

The Alameda Cornerstone Plan

Lakewood, CO

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area: 4.5 miles
Client: City of Lakewood
Alameda Gateway
Community Association
Year Adopted: 2003
Website: lakewood.org/index.cfm?&include=/CPD/plans/alameda-cornerstone.cfm

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



The intersection of South Wadsworth Boulevard and West Alameda Avenue defines the heart of Downtown Lakewood.



The vision for the Oak Street Neighborhood Center encourages a mix of smaller scale building types to respect the predominantly residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.



Enhanced landscaping and frontage streets placed along the sides of Alameda Avenue separate through traffic from slow traffic and provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment.



The Project

The Alameda Cornerstone Plan is a community-based plan created to realize the vision of West Alameda Avenue as the Grand Parkway connecting Denver to the Mountains. Located in Lakewood, CO, West Alameda Avenue offers distinctive character and potential with its stunning views to Green Mountain and position within the region. The Cornerstone Plan, designed by Dover, Kohl & Partners, recognizes the necessary balance between pedestrians and vehicular traffic; at the same time it works to stimulate economic development and create an identifiable center of town. The Plan also sets forth a comprehensive approach to guiding growth along this corridor, coordinating the connection between land use and transportation, establishing urban design details such as the relationship between buildings and streets, and identifying strategies to achieve the community's vision for this important corridor. Charlier Associates and UrbanAdvantage assisted Dover-Kohl in the creation of the Plan.

Process

The Cornerstone Plan is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between the greater Lakewood community, the Alameda Gateway Community Association, the City of Lakewood, the Regional Transportation District, and Denver Federal Center/General Services Administration. During a seven-day charrette in September 2001, the group arrived at a set of "Seven Guiding Principles" to help transform West Alameda Avenue into a great street. The principles and corresponding design concepts were vetted throughout the week through meetings, presentations, and a hands-on design workshop. In addition, three open houses were held, and surveys were mailed to 14,000 residents and businesses. Overwhelmingly, survey respondents supported the vision for West Alameda Avenue. A video detailing the planning process and plan principles was developed and aired on the City's cable TV station.

Planning Principles

The guiding principles adapt traditional neighborhood design conventions and local desires to this unique corridor. The first priority was to "think green" and unify the corridor with landscape and urban design to create a "Grand Parkway to the Mountains." Providing multiple modes of circulation – from motoring, biking, and transit – was also stressed to create balance and choice; for the street to be walkable, the new corridor would also need a continuous pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian path. A desire to focus efforts on projects big and small was also expressed so as to create a distinct downtown as well as small neighborhood serving centers. Other goals were to: transform the major intersections with smart design and civic art; develop buildings with doors and windows facing the street; and catalyze development by working with investors, encouraging them to participate in the redevelopment process.

Status

In February 2003 the City of Lakewood adopted the Alameda Cornerstone Plan as an amendment to the Lakewood Comprehensive Plan. Following the adoption of the Plan, City staff prepared an Overlay Zone for the corridor which was adopted in April 2004.

Creating Neighborhood Centers



Garrison Park Neighborhood Center



Existing Conditions, 2001 – View looking south on South Garrison Street, toward West Alameda Avenue

A key element of the Cornerstone Plan is the establishment of a hierarchy of centers along West Alameda Avenue. Ranging from an urban Downtown to smaller neighborhood centers, each center displays a distinct physical character, varying in the types of buildings, intensity of development, scale, and appropriate land use.

A Neighborhood Center is smaller in scale than the Downtown and has a casual, "village" atmosphere. In centers such as these, mixed-use buildings can provide daily services and needs within walking distance of the adjacent neighborhoods. Live-work units have been very successful in neighborhood centers, providing opportunities for residents to run their businesses from home.

Along West Alameda Avenue, neighborhood centers are currently located on narrower streets, including South Oak Street, South Garrison Street, and South Harlan Street. As these centers change over time, it is important that development occurs at a scale that respects the existing character of the surrounding neighborhoods. It is not anticipated that the existing commercial areas would expand beyond their current boundaries.

The illustrations shown below and at right represent the redevelopment of the Garrison Street Neighborhood Center, which is already considered a central neighborhood gathering place for the Lakewood community. A University, Addenbrooke Park, and an assortment of retail services have addresses along South Garrison Street. Building from this already established area, the redesign modifies the street to create a more pleasing pedestrian environment.



The addition of on-street parking, with streetscape and landscaping improvements along the roadway, enhances the walking environment. As buildings redevelop, they will be located closer to the street to create an intimate neighborhood setting.



New buildings are used to fill in strategic locations. Lost space is captured by building on key lots as they become available. Buildings brought up to the property line better define the street. In Neighborhood Centers, adding more places to live and work near neighborhood serving businesses will help ensure the viability of these local businesses.