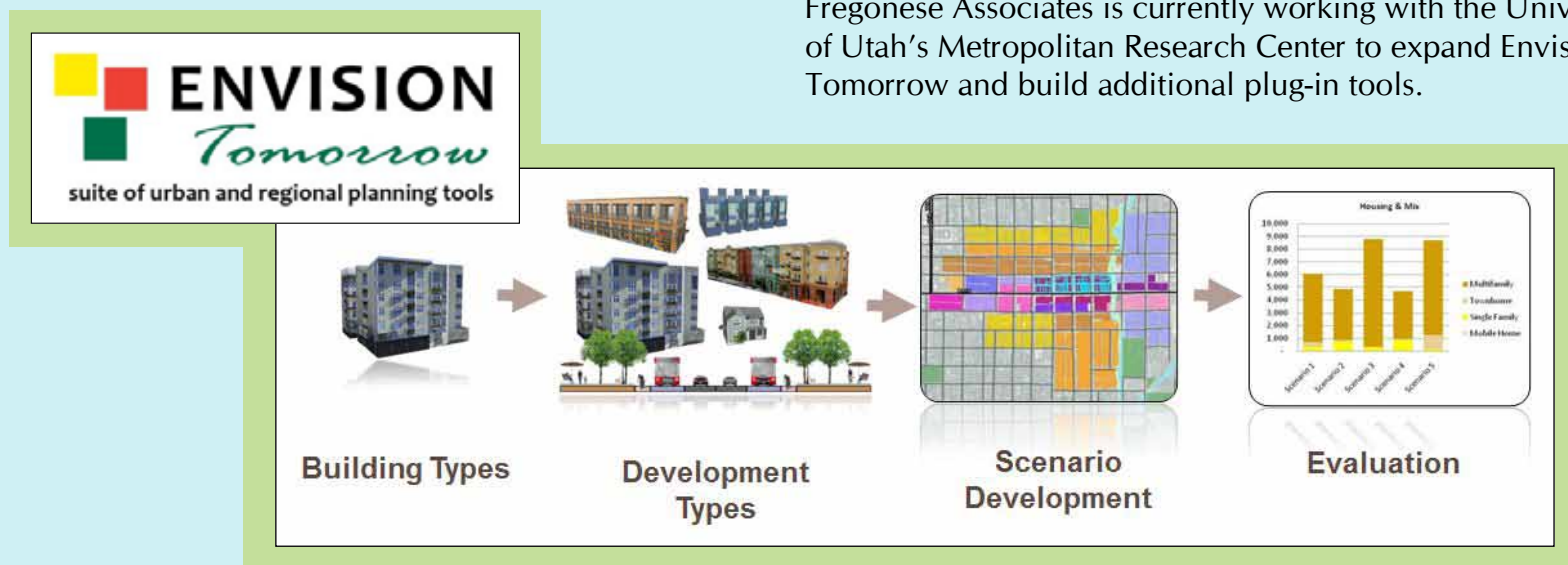
Envision Tomorrow consists of a suite of open-source planning support tools developed by Fregonese Associates, a land-use planning firm in Portland, Oregon. It includes a scenario builder extension for ArcGIS and a Return on Investment (ROI) spreadsheet model. It can be used at the local, corridor and regional scales to quickly create and evaluate different land-use scenarios using market-feasible,

prototype buildings. Scenarios can be evaluated on a variety of factors, including economic feasibility, land-use metrics and resource usage, including transportation and environmental impacts.

Envision Tomorrow stands out in comparison to other planning decision support tools because of its ability to link land use scenarios with ROI analysis. It can help answer the question, “Is this development sustainable and economically feasible?”

Because it is open source, Envision Tomorrow is not only free but also customizable. Through the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, the tool will be customized for the Kansas City region and tested in the corridor planning work. This should result in an effective tool which can be used by area planners and agencies throughout the region.

Fregonese Associates is currently working with the University of Utah’s Metropolitan Research Center to expand Envision Tomorrow and build additional plug-in tools.





## **F** *Regional and Local indicators*

Indicators and measurements tell the story about what we've accomplished and where we are headed. As part of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, indicators will be used to track the region's progress towards becoming more sustainable and help quantify whether or not our actions are truly creating a vibrant, connected and green region.

Indicators give everyone from policymakers to the public a common foundation to identify, understand and act on community issues. They help decision makers go beyond anecdotal evidence and answer questions: Are we growing in a way that is:

- Saving us money?
- Creating a stronger economy?
- Preserving and enhancing the environment?
- Fostering a healthier population?
- Promoting stable, enduring neighborhoods?
- Expanding access to jobs, education, and affordable housing?
- Providing more housing and transportation choices?
- Ensuring a thriving future?

In order to be effective, indicators should:

- Inform policy decisions and priority changes by providing a rich source of information to identify targeted strategies.
- Illustrate the connections between individual indicators, policy, and the impacts of that policy .
- Contain information that is “actionable” — meaning it is relevant and linked to policy items.
- Show relationships and disparities between communities and the region. It is not enough to know how the region as a whole is doing; we must also evaluate how individual communities within the region are doing.
- Be user-friendly for everyone. Present high-level information for those unfamiliar with the different topics, and allow those who want more information to drill down into more detail.

## STRUCTURE: ACTIONS, PLACES AND OUTCOMES
























The Creating Sustainable Places Indicators are structured to provide a clear link between quantitative measures and policy decisions. To do this, indicators are categorized on three levels: Actions, Places and Outcomes.

Examples of indicators in each category — based on the Creating Sustainable Places guiding principles — are shown on the following page.

MARC is currently working with the CSP Coordinating Committee and initiative partners to determine which specific measures will be quantified. Data will be shared through a web-based information portal that allows partners and the public to track specific indicators and drill down into varying geographies and levels of detail.

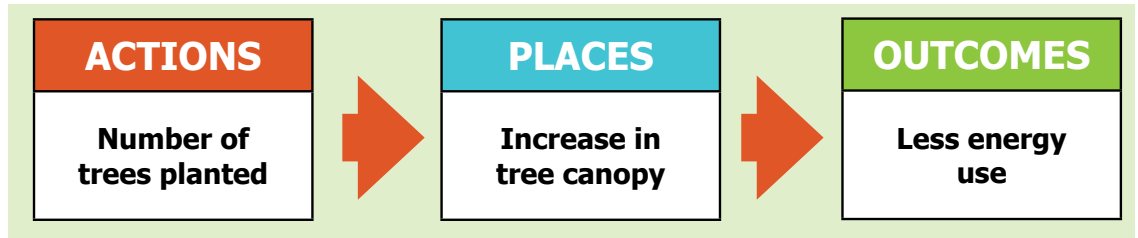
OVERVIEW OF STRUCTURE		
ACTIONS	IMPACT ON PLACES	REGIONAL OUTCOMES
Measures actions promoted by Creating Sustainable Places. These are tangible actions that could be anything from construction of new affordable housing units to adoption of Complete Streets ordinances.	Measures the impact of the actions on specific places or corridors. These are the characteristics and improvements our places need if they are to become more sustainable.	High-level indicators that measure whether we are meeting triple-bottom-line priorities. Are we taking actions that create places that are thriving — economically, environmentally, and socially?

## EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

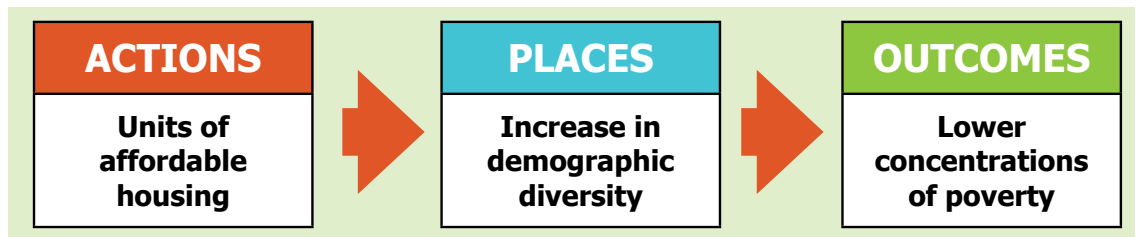
ACTIONS	PLACES	OUTCOMES
Measure actions and activities promoted by Creating Sustainable Places	Measure improvements in centers and corridors based on CSP guiding principles	Measure regional change in triple-bottom-line categories
 <b>REINVESTMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sq. ft. of commercial space renovated</li> <li>Housing units constructed/renovated</li> </ul>	 <b>REINVESTMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in property values</li> <li>Population and housing unit density</li> </ul>	 <b>EQUITY (SOCIAL)</b> <b>EQUITY AND AFFORDABILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concentrated poverty and race</li> <li>Index of discrimination</li> </ul> <b>EDUCATION, ARTS AND COMMUNITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd, 5th and 8th grade competency rates</li> <li>Degree of community connection, arts participation</li> </ul> <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YPLL rate and distribution</li> <li>Obesity rates</li> </ul>
 <b>TRANSPORTATION CHOICE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit service improvements</li> <li>Miles of Complete Streets</li> </ul>	 <b>TRANSPORTATION CHOICE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modal split in trips</li> </ul>	
 <b>HOUSING CHOICE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of units constructed/renovated by type, target income</li> </ul>	 <b>HOUSING CHOICE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution of housing types</li> <li>Distribution of housing price points</li> </ul>	
 <b>ENERGY EFFICIENCY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of structures weatherized</li> </ul>	 <b>ENERGY EFFICIENCY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential energy use per unit or sq. ft.</li> <li>Commercial use per sq. ft. or employee</li> </ul>	
 <b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in housing and infrastructure condition</li> </ul>	 <b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in crime rates</li> </ul>	
 <b>HEALTHY LIFESTYLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Miles of new sidewalks constructed</li> </ul>	 <b>HEALTHY LIFESTYLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkability scores by activity type</li> <li>Local food access</li> </ul>	
 <b>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of trees planted</li> <li>Miles of trails constructed</li> </ul>	 <b>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree canopy</li> <li>Pervious surface</li> </ul>	
 <b>LOCAL ECONOMY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dollar value of new mixed-use development</li> </ul>	 <b>LOCAL ECONOMY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local employment</li> <li>New small businesses</li> </ul>	
 <b>SOCIAL EQUITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Units of affordable housing constructed</li> </ul>	 <b>SOCIAL EQUITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing type diversity</li> <li>Housing/job balance</li> </ul>	
 <b>VIBRANCY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable-friendly codes and plans</li> <li>Improvement of public spaces</li> </ul>	 <b>VIBRANCY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street population count</li> <li>Public gathering places</li> <li>Mix of business types</li> <li>Mix of housing types</li> </ul>	
		 <b>ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>NATURAL SYSTEMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of population near parks or trails</li> </ul> <b>PLANNING &amp; DESIGN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of region under sustainable code framework</li> <li>Percent of population growth accommodated by redevelopment and infill</li> </ul> <b>CLIMATE &amp; ENERGY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>Regional energy use</li> <li>Vehicle miles traveled</li> </ul>
		 <b>ECONOMY</b> <b>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median household income</li> <li>Percent of self-sufficient households</li> <li>Employment in young businesses</li> </ul> <b>EMPLOYMENT &amp; TRAINING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployment by race and educational attainment</li> <li>Workforce technical competency</li> </ul>

The impact a particular action has on a specific place and the outcome that is anticipated from that impact can be charted. Examples 1 and 2 illustrate the expected relationships between individual actions, impacts and outcomes.

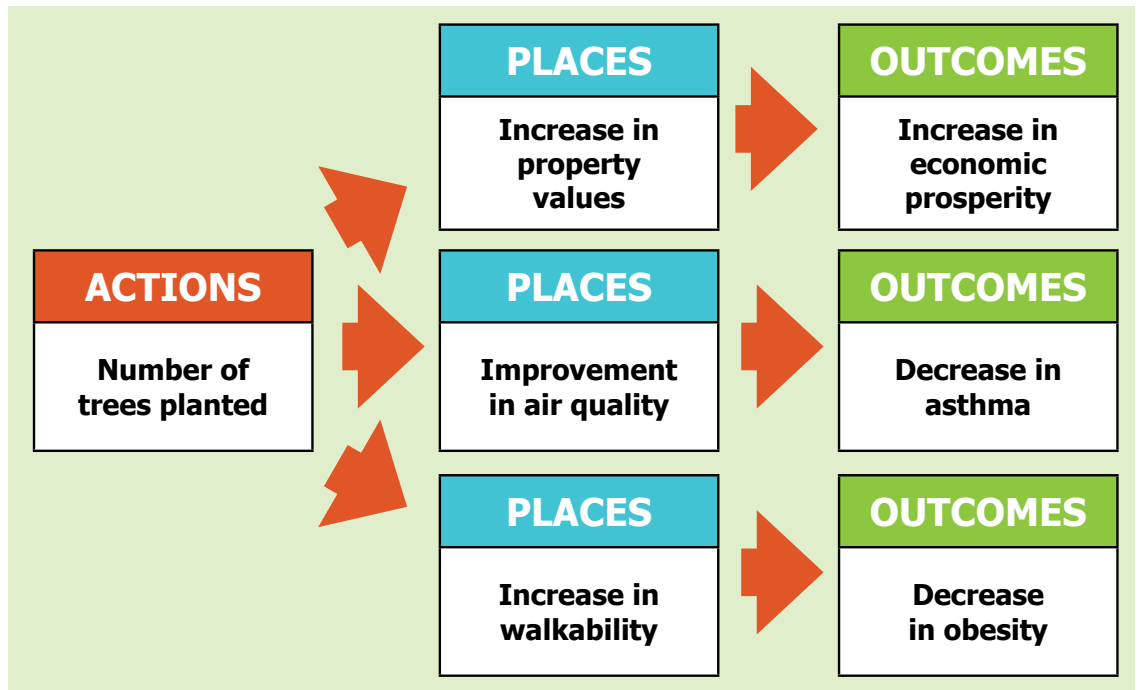
**EXAMPLE 1:**



**EXAMPLE 2:**



**EXAMPLE 3:**



Also, many actions may have multiple impacts on places and regional outcomes, as shown in Example 3.

## REGIONAL INDICATORS

Creating Sustainable Places partners will identify specific indicators to measure our progress toward the regional vision of sustainability. A few of these measures — those that are most important, with easily accessible data — will be given prominence as “dashboard” indicators of regional progress. Others will allow users to drill deeper to understand the data in greater detail. (A good example is MetroPulse, a regional indicators website for the Chicago metro area.)

Indicators will be tracked over time and publicized through an annual report card that will provide policy makers information on which to base decisions. If certain measurements are trending in the wrong direction, decision makers can investigate and take action to reverse the trend. This iterative process — taking action, measuring its impact and modifying actions as needed to reach sustainability goals — supports the process principles of creating a learning community and building partnerships (see page 7).

## PLACE AND CORRIDOR INDICATORS

This structure can be applied on both the regional and local levels. The nature and scale of each planning project will dictate application of the indicators, and users can pick and choose which data from this comprehensive resource they want to track and understand.

Planning teams should expect to identify specific plan-area indicators as an important part of their planning work. These indicators should reflect the vision and goals for the planning area. A good place to start is with the examples given in the chart on page 63. The planning team should identify the actions they anticipate taking, the impact they expect these actions will have, and the outcomes they hope to achieve from these impacts. For example, if a planning team identifies a reduction in energy use as a goal for the planning area, they might include — and measure — actions such as planting trees or adding transit services in the plan.

## STEPS FOR USING INDICATORS TO MOVE TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

### 1: Develop Place-Based Indicators and Establish Targets

- What are the desired outcomes for the planning area?
- What action items from the plan will produce those desired outcomes?
- How do the action items impact the planning area?
- What outcomes you can track to measure success?

### 2: Determine how the measures match up with the CSP indicators

- Are the CSP indicators applicable to your area? Are some more important to your stakeholders than others?
- How will the actions identified in the plan impact these measures and desired outcomes?

### 3: Establish a timeline for tracking progress

### 4: Report to policy makers and the public periodically on the indicator measures

### 5: Use the data to determine whether actions are having the desired outcome

- Create a learning environment by determining what works and what doesn't

### 6: Adjust the plan and implementation strategy

- Use what you've learned to build partnerships and agree on actions that will address negative trends and reinforce positive ones

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*Part IV:  
Best Practices in  
Sustainable Development*



## *East Colfax Corridor Denver, Colorado*

### **TIMELINE AND STATUS**

- Designated as a priority area of change in Blueprint Denver in 2002.
- Plans, studies, development efforts and transportation improvements are ongoing.

### **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Denver Department of Community Planning and Development
- Surrounding community
- Land and business owners
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)

### **Background and key features**

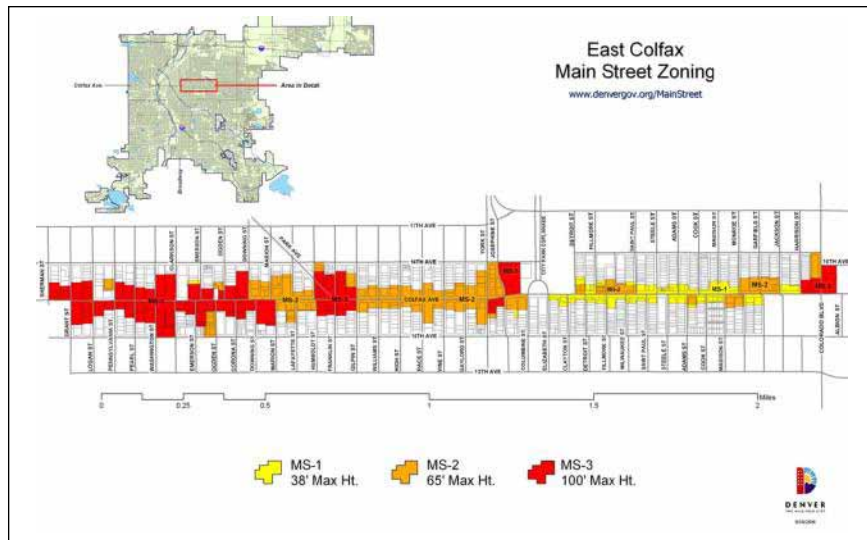
Once known as Denver’s “Main Street,” Colfax is an aging commercial corridor that is more than 26 miles long. Colfax runs east to west, linking the suburbs of Aurora and Lakewood, with Denver located in the center.

This case study focuses on the eastern portion of Colfax from downtown Denver to Colorado Boulevard. This corridor first developed as an area for Denver’s wealthiest residents, with many mansions lining the street. In 1900, a trolley system was built along Colfax to facilitate the movement of people between downtown and the suburban fringe. As the auto-oriented culture of the 1950s developed, the trolley was removed, making the corridor much more dependent on the automobile (though bus transit service remained available). Colfax businesses survived primarily as a result of the tourism industry until the construction of Interstate 70 was completed and Colfax was no longer the easiest way to travel through town.

After a long period of disinvestment, the corridor and surrounding area recently started to experience increased transit ridership and interest in redevelopment. Building on this interest and reinvestment, the city of Denver worked with a stakeholder committee comprised of representatives elected from each neighborhood association and business district to develop a unified vision for the corridor. The results of this effort — the 2004 East Colfax Corridor Plan — identified problems throughout the corridor and created reasonable goals that included flexibility and predictability.

The goals were based on a clear purpose and intent that included sustainability, enhancing the pedestrian experience, and focusing on the form of new development. A new, form-based Main Street Zoning classification was created and implemented throughout the corridor. It has also since been adapted for use along other urban corridors in Denver. Numerous redevelopment and rehabilitation projects have been completed or are currently





Main Street Zoning along Colfax.

underway under this new Main Street Zoning designation. The result is a more compact, urban form of development that enhances the pedestrian environment.

The East Colfax corridor is served by high frequency bus (not BRT) and has the highest bus ridership of any revenue-generating, fixed-route bus corridor in the Denver Regional Transportation District. The potential re-introduction of a streetcar along the East Colfax corridor was investigated in the July 2010 Colfax Streetcar Feasibility Study.

### Public investments/incentives used

A recent "Transit Priority" CDOT project aims to encourage more transit users through additional priority signals for buses, street improvements, and increased safety and security at bus stops. Streetscape improvements, funded by a bond program, are coordinating closely with this CDOT project.

### Subsequent public and private investment

Sample private redevelopment projects include Argonaut Liquors and the Tattered Cover Book Store and Twist & Shout. (See photos on pages 70–71.)

### Public policy to facilitate this project

A supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000, **Blueprint Denver** (adopted in 2002), designated East Colfax as a priority area of change for many reasons. East Colfax has the ability to accommodate more (and affordable) housing, preserve historic resources, and foster economic development. This area is also close to downtown Denver and is accessible by public transportation.

As a result of this designation, the East Colfax Corridor Plan was completed in 2004. This effort included extensive involvement of local business and adjacent neighborhoods. The overall goal of this plan was to create policies that would steer East Colfax toward becoming a high-density, mixed-use area served by transit. The top priorities designated by the plan include:

- Create a new zone district appropriate for East Colfax and similar corridors.
- Establish a Colfax historic district that provides preservation incentives without restricting development on non-historic sites.
- Undertake a phase-two transportation study that identifies street design standards and transit alternatives.
- Develop key catalyst sites along the corridor.

As a result of the East Colfax Corridor Plan, a **"Main Street" zoning district** was created in 2005 and applied to the East Colfax corridor in 2006. This zoning designation was created to encourage redevelopment and revitalization while allowing for

flexibility and predictability. Three Main Street Zones, which range from low- to high-density, were created and applied to the appropriate areas. Parking was the hard sell of this process and required a lot of careful attention.

The **Colfax Streetcar Feasibility Study**, completed in 2010, concluded that a modern streetcar service is feasible along the Colfax corridor. The streetcar would become cost effective in approximately 30 years and is projected to have much higher ridership than other federally funded streetcar systems. The justification for the streetcar is to increase mobility and to promote economic investments.

Funding to implement the study's recommendations has not been identified; however, it is likely that federal funding will be required. If federal funding is sought, an alternatives analysis will be the next step.



New Argonaut building conforming to the new Main Street Zoning (left) and old Argonaut building (right).



Argonaut 2007 (left) and 2011 (right). Source: Google Earth.



New Tattered Cover Book Store and Twist & Shout.



Tattered Cover Book Store and Twist & Shout 2002 (left) and 2010 (right).  
Source: Google Earth.

## SOURCES

### **Colfax Avenue Case Study**

[projectderenne.com/userfiles/Colfax%20Avenue%20Case%20Study.pdf](http://projectderenne.com/userfiles/Colfax%20Avenue%20Case%20Study.pdf)

### **Colfax Streetcar Feasibility Study**

[www.denvergov.org/Portals/515/documents/CSFSFinal.pdf](http://www.denvergov.org/Portals/515/documents/CSFSFinal.pdf)

[www.denvergov.org/ColfaxStreetcarFeasibilityStudy/  
tabid/435130/Default.aspx](http://www.denvergov.org/ColfaxStreetcarFeasibilityStudy/tabid/435130/Default.aspx)

### **Colorado Real Estate Journal**

[library.constantcontact.com/download/get/  
file/1106939810882-30/CREJ+1111.pdf](http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1106939810882-30/CREJ+1111.pdf)

### **East Colfax Corridor Plan**

[colfaxave.com/cp/data/upload/files/EColfaxSmallAreaPlan.pdf](http://colfaxave.com/cp/data/upload/files/EColfaxSmallAreaPlan.pdf)

### **Main Street Zoning: Process, Outcomes, Lessons**

[www.railvolution.org/rv2006\\_pdfs/rv2006\\_227b.pdf](http://www.railvolution.org/rv2006_pdfs/rv2006_227b.pdf)

# **Belmar** *Lakewood, Colorado*

## **TIMELINE AND STATUS**

- Groundbreaking: Oct. 9, 2002
- Phase 1 completed in 2004
- Build out is projected for completion by early 2012

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Lakewood Reinvestment Authority (LRA)
- City of Lakewood
- Continuum Partners, LLC

[www.belmarcolorado.com](http://www.belmarcolorado.com)

## **Background and key features**

This 103-acre, 22-city block project is the redevelopment of a former regional mall, the Villa Italia. Located at the intersection of two major commercial corridors in a suburb of Denver, Belmar includes a combination of vertically and horizontally mixed-uses and is focused around an urban “main street.”

Belmar serves a suburban community, offering residential, civic, retail and employment opportunities, as well as 10 acres of public space. Building heights range from one to six stories and the average density is 12.9 dwelling units per acre. There is a significant residential component, with 1,300 housing units averaging \$250–\$300 per square foot, higher than the rest of Jefferson County.

This redevelopment not only serves as an example of what to do with a fading regional mall but also serves as an example of how to create a place that promotes community and encourages pedestrian activity. Belmar is Lakewood’s “new downtown.”

The project was the first undertaken by the Lakewood Reinvestment Authority (LRA). The reinvestment area was initially accepted in 1998 and expanded to include the Villa Italia Shopping Center in 2000. As a public/private partnership between LRA, the city of Lakewood, and Continuum Partners, LLC, this site developed as a planned development.

Public improvements were funded primarily through bonds and development occurred incrementally to meet the demands of the market. For example, a key site that was initially planned for a hotel was eventually developed with more retail due to changes in the market.

Another important element of this redevelopment project was striking the right balance between local and national tenants in order to secure financing.

Belmar incorporates many sustainable elements, including a rooftop solar array that produces enough energy to light three structured parking garages. It also features wind-powered street lights and a small urban wind farm that produces enough power to light a large parking lot. Many buildings are LEED-certified or meet other green building standards such as Energy Star. In addition, materials from the old mall were recycled and reused, down to the concrete from the original mall slabs. Approximately 130 mature trees were transplanted in the area to accommodate the redevelopment.

Belmar is served by five bus routes but is not dependent on transit for success. These existing transit lines simply allowed this development to accommodate higher density development without putting a strain on the existing roadways.

### **Public investments/incentives used**

As of 2008, public improvements cost approximately \$160 million, with \$120 million financed through bonds and the remaining \$40 million paid for by Continuum Partners. A public improvement fee (PIF) of 2.5 percent and property tax-increment financing of \$500,000 pledged from the Alameda Corridor will repay the bonds issued for public improvements. The city helped support the PIF by waiving 1 percent of its sales tax. Initially, 50 percent of the lodging tax for the proposed hotel was to be used to repay the bonds, and this was adjusted when the hotel was replaced with more retail uses.

Phase 1, completed in 2004, cost approximately \$230 million. As of 2009, total build out was estimated to cost \$850 million.

### **Subsequent public and private investment**

Belmar Crossing, a shopping center located directly across the street from Belmar, underwent major renovations in 2004 after seeing increases in property value resulting from the Belmar redevelopment.

### **Public policy to facilitate this project**

The **Wadsworth Boulevard Strategic Plan** was adopted in 1997 and replaced by a new plan in 2009. The plan focused on Wadsworth Boulevard, north of Mississippi, which contained the old Villa Italia Shopping Center.

The **West Alameda Avenue Corridor Urban Redevelopment Plan** (1998) was created as a result of the designation of the Lakewood Reinvestment Authority. This plan defined the urban renewal area and described the need for public undertakings and what they might look like. Villa Italia Shopping Center was designated as phase two of this urban redevelopment plan and slated for redevelopment when economic conditions made it feasible. The Belmar project was approved by the Lakewood Reinvestment Authority in 2000.

Belmar was in the development stage when the **South Alameda Area Plan** was created in March 2002. This plan outlined the redevelopment of the old Villa Italia Mall and identified traffic and public works concerns. Planners hoped that Belmar would serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and reinvestment along Alameda Avenue.

See photos on pages 74–75.



Left: The one-acre public plaza at Belmar. Right: Park and residential units at Belmar.



Left: Belmar's Main Street. Right: Wind-powered lighting at Belmar.



Belmar 1999 (above) and 2011(below).  
Source: Google Earth.



## SOURCES

### City of Lakewood

[www.lakewood-colorado.org/sustainability/projects.htm](http://www.lakewood-colorado.org/sustainability/projects.htm),  
[www.lakewood-colorado.org/PDFs/HighlightsAlameda.pdf](http://www.lakewood-colorado.org/PDFs/HighlightsAlameda.pdf)

### Lakewood Economic Development — Belmar

[www.lakewood-colorado.org/PDFs/Belmar%20Kit.pdf](http://www.lakewood-colorado.org/PDFs/Belmar%20Kit.pdf)

### Public Improvement Fee Information

[www.lakewood.org/index.cfm?&include=/FN/PIF/BelmarPIF.cfm](http://www.lakewood.org/index.cfm?&include=/FN/PIF/BelmarPIF.cfm)  
[www.lakewood.org/FN/PIF/belmarbrochure.pdf](http://www.lakewood.org/FN/PIF/belmarbrochure.pdf)

### South Alameda Area Plan

[www.lakewood.org/PPW/CPR/pdf/NPsAlameda.pdf](http://www.lakewood.org/PPW/CPR/pdf/NPsAlameda.pdf)

### The Town Paper, Another Greyfield Gone

[tndtownpaper.com/Volume7/belmar\\_colorado.htm](http://tndtownpaper.com/Volume7/belmar_colorado.htm)

### West Alameda Avenue Corridor Urban Redevelopment Plan (1998)

[www.lakewood-colorado.org/PDFs/Alameda%20Plan.pdf](http://www.lakewood-colorado.org/PDFs/Alameda%20Plan.pdf)



## *Destination Midtown Omaha, Nebraska*

### **TIMELINE AND STATUS**

- The planning process was announced to the public April 1, 2003.
- Part of an ongoing effort to maintain and revitalize this area.

### **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Many public and private institutions
- City of Omaha
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Destination Midtown (similar to a community development organization; consists of an advisory board, a full-time director and many volunteers)
- Neighborhood associations
- Businesses

[www.destinationmidtown.org](http://www.destinationmidtown.org)

### **Background and key features**

Midtown Omaha, a 3.6 square-mile area just west of downtown, was beginning to show signs of its age. Institutions wanted to make significant capital improvements but were concerned about the viability of the surrounding area. To address these concerns and establish a vision for the future, the local institutions formed a partnership called Destination Midtown.

Destination Midtown links neighborhoods, businesses, institutions and the city in efforts to revitalize Midtown Omaha and make it a “destination of choice.” Destination Midtown is mostly funded through corporations and serves as a partner to the city. This organization is currently transitioning to expand its boundaries and cover areas outside Midtown. It is also focusing on neighborhood business district projects and other economic development and infrastructure improvements.

Midtown originally developed as the horse railway, electric railway and eventually the Belt Line Railroad brought people outside of Omaha’s downtown area in the late 1800s. Midtown became an urban area that offered options for living, working, shopping, and playing all within walking distance. It is one of the few locations in the Omaha metropolitan area where this continues to be the case.

Due to its age, most of the area has been developed. It is mainly comprised of historic residential neighborhoods between commercial corridors. There are also quite a few large institutional uses such as Creighton University and the associated Medical Center, Mutual of Omaha, Kiewit, Berkshire Hathaway, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

This district now includes the main arterial road within the metro area, Dodge Street. While no additional transportation routes have been added since this effort began, the area has retained its regional transportation routes while other areas of the city have suffered from discontinued service, as increased density was



able to support transit. In addition, an Alternative Analysis will be underway soon to look at options such as a streetcar and BRT that increase transit ridership and may also result in economic development. This effort is the result of a partnership between the city, Mutual of Omaha, UNMC and others.

### **Public investments/incentives used**

The idea to reinvest in Midtown was largely driven by the local institutions; therefore, the first successful project was almost entirely developed by these institutions. Midtown Crossing features one million square feet of commercial and residential space, mostly located on a former Mutual of Omaha property that was underutilized, along with a few other acquired parcels.

Destination Midtown, developed by ECI Investment Advisors, Inc., in coordination with nearby large corporations, began in September 2007 and was completed in May 2010. This \$325 million project was intended to serve as an example of redevelopment in Midtown has since served as a catalyst for redevelopment in the area. Only a small fraction of the project was funded with public money — tax increment financing (TIF) dollars were used to convert Barnum Street into a two-way street and for sewer improvements.

The project is one of only a few in the nation pursuing LEED for Neighborhood Development certification. Midtown Crossing features two green roofs, a LEED-certified hotel, and is built around more than seven acres of green space. The public Turner Park was doubled in size and is now maintained by Mutual of Omaha with some financial help from the city.

In addition to a recycling program for residents, a construction waste recycling program was implemented, and energy efficient wall panels were installed to reduce energy consumption. This development has opened the market to higher-income residents who wish to live in an apartment or condo.

### **Subsequent public and private investment**

Since 2005, Destination Midtown has completed 120 projects. It has attracted small businesses, expansions and rehabilitations, totaling more than \$640 million.

Omaha-based Urban Village Development plans to rehabilitate eight run-down, historic buildings in the Park Avenue district of Midtown, creating 137 high-end apartments by mid-2013. This project is expected to add more than 125,000 labor hours to the job market. Urban Village Development has also added 210 apartment units as part of 15 buildings renovations within a half-mile radius of the Midtown Crossing development. These projects are expected to serve as a catalyst for other redevelopment in the area.

Other projects in the Park Avenue district include an expansion of the St. John Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, a renovation at the Kent Bellows Studio, and plans for the new inCOMMON Community Development community center. In addition, many large institutions have invested millions of dollars into their own facilities.

Improvements to slim the roadway and provide a bicycle lane are in progress along Leavenworth Street. Two options have been developed and a meeting is planned for early 2012 to decide the best option. This is a pilot project that will hopefully set the foundation for how to activate other streets in Midtown. Additional roadway studies currently underway include Saddle Creek Road and the “S curve” where Dodge Street is split into Douglas Street.

### **Public policy to facilitate this project**

Finalized in 2004, the **Destination Midtown Master Plan** was driven and largely funded by the local institutions. This plan investigated the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the area and further refined the study area

boundary. After significant public involvement, including numerous design charrettes and public workshops, this study makes recommendations that are categorized into four program topics: neighborhood, transportation, central corridor, and parks and open space. An implementation matrix prioritizes the recommendations and assigns them to the appropriate personnel. This plan inspired many others similar in nature to be developed for other areas of the city.

The **Park Avenue Redevelopment Study** was adopted in 2008 and focuses on a specific area within Midtown. The plan sets out specific recommendations for redevelopment in the area, including infill housing, streetscape and transportation system improvements, rehabilitating residential structures, and developing new commercial opportunities.

The **Neighborhood Business District** project kicked off in July 2011 and will focus on three neighborhood business districts in Midtown and South Omaha — Leavenworth, Gifford Park and Park Avenue. Working with a consultant, Destination Midtown, the South Omaha Development Project and the Metropolitan Area Planning Association will create an economic development plan for each district to catalyze redevelopment, investment and job creation. A catalyst development is planned for each neighborhood specific to the uniqueness of each area.

**Downtown Omaha 2030** calls for connecting Midtown to major employment

centers via streetcar. The plan also calls for an enhanced pedestrian environment along these major corridors.

The **Transportation Master Plan** is close to completion and includes a Prioritized Project List that includes many recommendations from the Destination Midtown Master Plan. Most of these recommendations will make the streets in Midtown more pedestrian friendly.



Dodge Street as it exists today (left). Concept rendering of Dodge Street as an urban boulevard (right). Source: [jolsonurbanist.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/destination-midtown.pdf](http://jolsonurbanist.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/destination-midtown.pdf)



Leavenworth Street looking west from 39th Street (left). Concept rendering showing Leavenworth Street redevelopment based on design guidelines (right).



Midtown Crossing. Source: [www.weitz.com/project/midtown-crossing/](http://www.weitz.com/project/midtown-crossing/)



Midtown Crossing 1993 and 2010. Source: Google Earth.

## SOURCES

### **Destination Midtown Master Plan**

[destinationmidtownstage.jelecos.info/xDocs/Master%20Plan.pdf](http://destinationmidtownstage.jelecos.info/xDocs/Master%20Plan.pdf)

### **Midtown Crossing**

[www.midtowncrossing.com](http://www.midtowncrossing.com)

### **South Omaha Development Project**

[omahachamber.org/southomaha](http://omahachamber.org/southomaha)

# *Columbia Pike Corridor* *Arlington, Virginia*

## **TIMELINE AND STATUS**

- The Columbia Pike Initiative began in 1998.
- Efforts to revitalize the corridor are ongoing.

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Arlington County Department of Environmental Services
- Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) — a nonprofit coalition of businesses, civic associations, property owners and Arlington County
- Residents
- Businesses
- Property owners

[www.columbia-pike.org](http://www.columbia-pike.org)

## **Background and key features**

The Columbia Pike Initiative began in 1998 with the hope of spurring revitalization and redevelopment along this decaying suburban, auto-oriented corridor. The Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) was formed through a public/private partnership and is a nonprofit organization focused on the revitalization of the Columbia Pike Corridor and its neighborhoods. Since the 1880s this corridor has functioned as a main east-west transportation corridor and is the most heavily used transit corridor not served by Metro in Northern Virginia, with 15,000 passengers daily.

Columbia Pike Initiative — A Revitalization Plan, led by CPRO, establishes a long-range vision for the corridor that focuses on creating a more lively, economically competitive and desirable place to live, work and play. The plan was adopted in March 2002 and updated in 2005. The document was the first of many efforts that continue to revitalize the Columbia Pike Corridor:

- The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form-Based Code has helped guide the form of development along the corridor to achieve a more desirable place for pedestrians.
- The Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force Report sets guidelines to make Columbia Pike into a complete street.
- The Master Transportation Plan adopted early 2011 will provide guidance on transportation related issues for the corridor.

## **Public investments/incentives used**

While no public investments or incentives were used to kickoff this project, significant public improvements have been completed since the Columbia Pike Initiative began in 1998. For example, the Columbia Pike Corridor recently added “Super Stops” — larger and more accessible bus shelters — at four

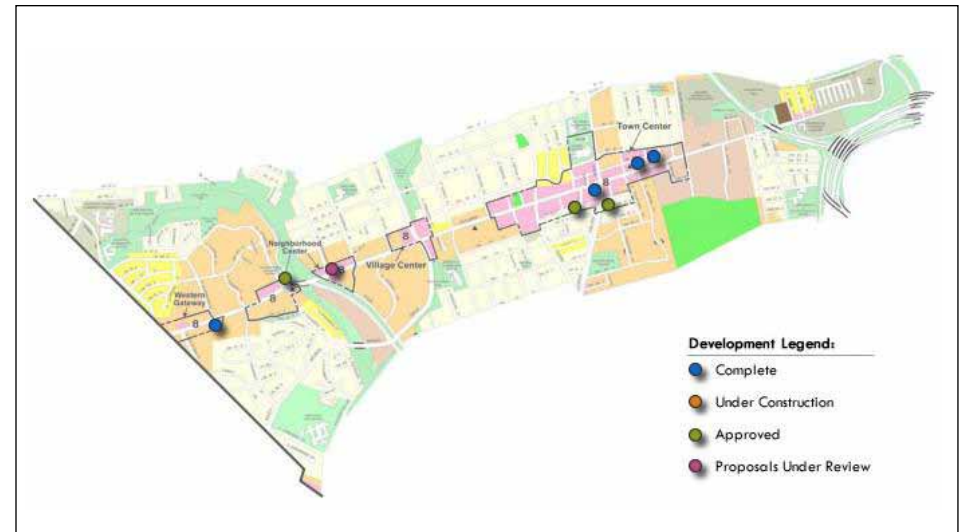
locations, with eight additional locations planned. In addition, a feasibility study to build a five-mile light rail corridor is in the works. Many other improvements have been made or are planned, such as bike boulevards, utility undergrounding, a bridge rehabilitation and streetlight upgrades. Significant private investment has occurred in the corridor as a result of these efforts

### **Subsequent public and private investment**

Over the past four years, 200,000 square feet of commercial space and almost 1,000 residential units have been developed along the Pike. One example of an approved project is the Arlington Mill Community Center, offering a new 40,000 square foot facility with light ground-floor retail and 192 residential units. Two other residential projects are approved and will add another 58 housing units to the Columbia Pike Corridor. Completed projects include Penrose Square — a seven-story retail and residential building; Siena Park — a six-story residential, retail and office development; Halstead (Columbia Center) — an eight-story residential and retail building; and 55 Hundred (Columbia Village) — a 10-story retail and residential development on the west end of the Pike.

Streetscape improvements and utility undergrounding are in the works along Columbia Pike. These improvements are part of a three-phase project that entails redesign, street improvements and pavement repairs. This project is funded by federal, state and local dollars and is estimated to cost \$7.4 million. In addition, there are efforts to upgrade streetlights, enhance safety and access for bicyclists and pedestrians, and provide additional “Super Stops” for bus riders.

The Columbia Pike Multimodal Street Improvement Project is currently taking place on the east side of the corridor between South Jefferson Street and South Joyce Street. This 3.5-mile project, led by Arlington County, aims to make Columbia Pike a complete street, offering a variety of transportation opportunities. A transportation study, currently in draft form,



Columbia Pike Development Projects. Source: [www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/planning/plan/page69520.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/planning/plan/page69520.aspx)

offers a transportation analysis, environmental documentation and preliminary streetscape design related to infrastructure. This effort coordinates with the Pike Transit Initiative but is a separate project.

The Pike Transit Initiative is an effort to increase mobility along the corridor and accommodate future growth. After conducting a local alternatives analysis, in conjunction with Arlington County and Fairfax County, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) proposed and is now evaluating the feasibility of a five-mile streetcar along Columbia Pike. This process will continue with public engagement and the potential streetcar could be up and running by 2017.

### **Public policy to facilitate this project**

**Columbia Pike Initiative — A Revitalization Plan** was adopted in March 2002. This is a long-range vision plan focusing on economic development, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation and public infrastructure initiatives, and open

space and recreational needs. Its overall goal was to create a more lively, economically competitive and desirable place for people to visit, work and live. A 2005 update focuses on the residential component not included in the first plan. This “Housing Initiative” centers on improving and expanding housing options in the area.

The **Columbia Pike Parking Strategy** was adopted in 2002 and updated in 2005. It focuses on the complex and specific parking needs in the Columbia Pike Corridor.

Following an intensive community charrette, the **Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form-Based Code** was one of the first form-based codes in the country. Adopted in February 2003, this code established standards for building form that help shape a pedestrian-friendly environment and promote a healthy mix of uses. New developments constructed along the corridor comply with this code.

To further refine the width, use and design of the Columbia Pike street space, the **Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force Report** was adopted in February 2004. This report sets guidelines for revitalizing Columbia Pike into a complete street, one that accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and transit.

The **Columbia Pike Implementation Team (CPIT)** was formed when the Street Space Planning Task Force Report was created. This task force is made up of citizens, civic leagues, related business associations and representatives from the Transportation and Planning Commission. The CPIT continues to provide guidance on transportation issues related to state, county and private projects.

The **Master Transportation Plan** was updated and fully approved and adopted in early 2011. This plan provides general guidance on the transportation systems in Arlington County through 2030. This plan will help guide transportation changes along the Columbia Pike Corridor.



Above: Street improvements. Below: New development along the Pike.  
Source: Arlington County Flickr





Rendering of potential transit along Columbia Pike. Source: [cp.arlingtonapps.com](http://cp.arlingtonapps.com)



Columbia Pike 1998 (top) and 2010 (bottom). Source: Google Earth.

## SOURCES

### **Arlington County Columbia Pike**

[cp.arlingtonapps.com](http://cp.arlingtonapps.com)

### **Arlington County Department of Environmental Services, Columbia Pike Revitalization Project**

[www.arlingtonva.us/departments/EnvironmentalServices/dot/planning/page66674.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/EnvironmentalServices/dot/planning/page66674.aspx)

### **Columbia Pike Multimodal**

[www.pikemultimodal.com](http://www.pikemultimodal.com)

### **Columbia Pike Parking Strategy**

[www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Documents/4087Columbia%20Pike%20Parking%20Strategy.pdf](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Documents/4087Columbia%20Pike%20Parking%20Strategy.pdf)

### **Multimodal Improvements Project - Transportation Study**

[www.kimley-horn.com/projects/pikemultimodal/images/features/CP\\_transportation\\_study\\_finaldraft\\_revised\\_sept\\_2010.pdf](http://www.kimley-horn.com/projects/pikemultimodal/images/features/CP_transportation_study_finaldraft_revised_sept_2010.pdf)

### **Pike Transit Initiative**

[www.piketransit.com/aboutstudy\\_current.php](http://www.piketransit.com/aboutstudy_current.php)

### **Plans and Form Based Code**

[www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/CPHDForumsColumbiaColumbiaPikeInitiativeMain.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/CPHDForumsColumbiaColumbiaPikeInitiativeMain.aspx)

# **RTA Healthline** **(Euclid Corridor)** **Cleveland, Ohio**

## **TIMELINE AND STATUS**

- Planning and engineering for the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project began in 1997
- Construction was completed in 2005
- BRT opened to the public in October 2008

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- City of Cleveland
- City of East Cleveland
- Cuyahoga County
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)
- Local development corporations: Downtown Cleveland Partnership; Playhouse Square Foundation; The Quadrangle; MidTown Cleveland, Inc.; Hough Partners for Progress; Fairfax-Renaissance Development Corporation; University Circle, Inc.
- Community members

[www.rtahealthline.com](http://www.rtahealthline.com)

## **Background and key features**

After many transformations over the years, the Euclid Corridor now contains a successful bus rapid transit (BRT) system that has spurred significant economic investment along the corridor. Once known as the Euclid Corridor Silver Line, the BRT has been renamed the RTA HealthLine to reflect its partnership with the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospital. This thriving corridor offers a 6.8-mile BRT system complemented by 9.2 miles of roadway and streetscape improvements on and adjacent to Euclid Avenue. The BRT operates in an exclusive center median that contains 58 stations, connecting the two major employment centers of Cleveland — Downtown and University Circle. The RTA HealthLine replaced the #6 bus line, increasing ridership by 48 percent in the first year and by 58 percent as of April 2011.

This effort was launched two decades ago by RTA and the city of Cleveland in hopes of improving access between the two major employment centers in Cleveland. After preparation of the Dual Hub Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project became a reality. This project included extensive public involvement and many joint planning efforts along the way. Much of this project was funded through the Federal Transit Administration and other state and local money. This large public investment continues to spur private investment — estimated in May 2011 to have reached \$4.7 billion. Despite the recession, development and other investments along this corridor have continued.

The RTA HealthLine's sustainability efforts include planting 1,500 new trees and providing a dedicated bike lane from Cleveland State University to Case Western Reserve University. In addition, the Euclid Corridor Vehicle (ECV) is a 62-foot long hybrid bus that was designed to resemble many high-speed trains used throughout the nation. The ECV can fit 100 people (both sitting and standing) and is ADA accessible due to its low-



floor design. Tickets are purchased at the stops rather than on the bus to reduce the duration of stops.

Other features of this project include the East Side Transit Center, located near the CSU Convocation Center. This center provides transit users a convenient and comfortable place to wait for connecting routes. In addition, a Public Art Master Plan was created to guide the development of public art by private and public entities. This project also involves a Downtown Transit Zone with reserved bus lanes on St. Clair and Superior Avenues.

### **Public investments/incentives used**

The street improvement and BRT project was funded by:

- \$82.2 million from the Federal Transit Administration
- \$50 million from the State of Ohio
- \$17.0 million from GCRTA
- \$8 million from the city of Cleveland
- \$10 million from NOACA
- \$0.6 million from FTA Rail Mode

### **Subsequent public and private investment**

\$4.7 billion has been invested along this corridor for projects such as rehabilitation of old buildings, new construction and major expansions of institutions. Some of these investments and the resulting benefits include:

- \$180 million Cleveland State University master plan
- \$500 million University Hospitals expansion
- \$350 million Cleveland Museum of Art project
- \$506 million Cleveland Clinic Heart Center
- 4,000 new residential units along the route
- \$62 million generated in local taxes

- 11.4 million square feet in new and planned development
- 13,000 new jobs

### **Public policy to facilitate this project**

The 1993 **Dual Hub Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement** investigated options for transit improvements along the Euclid Corridor between Downtown and University Circle. This transitional study evaluated the alternatives with respect to the changed federal project development process due to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiently Act of 1991 (ISTEA). Four rail options and one package of bus improvements were closely compared. The preferred alternative turned out to be the package of bus improvements known as the Rapid Transit System (RTS). When compared to the four other alternatives proposing rail, the RTS was much cheaper and would still achieve most of the transit benefits of the rail options.

The RTS was modified and became the basis for the **Euclid Corridor Transportation Project**. After 12 public meetings and coordination between the city of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) passed and amended the resolution in April 1999. The goals of this project were to increase the transit system efficiency, promote economic development along the Euclid Corridor and improve the quality of life along the corridor.

Other plans that relate to the Euclid Corridor include:

- Euclid Avenue Rehabilitation Plan (City of East Cleveland)
- Euclid Avenue Revitalization Plan (Downtown Cleveland Partnership)
- Cleveland Civic Vision 2000 (City of Cleveland)
- Cleveland State University Campus & Facilities Master Plan (1995)

- MidTown 2000: Understanding, Rediscovering and Envisioning Our Community (1998, MidTown Cleveland, Inc.)
- Cleveland Clinic Foundation Campus Master Plan (1998)
- University Circle Master Plan (1990, University Circle, Inc.)
- Cleveland Theater District Comprehensive Plan (1997, Playhouse Square Foundation)



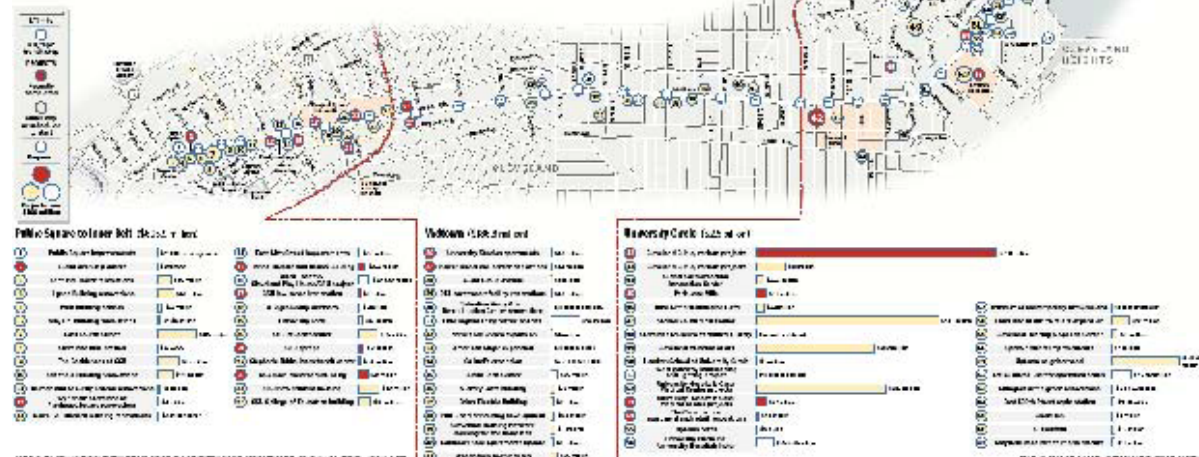
Left: RTA HealthLine Euclid Corridor Vehicle. Source: [www.freshwatercleveland.com/focusareas/Transportation.aspx](http://www.freshwatercleveland.com/focusareas/Transportation.aspx) Right: View of designated BRT lane on Euclid Avenue. Source: Junior Sam Flickr



Left: New BRT station. Right: Euclid Corridor with BRT improvements. Source: [blog.cleveland.com/architecture/2008/11/\\_cleveland\\_a\\_city\\_fighting.html](http://blog.cleveland.com/architecture/2008/11/_cleveland_a_city_fighting.html)

# Paving the way to economic development

More than 100 million dollars in investment along the RTA HealthLine will be used to build a new transit corridor and to improve the surrounding area. The RTA is investing in a new transit corridor and to improve the surrounding area. The RTA is investing in a new transit corridor and to improve the surrounding area. The RTA is investing in a new transit corridor and to improve the surrounding area.



Map of investments along the RTA HealthLine. Source: [media.cleveland.com/pdextra/other/Euclid.pdf](http://media.cleveland.com/pdextra/other/Euclid.pdf)

## SOURCES

### BRT Case Study – Cleveland RTA HealthLine

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kF6EF3kOGQE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kF6EF3kOGQE)

### RTA News

[www.riderta.com/newsroom/releases/?listingid=1580](http://www.riderta.com/newsroom/releases/?listingid=1580); [www.riderta.com/newsroom/releases/?listingid=1589](http://www.riderta.com/newsroom/releases/?listingid=1589)



Euclid Corridor 1994 (left) 2010 (right). Source: Google Earth.

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# Index of Terms

## **Best Management Practices**

Structural, nonstructural, and managerial techniques that are recognized to be the most effective and practical means to control nonpoint source pollutants such as those found in storm water runoff.

## **Build Green**

A rating system developed by the National Green Building Program, utilized by the Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City, which quantifies environmentally friendly building practices such as water efficiency, indoor environmental quality, and resource efficiency. This rating system is developed for buildings as well as land developments and can be utilized by new construction as well as for remodeling.

## **EnergyStar**

A certification granted by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy for household appliances and buildings that perform at specified levels of energy efficiency. ([www.greenhealthyhome.com/green-glossary/](http://www.greenhealthyhome.com/green-glossary/))

## **Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**

The ratio of gross floor area divided by gross lot or land area measured in square feet.

## **LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)**

A rating system established by the U.S. Green Building Council to encourage adoption of high performance building and development practices. Participating buildings are rated on categories including site sustainability, water and energy efficiency, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, design innovation, and regional priority. Buildings may achieve certification at the Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels. LEED certification is also available for Neighborhood

Development (LEED-ND) integrating the principles of smart growth, urbanism, green building and other sustainability topics into neighborhood design.

## **Low-Impact Development**

A sustainable landscaping approach that can be used to replicate or restore natural watershed functions and/or address targeted watershed goals and objectives. ([www.epa.gov/greeningepa/glossary.htm#l](http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/glossary.htm#l))

## **Mixed-Use, Vertical**

The integration of two or more land use types within a building, occurring on different floors. A typical example of a vertical mixed-use building would incorporate active uses, such as stores, offices, and restaurants, at the street level and residential or office uses on the upper floors.

## **Mixed-Use, Horizontal**

A pattern where several types of uses or buildings, together with residential, are included as part of a cohesive development in proximity to each other – but each building would contain its own separate use. They would be designed as a set of coordinated uses, with common parking areas, strong pedestrian connections, and similar design features, but would contain separate uses in each building.

## **Podium Parking**

A parking structure that is attached to a high-rise of another use.

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

A tool used by cities and other development authorities to finance certain types of development costs. The public purpose of TIF are the redevelopment of blighted area, construction of low- and moderate-income housing, provision of employment opportunities, and improvement of the tax base. With TIF, a

city “captures” the additional property taxes generated by the development that would have gone to other taxing jurisdictions and use the “tax increments” to finance the development costs.

### **Triple Bottom Line**

Measuring the economic, community and environmental performance of a project. This method of assessment aims for synergy amongst these three aspects rather than compromise or ‘trade-offs’ between them. ([www.greenplaybook.org/resources/glossary.htm#T](http://www.greenplaybook.org/resources/glossary.htm#T))

# Creating Sustainable Places Coordinating Committee

*The work of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative is led by a Consortium Coordinating Committee. The committee, initially formed by the MARC Board of Directors in March 2011, forms workgroups as needed for specific tasks, and hosts a Partner Congress once or twice each year to keep all partners informed and engaged in the process.*

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# Creating Sustainable Places



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Mid-America Regional Council

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