NORTH DENVER CORNERSTONE COLLABORATIVE
An Initiative of Mayor Michael B. Hancock

Annual Report 2014
In early 2013, we recognized the need to align six separate projects that were developing in and around the northern gateway of our city. We knew we needed one coordinated vision, and the support and partnership of the residents of Globeville, Elyria and Swansea, to activate this key segment of the Corridor of Opportunity that runs from downtown to Denver International Airport. The resulting North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC) is a coordinated effort that is ensuring integrated planning and deliberate connections among the converging projects. Each of the six projects is unique and plays a significant role in rebuilding our neighborhoods.

Already in 2014, we saw tremendous progress. The Globeville Neighborhood Plan, through significant community input, creative ideas and common sense recommendations, was adopted late in the year, with the Elyria-Swansea plan right behind. We are transforming Brighton Boulevard, with approximately $26 million in investments in 2015 to complete the first major overhaul of the area in decades. And River North, or RiNo, is booming with new infrastructure, development and energy.

Also in 2014, we stood with our Western Stock Show Association partners, Colorado State University, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and History Colorado, to announce the creation of the National Western Center – a dynamic hub that will combine modern agriculture with western tradition, education with entertainment, and competition with commerce.

RTD station development and the reconstruction of Interstate 70 complete the NDCC portfolio, and as you will see from this 2014 report, the NDCC’s strategic and collaborative approach is paving the way for an exciting and vibrant future in this historic part of our great city.

Respectfully,

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor
In 2014, the projects led by the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC) advanced quicker than expected due to integrated planning by our city agencies and partners. I am proud of the accomplishments we have experienced in such a short amount of time, but this success isn’t accidental. Our city agencies and growing list of external partners have been working together with residents and businesses to move projects forward in a way that creates a foundational and collaborative approach to how we reconnect a community.

Throughout this annual report, you will read about several of 2014’s successes that are significant to Globeville, Elyria and Swansea. Our team has been working diligently with residents and local businesses to ensure that our projects serve as a catalyst for neighborhood improvements and that we continue to keep residents’ needs at the forefront of our vision. The Globeville and Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Plans set a solid vision that will guide future redevelopment and retain the unique spirit of these historic neighborhoods. In 2014, we also released a draft of the National Western Center Master Plan, a bold vision to create a year-round campus with life-long learning, research, the arts, entertainment, competition and commerce. This bold and transformational effort to remake the National Western Complex and Denver Coliseum into a catalytic center to develop a next generation agricultural economy will position Colorado to help solve some of the world’s biggest food issues that will ultimately have a local impact and a global reach.

We don’t plan to slow down. The NDCC projects will continue to evolve in 2015, but we can’t do this without you. Your involvement is what drives us to be creative and thoughtful about each project, and we look forward to continue sharing this journey with you.

Sincerely,

Kelly Leid
NDCC Executive Director
NDCC PORTFOLIO PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

Globeville, Elyria-Swanse Neighborhood Plans
Long-term economic and cultural benefits follow when a neighborhood is revitalized. So when the distinct neighborhoods of Globeville, Elyria and Swansea took flight through thoughtful, innovative planning, the end result was exponential. Two adopted neighborhood plans now outline a strong vision to support the uniqueness of each neighborhood and its residents, while still sharing a common synergy. The neighborhood driven plans will guide future decision-making on land use, urban design and infrastructure in addition to identifying key partnerships.

National Western Center Campus
Imagine the next generation of an iconic Denver landmark that celebrates the past, but is clearly pointed toward the future of Denver as a global city. Through a visionary transformation, the National Western Center Campus will become a must-see destination with sustainable, year-round programming that celebrates the pioneering spirit and promise of the West. Experiential life-long learning, the arts, entertainment, competition and commerce will be bolstered by innovative partnerships with the National Western Stock Show, Colorado State University, Denver Museum of Nature & Science and History Colorado.

Brighton Boulevard Corridor Redevelopment
Paving a warm welcome to our city means energizing Brighton Boulevard, a major gateway to and from downtown Denver, with significant improvements. The second phase of planning for this corridor focuses on potential streetscape design elements, as well as additional amenities and mobility improvements. Public and private investment partnerships will build a new energy and encourage innovative collaborations to further development that mixes the old with the new.

River North/South Platte River
This vibrant community, also known as “RiNo,” is home to a remarkable mix of creative businesses. Radiating this progressive energy out to the rest of the city is key to the next phase of development. Plans call for innovative uses of the South Platte River as the focal point for future development and recreation. And RiNo’s evolution is expected to continue over the next 20 years thanks to transit-oriented development near 38th and Blake, and other mixed-use developments in the area, making this region of the city one of the most unique “must-see” communities.
**Interstate 70 Reconstruction**
Lowering a highway below grade is a bold move. That’s the innovative proposal from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) via the I-70 East Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the reconstruction area located between Brighton and Colorado Boulevards. Swansea Elementary School will gain four acres of community space from the cover that will provide new connections within the neighborhood. Just imagine how people, places and neighborhoods in the area will be reenergized and rediscovered with this significant and exciting restructuring of I-70.

**RTD Station Development**
Transit opens up paths for residents and boosts the economic viability of neighborhoods. As the cornerstone of the Corridor of Opportunity, Globeville, Elyria and Swansea are in a unique location that will be home to three RTD stations and the commuter rail maintenance facility. Due to the East, Gold and North rail lines, the community will enjoy enhanced connections to other parts of the city and provide vital access to and from Denver Union Station, DIA, National Western Center and Arvada. This same access will bolster thoughtful development around each station that is relevant to the neighborhoods.
Our First Full Year of Operations – 2014

Neighborhood Plans

Health of the Neighborhood - Initiated by Councilwoman Judy Montero, Denver City Council prioritized health considerations for neighborhood planning in its 2014 Priorities making a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) a part of all neighborhood planning processes for the City moving forward. Led by Denver Department of Environmental Health, the first HIA produced under this directive was for the Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods. This HIA studied five major factors that were identified by the residents as top concerns in the neighborhood; environmental quality, connectivity and mobility, access to goods and services, community safety and mental wellbeing. The HIA provided recommendations that will contribute to improved health for residents in the five categories and the HIA findings and recommendations were also incorporated into the neighborhood plans. The HIA can be accessed at [www.denvergov.org/NDCC](http://www.denvergov.org/NDCC).

Creating an Active Community – In 2014, Globeville welcomed a new bike lane from 47th Ave. to Broadway. A bicycle connection on 47th Avenue offers important east-west connection in the Globeville neighborhood, and it offers access to Globeville’s Argo Park, the future park walking loop, and South Platte River Trail. This improvement supports the vision for healthy neighborhoods through increased pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Also, this bike lane was one of the first actions taken upon the results of the HIA and part of Public Work’s bicycle work program. In addition, Parks & Rec helped Swansea Recreation Center convert unused tennis courts into futsol courts. This change helps make outdoor activities more culturally relevant for the neighborhood.
**Globeville Neighborhood Plan** – The residents of Globeville finalized their neighborhood plan in 2014, which was adopted by Denver City Council in December, sets the long-range vision for their neighborhood. The vision introduces four principles that are viewed as key to achieving this vision; Unique, Strong, Connected and Healthy. In addition, the plan provided a vision for four important character areas:

- Residential Neighborhood Core
- Washington Street and the Riverfront
- 41st & Fox Station Area
- Stable Industrial Edges

The Globeville Plan can be accessed at [www.denvergov.org/NDCC](http://www.denvergov.org/NDCC). (Provide direct link)

**Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Plan** – Following the footsteps of Globeville, the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood released a draft of their neighborhood plan in November outlining their vision. This plan also followed the key four principles that are essential to achieving this vision; Unique, Strong, Connected and Healthy. The Elyria-Swansea neighborhood plan focused on six character areas:

- Traditional Residential Areas
- Industrial Areas
- I-70 Reconstruction
- 40th & Colorado Station Area
- National Western Center & NWSS Station Area
- 38th & Blake Station Area

The plan is expected to be adopted by City Council in February 2015. The Elyria-Swansea Plan can be accessed at [www.denvergov.org/NDCC](http://www.denvergov.org/NDCC).

**Elyria Swansea Chosen for Technical Expertise** - The Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado) selected Elyria-Swansea as one of two communities for its Building Healthy Places Workshops. This one-day workshop led by ULI Colorado volunteers worked with the neighborhood to find practical ways to improve the urban environment that benefits public health of residents. This exercise focused on RTD’s 40th and Colorado East Rail Line Station and recommendations were included in the Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Plan.
National Western Center Campus

Study Demonstrates What’s Possible – In May 2014, the City & County of Denver released a market-based feasibility study focused on the National Western Complex, Denver Coliseum and the Colorado Convention Center based on the current needs, potential growth and recommendations for keeping these important visitor assets competitive. The feasibility study recommended a range of solutions to continue offering a diverse set of facilities that support meetings/conventions, entertainment and other events. The study projected that improvements to the facilities would have an annual economic impact/benefit of $180 million and $11.4 million of direct tax revenue to the city. This study was used as part of the master planning process for the National Western Center.

City Submits Intent to Apply for Regional Tourism Act – In October, the City & County of Denver submitted a Letter of Intent to the State of Colorado to be considered for its Regional Tourism Act (RTA) funding. The RTA, which is in its final round of funding, would help fund elements of the new National Western Center that attract new visitors to the campus. A team of internal and external experts was assembled to meet a February 2015 deadline.

Draft of Master Plan Released – After the Feasibility Study was released, the master planning process began. Our consultant team, led by Parsons Brinkerhoff began working with the Western Stock Show Association, Colorado State University, Denver Museum of Nature & Science, History Colorado, along with a community advisory committee to develop a bold vision for the National Western Center. In December, Mayor Michael B. Hancock and the National Western Center Partners released a draft of the master plan for public review and comment. At its core, the vision for the National Western Center celebrates the pioneering spirit and promise of the West through year-round experiential life-long learning, the arts, entertainment, competition and commerce. Following a set of strong guiding principles, the plan outlines several bold ideas that include:

- Improve access to and health of the South Platte River
- Flexible, year-round programs to drive new tourism
- Provide new multimodal connections
- Create new partnership opportunities
Redevelopment Continues on Brighton – This year, Brighton Boulevard saw several new projects unfold. INDUSTRY Denver opened its doors of its partially renovated industrial warehouse. INDUSTRY Denver is a collaborative office space which has been fully leased to creative companies such as Uber Technologies, Inc, Roximity, Zenman and Spotzer Media Group. In addition, Great Divide broke ground on their new facility to be located between 33rd and 35th Streets on Brighton Blvd. slated to open in 2015. And in late 2014, Family Environmental began demolition of the old Drive Train building on 31st Ave. and Brighton Blvd. making way for two new mixed-use projects. These are just a few of the new projects emerging along Brighton Blvd.

Detailed Design Work Begins on Brighton Blvd as a Multi-Modal Gateway – During the summer of 2014, CH2MHILL was selected as the design team to advance detailed design work forward on Brighton Blvd. Additional surveying, geotechnical and environmental investigation, and continued outreach to businesses and developments along the Brighton Boulevard Corridor took place this year. This next phase is scheduled to be completed in 9 months and will refine the plans and urban design concepts developed over the last year.

Significant Investment Receives Green Light – Included in Mayor Hancock’s proposed 2015 budget, Brighton Boulevard was a key project that received a significant investment. In late 2014, Denver City Council approved the budget and Brighton Boulevard has been allocated $25.7 million to move the project forward. These funds will be used to implement Blvd. improvements from 29th to 44th Streets and activate other adjoining creating shovel ready projects along this corridor.
River North – RiNo & the South Platte River

**RiNo Pedestrian Bridge Design Commences** - A partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 2014 between the NDCC Project's Office, Zeppelin Development, the Greenway Foundation and Bridges to Prosperity, to collaborate on a new pedestrian bridge that will link the Taxi development to the future River North Park. The bridge will be part of a larger multi-model connection between RiNo and RTD's 38th & Blake commuter rail station. Community outreach will commence in 2015.

**RiNo Receives Funding to Identify Space Needs** - ArtSpace, a national nonprofit developer, owner and operator of spaces for artists and creative enterprises, received special funding from JP Morgan Chase, the City of Denver and others (including the NDCC) to identifying the space needs for artists and creative businesses in and around the RiNo and North Denver area. This study is to help advance a potential mixed-use project that includes living and working space for artists and creative businesses and supports the future of the arts in the area. Outreach work began in 2014 and will continue into 2015.

**35th/36th Pedestrian Bridge Project Revises Preferred Alternative** – Denver’s 35th/36th Pedestrian Bridge Project will provide a new connection over the railroad tracks between River North, Curtis Park and Cole neighborhoods and the future RTD East Rail Line station at 38th & Blake. As part of its final alternatives evaluation process, the City revised the west side landing of the preferred alternative that will span over the railroad tracks to connect Blake Street and Wazee Street between 35th and 36th Streets. The project moved into detailed design in 2014 with a goal of constructing the bridge to open in conjunction with RTD’s East Rail Line in 2016.

**RiNo Park Design & Phase I Implementation Receives Funding** – As part of reenergizing the South Platte River, the RiNo Park design and initial implementation received from the Mayor’s 2015 budget as part of an overall NDCC investment of $47 million toward key NDCC projects. The new park is currently being planned between 33rd and 35th Streets, just west of the new Great Divide Brewery, which is presently under construction. The NDCC team, in partnership with Denver Parks & Recreation are slated to get full design underway in early 2015.
I-70 East Redevelopment

Group Visits Seattle’s Highway Cover – In 2014, several city officials, Denver city council members and business leaders got a firsthand look at highway covers on SR 520 and I-90 in the Seattle, Washington area. The Washington State Department of Transportation provided the tour, which included a visit to the current construction of three new 500-foot lids over SR520. As the proposed cover over I-70 East would be the state's only highway cover, this tour was intended to provide participants with some insight into the "look and feel" of a covered highway along with the community context surrounding these projects.

SDEIS Garners Approximately 900 Comments – The comment period for the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the I-70 East project began on August 29th and closed on October 31st. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Federal Highway Administration gathered nearly 900 comments from residents and other community stakeholders regarding this project. Every comment received will be reviewed by the project team and a response will be provided in the Final EIS. The City & County of Denver assembled a large, cross-agency team of technical experts to provide comments in support of the Partial Cover Lowered Alternative. The City’s comments can be viewed online at www.denvergov.org/NDCC.

All comments submitted to CDOT can also be viewed at www.i-70east.com.

Swansea Students Design the Swansea Cover – As part of the outreach effort to engage residents in the project, the Swansea Elementary School’s Student Council Class, consisting of representatives from each grade, participated in an exercise to design the I-70 cover concept. Project team members provided a base model and students were able to add all of the elements they would like to see on the cover. Models included a diverse set of elements such as trees, sidewalks, soccer fields, fountains, a small convenience story and more. Students prepared team presentations and presented their models to CDOT, City and Denver Public School staff.
**RTD Commuter Rail Station Development**

**North Metro Rail Line Breaks Ground** – In March of 2014, RTD broke ground on the North Metro Rail Line which will provide a direct link from Denver Union Station into Adams County. The first stop for the North Metro Line will be located at the National Western Center and the expected opening date is in 2018. Mayor Hancock was present to express the importance of this transit line to North Denver and how this project plays a key role in revitalizing an important cornerstone of our city and provides new connections to the rest of the city.

In addition, the East Rail Line and Gold Line located in the NDCC project area continue to advance. In 2014, four commuter rail cars arrived in Denver from the assembly plant in Philadelphia. These rail cars will be used for the rail lines currently under construction. The public was given the opportunity to tour the cars in December at Denver Union Station. The East Rail Line will have two stops within in the NDCC area; 38th & Blake and 40th & Colorado Blvd. The Gold Line includes one stop within the NDCC area at 41st & Fox. Both lines will be open to the public in 2016.
NDCC Operations

Kick Starting Investment in NDCC Projects – In Mayor Hancock’s proposed 2015 budget, he allotted $47 million toward all six NDCC portfolio projects. Of those funds, $25.7 million will be designated for the Brighton Boulevard Redevelopment Corridor Project. In late 2014, Denver City Council approved the proposed budget. This investment demonstrates the City’s commitment to create intentional opportunities for Globeville, Elyria and Swansea and will allow the NDCC team to continue advancing projects with the same concentration. For more details on the 2015 budget, please review the Moving Forward Section of this annual report.

In addition to financial resources, the NDCC has collaboratively engaged internal agencies to ensure integrated planning and implementation is taking place among these converging projects. At any given time, there was approximately 60 City staff working on NDCC Projects. City agencies involved in the six NDCC projects include Community Planning & Development, Public Works, Parks & Rec, Office of Economic Development, Department of Finance, Department of Environmental Health, Arts & Venues and the Mayor’s Office. In 2014, the NDCC also hired an Environmental Project Manager to coordinate all of the environmental challenges in Globeville, Elyria and Swansea.

Experts Explore Funding Solutions - In 2014, Mayor Hancock created an NDCC Finance & Governance Work Group consisting of Denver’s top leaders to explore funding opportunities for all six NDCC projects. This group meets monthly and explores a variety of finance options relevant to the NDCC projects. The committee will provide these recommendations to the Mayor in early 2015.
Public Outreach Continues – In its second year, interest in the NDCC projects continues to increase. In 2014, approximately 75 presentations including tours were given on projects or general NDCC overviews. Groups include nonprofits, business groups, and neighborhood organizations among others.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
- RiNo Art District
- Valdez Perry Library
- Downtown Denver Partnership
- Colorado State University Board of Directors
- Clinica Tepeyac Board of Directors
- City of Arvada
- Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- AIA
- Denver Metro Association of Realtors
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Denver
- Bruce Randolph Middle & High School Parent Group
- Swansea Elementary School Parent Group
- Garden Place Elementary School Parent Group
- The Growhaus Board of Directors
- DURA
- Globeville Elyria Swansea Business Association
- Denver Delegation
- City Club
- Wheat Ridge Business Association

In the News – The NDCC projects continue to garner interest from the public. Whether it’s a story about the I-70 East project to the National Western Center or the Neighborhood Plans, Denver is interested in the advancement of all six projects. In 2014, 171 stories ran regarding NDCC projects. Archives can be found on the NDCC website at [www.denvergov.org/NDCC](http://www.denvergov.org/NDCC).
MOVING FORWARD – OUR PLANS FOR 2015

NDCC Project Work

In 2015, the NDCC will continue its intense focus on action oriented outcomes and preparing for a growing list of shovel ready projects. Here is a glance of what you can expect in the next year:

- Denver City Council is expected to adopt the Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Plan in February.
- The NDCC will begin conversations regarding Washington St. to include business owners and the Globeville community.
- National Western Center Master Plan is expected to be adopted by Denver City Council in March.
- The City will submit an application to the State of Colorado for consideration of the Regional Tourism Act funding in February. The application will highlight new tourism opportunities based on the new vision for the National Western Center.
- The Brighton Boulevard project team will commence public outreach efforts to determine design elements for this important corridor. The timeline calls for construction commencing at the end of 2015/early 2016.
- Design work will begin for the new RiNo Park, Festival Street and 33rd Street creating a new park amenity as part of energizing the South Platte River.
- CDOT will publish the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the I-70 East project.
- A community work group will be assembled to further develop the Swansea Cover as part of the I-70 East project.
Our Finances

The NDCC’s 2015 budget for $45,700,000 was approved by City Council and will allow project teams to move forward with small and large projects in 2015. The following are planned efforts per project.

**Neighborhood Plans**
- East West Connectivity in Elyria Swansea
- 47th & Marion Underpass

**National Western Center**
- General Planning

**Brighton Blvd. Corridor Redevelopment**
- Brighton Blvd. & 35th St. Intersection
- Brighton Blvd. Redevelopment

**River North/South Platte River**
- EEB Building Demolition
- Festival St./ Arkins Realignment
- River North Greenway Plan
- River North Park Development

**I-70 East Reconstruction**
- Holly & 48th Ave
- 52nd Ave from Colorado to Brighton Blvd.
- Market Lead Connectivity
- 47th & York north and south of I-70
- Monroe Reconstruction – land acquisition

**RTD Station Development**
- 35th Ave. between Arkins & Wazee
- 40th and Colorado Pedestrian Improvements

$45,700,000
2015