



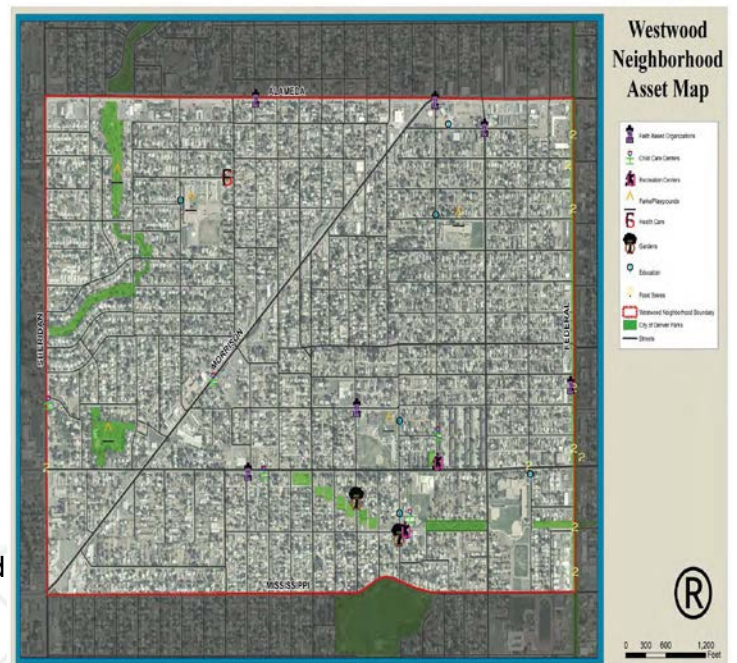
HEALTHY PLACES: WESTWOOD

Healthy Places is designed to inspire and support the development of healthy communities. Through a community-led process, Healthy Places aims to foster a built environment where it is easier, safer, and more appealing to walk, play and engage in daily activities that encourage movement, connection, and fun. The Westwood neighborhood in southwest Denver was selected to participate in the Healthy Places initiative and is working to become a model for active design and healthy living for urban communities throughout Colorado.

In early May, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) sent a panel of national experts to spend a week in Westwood. The ULI is a national nonprofit education and research institute that focuses on providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in sustaining and creating thriving communities. The panel had the opportunity to tour the neighborhood, interview more than a hundred community stakeholders and leaders, and develop recommendations for improvements and policies to advance active living. The panelists drew from their expertise in land use and public health to draft recommendations focusing on promoting better health and physical activity through more complete sidewalk and bike connections, enhancing access to transit, schools and parks and using alleys creatively in order to encourage physical activity and play.

OVERARCHING THEMES

- Harness the energy, spirit and cultural diversity that make Westwood unique
- Prioritize enhancements to the built environment that encourage healthier lifestyles and behaviors for children and families
- Increase and enhance parkland, open space and recreation opportunities
- Work on transforming alleys into community assets that can be enjoyed by all Westwood residents
- Enhance walking, biking and transit connections throughout the neighborhood





SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Transform Morrison Road into Westwood's Main Street:** Create a community destination that encourages walking and biking because it is thriving, safe, vibrant and people-friendly. Slow vehicular traffic through lane narrowing and design elements such as colored pavement and other creative solutions. Design better and safer pedestrian crossings, connect sidewalk networks, and ensure zoning allows and encourages a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- **Create the Neighborhood Core:** Focus on Morrison Road between Kentucky and Virginia as the area that represents Westwood's core. Concentrate investment in this area in road, bike and pedestrian improvements and connections. Encourage new development and appropriate commercial uses in this node. Develop a plaza to serve as the neighborhood gathering place, and celebrate the diversity and cultural richness of the neighborhood.
- **Unify Neighborhood Resources:** Bring the many diverse groups and organizations working in Westwood together to focus on active living programming and improvement. Be creative and strategic about deploying and leveraging resources, programs, education and neighborhood advocacy.
- **Create More Active Park Space:** Enhance existing park and open space with amenities and programs that encourage longer stays. Work with the city to acquire more parkland at strategic locations; install lighting, shade structures and amenities where needed. Develop gulches and enhance connections to and through gulches and parks. Begin planning for a new recreation center to serve the neighborhood.
- **Develop Alleys:** Develop alleys as safe community assets, paint and celebrate alleys near schools, consider closing certain alleys for safe play activities, introduce more and better lighting. Be creative about how alleys can encourage more physical activity and opportunities for play and enforce new illegal dumping regulations.
- **Neighborhood Circulator:** Create a circulator transit option for residents connecting schools, parks, Morrison Road and light rail access.

