

STUDY SUMMARY

The transformation of the historic home of the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) into the National Western Center (NWC) campus is a unique opportunity for Denver, the Front Range, Colorado, the Rocky Mountain West, and the world. The extensive planning has triggered critical conversations about the site becoming a dynamic, year-round campus comprised of world-class competition and entertainment, education and research, and economic innovation. NWC will become a key driver to advance the Front Range economy, resulting in technology innovation and adaption, business creation and growth, and new employment opportunities.

The intention of the NWC NextGEN Agribusiness Economic Development Study, and the resulting strategies, is to expand the NWC conversation beyond the important core elements of entertainment, competition, education, and research—into innovation and commerce to strengthen and grow Colorado’s economy. This study, and the underlying research, leverages an important 2014 study (<http://tinyurl.com/CSU-value-chain>) by CSU which focused on the clear emergence of an agricultural value chain and specific industry clusters for growth along Colorado’s Front Range.

The NWC Study Team completed a thorough analysis informed by discussions with the Study’s Technical Advisory Committee.

- Statewide, national and global agriculture industry trends were summarized and implications noted.
- Commercial real estate trends were studied to understand the ability of regional office, retail and industrial markets to sustain private sector investment at NWC.
- Economic analyses was completed for industries within agriculture, resources, and ag-linked sectors (including allied technology and finance) were completed.
- Case studies of innovation districts focused on agriculture, the plant and life sciences, and biotechnology.
- Key assets related to Colorado and the NWC site were considered.

KEY FINDINGS

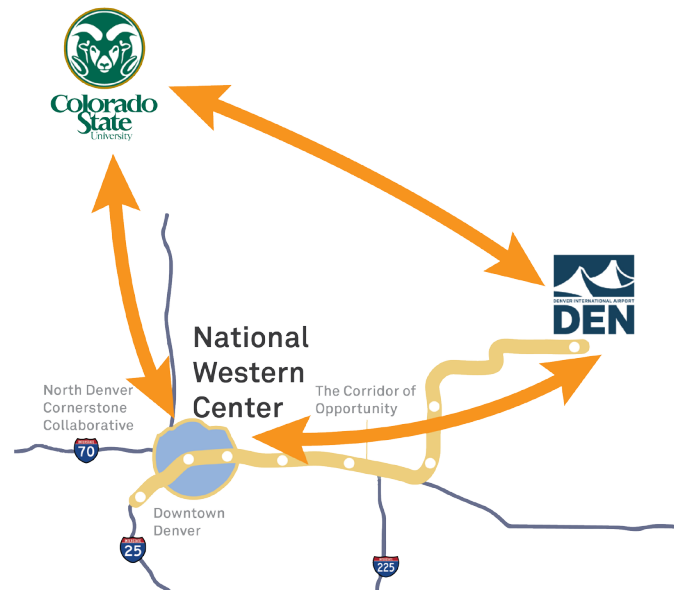
- Understand and leverage institutional and private sector connections between CSU, Denver International Airport, and the National Western Center, establishing the “agriculture innovation triangle™” and using it to support future regional job growth.
- Focus on the development of an Innovation District in context with NWC that can leverage federal funding for research in the plant and life sciences to spin off ideas into private sector opportunities.
- Evaluate 1 to 3 million sq. ft. of office & lab space, at urban/neighborhood development density.
- Encourage industry sector, cluster, and end-market opportunities that build on inherent regional strengths.



NEXTGEN AGRIBUSINESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Agriculture Innovation Triangle™ leverages existing regional research, agribusiness, and commercial assets. Colorado State University (Fort Collins), Denver International Airport (DEN), and NWC are already working and expanding their partnership—with the goal of taking an innovation from the lab to the global marketplace.

The study provides a set of priority sectors, based upon on today’s conditions—and suggests several emerging sectors for focus. But equally important, global agricultural and resource management and sustainability is undergoing, and will continue to evolve to meet changing market and environmental conditions. The priority sectors will evolve and change as the world strives to meet tomorrow’s food challenges.



Current Priority Sectors

Water, Infrastructure and Energy
 Beverage Manufacturing
 Specialty Foods Manufacturing
 Cattle and Dairy
 Agriculture-related Aerospace & Mapping
 Animal Health and Testing

Emerging Sectors

Manufacturing: Sensors Instruments
 Manufacturing: Urban Vertical Agricultural Production
 Grain & Oil Seed Processing
 Software Development
 Professional Services & Technical Services
 Financial Services

The NWC can serve as the “front door” for the Colorado agriculture and resource industry, becoming the location where “serendipitous collisions” occur between innovators, finance, and markets. The outcomes informed a high-level understanding of the long-term opportunity for institutional research and job-creating commercial activity at the NWC site.

The study builds a foundation for an economic strategy and a business development program, which together will enable the realization of the opportunity for the NWC, the adjacent area of influence, the Agriculture Innovation Triangle™, and Colorado. Over the next decade many next steps and projects can be accomplished, and the following provides a few of the economic and business development efforts to be undertaken in the next two years.

- Advance the current analysis, using updated data, with a focus on innovation and research output, firm characteristics, market changes and opportunity, employee productivity, targeted business investments, and export market opportunities.
- Encourage the development of lab/flex space building to catalyze opportunities for emerging agri- and resource development-businesses in the area, as well as to establish an agribusiness cultural hub.
- Research and seek to establish an Innovation Investment Fund to support the growth of agribusiness opportunities that align with priority sectors.
- Support and provide outreach to neighborhood business in priority and emerging sectors to encourage opportunities and growth.
- Build on workforce analysis of residents and business sector opportunities, and establish a focused job training program to encourage and support residents to meet immediate and future job opportunities.

For additional information, about the NWC redevelopment, the NWC NextGEN Agribusiness Economic Development Strategy, or other aspects of the project, please go to [www. Denvergov.org/NationalWestern](http://www.Denvergov.org/NationalWestern)