



## ***What Makes a Great Street?***

During a series of small, informal meetings held in December 2009 for the Ralston Road Corridor Plan, project stakeholders were asked to think about a great street or urban space that they have visited. Responses ranged from many of the small Colorado resort communities to far away destinations such as Waikiki, Hawaii and Brugge, Belgium. Also included were several active urban streets in large cities, such as Michigan Avenue in Chicago, Lake Washington Boulevard in Seattle, and Wynkoop Street in Denver.

Participants then discussed specific characteristics of these places and how these environments compare and contrast to the Ralston Road Corridor. The insight of Arvada residents can be summarized in the following underlying themes of great urban places and great streets:

### ***1. Give Me a Great Place to Walk***

Great streets are great places for pedestrians. They provide an interesting mix of destinations, pedestrian facilities, and amenities that make walking enjoyable, convenient and safe.

Arvada residents have expressed a strong desire for wide sidewalks; a green, attractive streetscape; ample and safe pedestrian crossings; and convenient access to the nearby Ralston Creek Trail. Sidewalk maintenance issues, traffic noise and safety perceptions were cited as factors that make Ralston Road a less than great place to walk.

### ***2. Steady Traffic Flow: Not too Fast, Not too Slow***

Great streets provide mobility in a context that is appropriate for their surroundings.

Motorists traveling on Ralston Road desire more consistent movement along the corridor, with vehicles traveling at moderate, not fast speeds. Frequent traffic stops and starts on Ralston Road are a commonly cited frustration that diverts traffic onto parallel residential streets.

### ***3. Variety of Places to Live, Work & Play***

Great places include a vibrant mix of land uses where residents and visitors can live, work, shop and recreate.

Ralston Road is envisioned as a diverse, multigenerational corridor with a mix of land uses to promote the live/work/play concept – all within walking distance of each other. The corridor should be vibrant enough to strengthen existing businesses while attracting new investment.

## **4. *Parking Matters***

Great places provide an adequate supply of conveniently-located parking to support local businesses, without compromising on urban design.

Arvada residents have expressed a desire for parking that is accessible, convenient and adequate, but also non-intrusive and inconspicuous.

## **5. *Conveys an Authentic Sense of Place***

Great streets respect the character of abutting properties and land uses.

Arvada residents and City Staff desire for corridor redevelopment to follow existing design guidelines for Olde Town that reflect the area's historical context. Proposed plans for the Triangle Area redevelopment envision a newer, more contemporary aesthetic. The community's vision for the connecting corridor continues to evolve as people wonder if the central section should become a third activity center with a unique identity, or an area to move through in route to the other destinations.

## **6. *Preserves Auto Travel/Promotes Alternatives***

Great streets and places encourage multimodalism.

Arvada residents view Ralston Road as an integrated, multimodal corridor that accommodates automobile travel while promoting walking, bicycling, transit and other alternatives. The ability for multiple users to safely and conveniently travel on Ralston Road, on parallel streets, on the Ralston Creek Trail, and on intersecting streets is important to enhance mobility, circulation and access within the study area. Successfully making enhanced connections to the Gold Line FasTracks stations located at either end of the study area will be critical for all modes.

## **7. *Accommodates Neighborhood Needs***

Great streets and places respect the needs and desires of the people they are intended to serve.

The Ralston Road corridor is envisioned as a place with a mixture of retail, restaurants and recreational opportunities that serves the diverse needs of the community. The potential addition of boutique shopping and upscale restaurants is desired to be balanced with tenants who can serve diverse incomes and provide the daily goods and services needed by the neighborhood. Historically, the corridor has included neighborhood gathering places such as a swimming pool, park and community gardens. Features such as these that create neighborhood identity and social interaction are strongly desired to remain within the corridor.

## **8. *Looks Good/Feels Good***

Great streets and places are attractive, comfortable and safe for all users.

Arvada residents envision a "green," attractively landscaped Ralston Road corridor with street trees, ample lighting, interesting store-fronts, and wayfinding signage to guide pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists to community destinations. Residents have also expressed a strong preference for buried utilities to improve corridor aesthetics and prevent obstructions in pedestrian walkways. People desire for motor vehicles to be present, but not be the dominant feature of the urban environment.