



SPOTLIGHT

By Gideon Berger, Denver Department of Community Planning and Development senior city planner

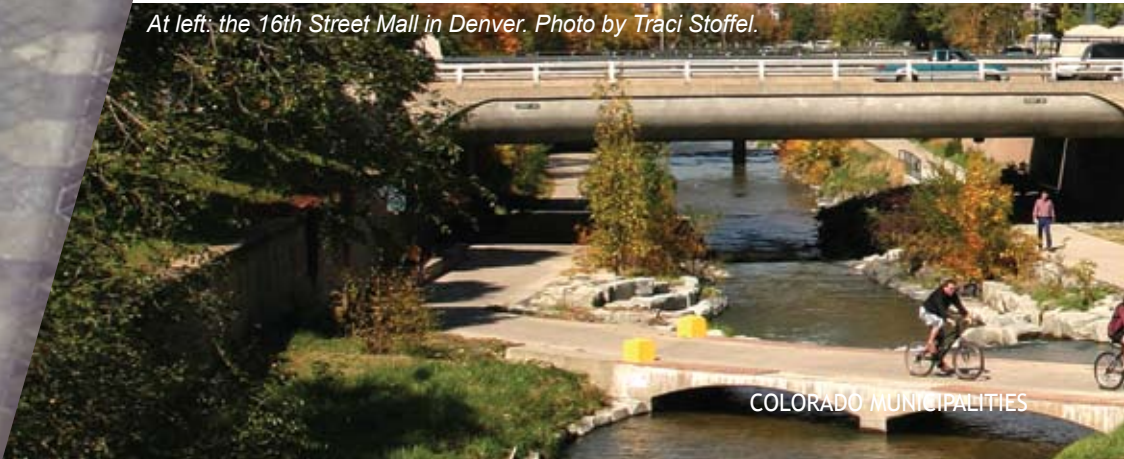
LIVING STREETS

LIVING STREETS ARE VIBRANT places where people of all ages and physical abilities feel comfortable using any mode of travel, whether walking, biking, transit or automobile. While living streets are designed to maximize the efficiency of a corridor's person-trip capacity, compared to solely auto-trip capacity, they are also intended to integrate with the use and form of adjacent development to achieve great destinations for people — in addition to the movement of people.

By supporting multi-modal access, living streets provide a more sustainable transportation balance. By integrating the street with the adjacent built environment, living streets add value to communities. By encouraging the creation of great places with transportation options that work for everyone, living streets can simultaneously promote healthier living, economic development and increased mobility.

The Living Streets Initiative is a citywide initiative and regional partnership to educate professionals, community and elected leaders as well as the public at large about the benefits of living streets. LSI will also create model living streets policy language that could be adopted by the City and County of Denver or other local jurisdictions. Managed by Denver's Public Works and Community Planning & Development departments, the LSI brings together eight city departments and agencies (the two previously mentioned, plus Environmental Health, Economic Development, Parks & Recreation, Greenprint Denver, Budget & Management and Human Rights & Community Relations) to unify Denver's efforts to redevelop its enhanced transportation corridors in support of the Strategic Transportation Plan's approach to moving people and not just vehicles, Blueprint Denver's vision of directing growth to places with supportive

At left: the 16th Street Mall in Denver. Photo by Traci Stoffel.



transportation infrastructure, and the sustainability goals of Greenprint Denver's Climate Action Plan.

Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper has appointed a task force to advise the initiative, including advocates for seniors, pedestrian and bicycle access, environmental conservation, transportation management, public transit, local business districts, public health professionals, economic development specialists, neighborhood organizations, and public entities such as the Denver Regional Council of Governments, Colorado Department of Transportation and Regional Transportation District.

The regional partnership, which includes the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Metro Mayors Caucus, Kaiser Permanente Colorado and many other sponsors, is hosting a lecture series featuring national and international experts geared toward professionals in the political, engineering, public health, economic and transportation policy realms. Former Bogota Mayor Enrique Penalosa kicked off the initiative with an inspirational discussion about the politics of living streets in August 2008, followed by Walter Kulash's (principal engineer at the Orlando-based consultancy Glatting Jackson) discussion on sustainable engineering solutions in October 2008, and San Francisco Director of Occupational & Environmental Health Dr. Rajiv Bhatia's

lecture on the relationship between public health and the built environment in November 2008. Dena Belzer, president of Berkeley-based Strategic Economics, recently discussed the economic benefits of living streets, while the final lecturer will be Anne Canby, president of the DC-based Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, who will present on funding the implementation of living streets Feb. 26.

Following the lecture series, LSI will initiate a series of public workshops on living streets in the City of Denver and surrounding suburban communities facilitated by Civic Results, the Denver-based nonprofit.

The City initiative is studying the Downtown-Cherry Creek Corridor (Speer Boulevard at I-25/1st Avenue through the Cherry Creek District/Steele Street/Alameda Avenue/Leetsdale Boulevard) for design solutions and policy ideas that are exportable to Denver's other enhanced transportation corridors (Federal Boulevard, Broadway/Lincoln, University/Josephine/York, Colorado Boulevard, Peoria Street, Quebec Street, West 38th Avenue, Colfax Avenue, Alameda Avenue, Evans Avenue, Hampden Avenue, Brighton Boulevard). Under a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Smart Growth Implementation Award, a national team of consultants will provide Living Streets design suggestions for the pilot

Downtown-Cherry Creek corridor. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs Smart Growth Office provided a grant to the City to conduct a study of the economic benefits of Living Streets on the pilot corridor, which is being conducted by Denver-based Progressive Urban Management Associates.

In addition to the goal of adopting an implementable living streets policy for Denver, the initiative will produce a living streets how-to manual for the Colorado Office of Smart Growth for other communities. The Mayor's Task Force is also formulating other goals for the initiative. All of this work falls under the umbrella of Greenprint Denver, Mayor Hickenlooper's sustainable development action agenda for Denver. For example, Denver LSI staff are supporting the Greenprint Denver office's effort to roll-out a bicycle sharing program for downtown Denver by 2010 based on the success of the Democratic Party nominating convention program in August 2008.

To learn more about the Living Streets Initiative, register for or get details about upcoming events, or find links to more information about the relationship among transportation infrastructure, the built environment, public health and economic development, visit www.denvergov.org/livingstreets.

