

Building Healthy Places

*Workshops on healthy solutions
for the land use community.*

**Workshop #1: Lake Creek Village
Edwards, Colorado
June 27, 2014**

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Bike path between Eagle River and Lake Creek Village (LCV).



Seven ULI experts volunteered to work with stakeholders on schemes to improve LCV.



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Urban Land Institute **Building Healthy Places Initiative**

In 2012, the Colorado Health Foundation and the Urban Land Institute, a 501-c-3 nonprofit membership organization dedicated to best practices in land use, launched the Building Healthy Places Initiative. The initiative links alarming health factors – particularly obesity and related diseases – to the physical design of communities that discourages active lifestyles, while limiting access to healthy food. This is especially a problem in lower-income areas where residents may not be able to afford health clubs, youth sports leagues, or shopping at Whole Foods.

The principles of Building Healthy Places suggest this: Active living, healthy food, access to nature, and a strong sense of community are not a luxury, and must be embedded in or near their neighborhoods.

The initiative seeks to make an impact in specific areas including:

- Active living: Buildings and community design that encourages walking, cycling, play and other physical activity as part of everyday life
- Access to healthy food. Many communities lack a local market that sells fresh food, farmers market, or community gardens. High-calorie, low-cost fast food is a cheaper alternative
- Healthy buildings that are energy efficient, have good indoor air quality, and invite access to natural light and fresh air
- Access to parks and natural areas
- A safe public environment that is essential for active living, community gardens, playgrounds, and other outdoor activities
- A strong sense of community to foster social and mental health

In 2013, ULI and CHF studied three Colorado communities – Arvada, Lamar and the Westwood neighborhood of Denver—to recommend physical improvements. These reports are available for viewing and free downloads at www.uli.org.

Later that year, ULI Colorado—the 1,000-member District Council of the international ULI—received a \$10,000 grant from the ULI Foundation to work with another two Colorado communities in a new program of Building Healthy Places Workshops. Lake Creek Village (LCV) in Edwards was one of two communities chosen through a competitive process. On June 27, 2014, ULI Colorado did its first Building Healthy Places Workshop at LCV. Seven ULI experts volunteered to work with Eagle County officials and LCV residents.

This report contains their findings and recommendations. Based on the ULI recommendations, Eagle County Housing Authority hopes to apply capital funds to make targeted improvements at LCV. These could include community gardens, a soccer field, educational programming, traffic calming, and measures to foster a healthy community at LCV.

Eagle River is considered a hazard for residents of LCV.



Our volunteer panelists, who mostly work in Denver, were pleasantly surprised to find at LCV a well-maintained 30-acre complex of tidy garden apartments in a gorgeous location on the Eagle River. But information compiled by the sponsors as well as a series of interviews with stakeholders revealed a somewhat different story about living at LCV.

Issues cited included:

- More than 900 people live at LCV, of which 400 are children. Kids have almost no place to exercise or play. Thirty years ago LCV was designed for single employees of local resorts. It has evolved into a Hispanic community (87 percent of residents) with children living in 59 percent of households.
- With little else to do, kids kick soccer balls off garage doors and dig up sprinkler heads creating maintenance headaches. They also wander near the river, which can be unsafe, especially during spring runoff.



LCV consists of eight apartments located in a part of town isolated from healthy food and services.

- The community is isolated from central Edwards amenities and services. In contrast, the Miller Ranch affordable housing community in Edwards is walkable to downtown and surrounded by soccer fields and other play areas.
- Hispanics comprise 30 percent of Eagle County and are the fastest-growing population segment. Hispanics in Eagle County experience rates of obesity and related chronic diseases about one-third higher than the rest of the population.

To address these issues, the ULI panel studied an advance packet of background information, toured LCV, and worked with local officials and residents for a daylong workshop at LCV on Friday, June 27.

Based on their research, observations and interviews with residents and stakeholders, the expert panel added its findings to the identified issues and made recommendations to make LCV a better place to live in the short and long term.





Challenges:

- Public safety is at least a perceived issue at LCV. One part is public drinking, especially near the garages. Several mothers who live at LCV reported that this creates an atmosphere of intimidation, which discourages the use of outdoor public spaces
- Fast traffic on Lake Creek Village Drive is another public safety issue.
- The riverfront should be an amenity, but many view it as more of a threat to public safety, and to wildlife living in sensitive marshes between LCV and the riverfront.
- Paths are everywhere at LCV, but circulation is poor. The paths don't lead to defined destinations while Lake Creek Village Drive presents a barrier that severs the community.
- Paths are also dark and slippery in winter, and there is no sidewalk leading to the local bus stop.
- Most retail and health services are located three miles away in downtown Edwards. Residents actually have to travel away from downtown and then make a U-turn to head there. Many prefer to walk along the abandoned railroad line for a more direct route.
- Although LCV is 87 percent Hispanic, it defies the positive stereotype of the tight barrio. Neighbors report there is little sense of community; possibly because people move often, or the lack of shared public spaces, or the perception that public spaces are threatening or unsafe.
- Most residents find services off-site versus on-site, which can also be a barrier to community building. The hope is the new community center will help establish community ties by offering on-site services to residents.
- Trash management is a problem.

- More than 200 dogs live at LCV. Trash cans are scarce, so dog waste is a problem.
- So are ground squirrels, who chew up the landscape, including chewing holes through the asphalt surface of bike paths (this is the first time ULI has encountered this issue!).
- The property is owned by the Housing Authority, who will keep rents at an affordable level because of their mission. However, long term affordability is not provided through any deed restriction on the land.

Opportunities:

- In January the Eagle County Housing Authority took over the management of LCV from a private company. The housing authority seeks to dedicate capital funds to make specific improvements at LCV.
- Although some unfriendly “No Trespassing” signs, posted in English and Spanish, might suggest otherwise, neighbors to LCV say they welcome collaboration with LCV residents on shared amenities such as recreational facilities and a community garden.
- LCV is surrounded by beautiful public lands owned by the Forest Service and BLM. (However residents lack access as trailheads are 6-8 miles away.)
- Eagle County is prepared to commit substantial capital funds—perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars—to begin making landscape improvements at LCV. The county has hired Norris Design to plan and design such improvements.
- Wealthy people and those with special talents (like fly-fishing guides) could potentially be engaged in special programs at LCV that connect residents to local outdoor culture.

- People here work two or three jobs here and there's no time for community.
- There's no basketball courts or soccer fields for the kids. Adults don't have much to do either. They get bored.
- When I moved here I liked it but I quickly realized it is crowded with too many cars. I don't have a feeling of safety here.
- Some men like to hang out near the garages and drink. I don't feel safe here and don't let my kids out alone to play.
- Maybe you can give them something else to do?
- There's a chronic stress issue from people who hang out and look threatening even if they are not.
- You can have a community garden that provides some healthy food for three months. But what about the rest of the year?



LCV garages are used as soccer nets, and the local pub.

V. Questions for the Panel

How do we get residents involved and committed to using the improvements?

Residents need to “take ownership” of the grounds. The Housing Authority should seek to identify and empower community leaders. Stakeholder residents reported that the sense of community at LCV is weak. Creating safe, shared public spaces and activities will go a long way toward building a sense of shared (and owned) community.

You can work on getting funding to help people to get out their door. Even the perception of intimidation keeps people inside. You can start walking clubs, biking clubs. There may be grant dollars available to hire a health liaison to work on programs and to connect residents directly to active living opportunity.

Cost and ongoing maintenance will be a significant consideration to what recommendations can be implemented. How do we assure that things we are recommending aren't maintenance nightmares?

New amenities must be appropriately scaled and made from durable materials. An example would be a “mini” soccer field with an artificial grass surface. Reducing the area of bluegrass turf overall would save water, money and maintenance. Better trash management (with more small trash cans near play areas) will also reduce maintenance.

What have other affordable housing complexes done to successfully promote healthy living through the built environment?

Providing safe places to walk, bike, experience community, and play in mixed-age groups is a key. In Denver, the Mariposa redevelopment of the South Lincoln Homes public housing is becoming a national example. Mariposa now includes community gardens, a bike station with access to trails, redesigned streetscapes, and a healthy-food café that also a place for local youth to learn the culinary arts. Programming such as exercise, nutrition and cooking classes have also been effective and many residents report substantial weight loss and other health improvements. Mariposa also includes adult outdoor exercise equipment as well as outdoor play for children who aren't as sports oriented – outdoor chalkboards, games, musical equipment like outdoor xylophone or bells

More locally, several residents cited the positive example of Miller Ranch with its location among playing fields, a short walk to downtown, and convenient to trails.

Another key is having an on-site liaison/staff person to serve as a health coordinator for the neighborhood. This person should be part of the community and understand the culture of the property and its residents. They must get involved with the community to personally connect residents to healthy opportunities for exercise, food and social gathering. Funding for this staff person can come from the Operating Budget or be from a grant source.

What cultural considerations can be made for the recommendations?

This could be woven into the job description for the on-site health coordinator. The Hispanic community is avid for soccer, but other opportunities can arise. For examples, kids would like to mountain bike on a challenging course if available, and many women in LCV enjoy playing volleyball.

The panel grappled with the issue of public drinking and its effect on the perception of security. Some advocated for a “no public drinking” policy, while others thought this would clash with some elements of Hispanic culture. We heard that the women may insist the men not drink at home, and social drinking in outdoor spaces is important and accepted.



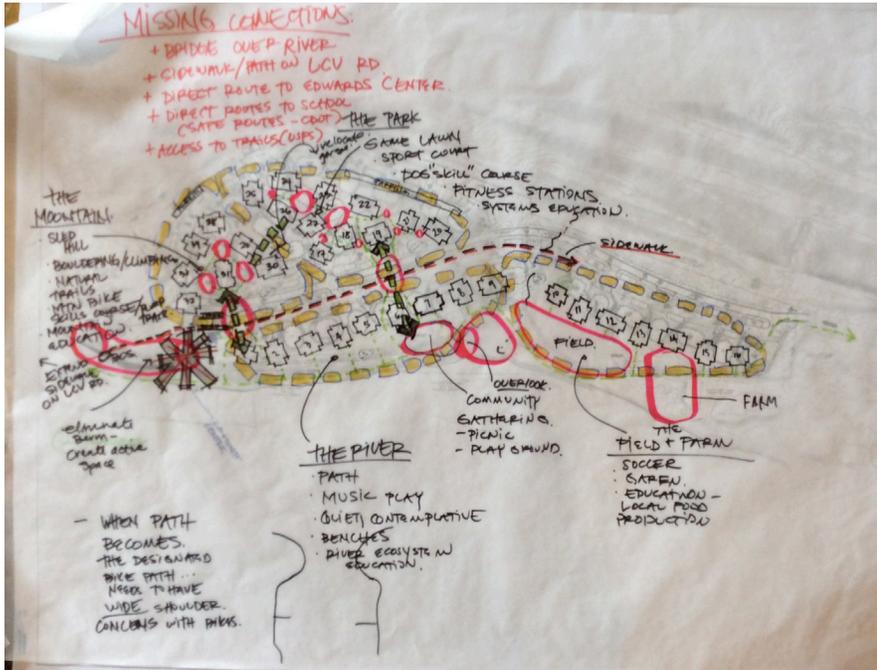
How can the natural environment be incorporated in to the improvements without being a deterrent?

You might use the site's topography to create a bicycle pump track [a loop of dirt berms and smooth dirt mounds]. You could build a raised riverside observation platform. Parts of the riverside habitat are currently off-limits during nesting season.



Community:

- a) Rebrand the single complex as four distinct but connected neighborhoods, each with its own identify and assets.



Sketch plan to define LCV as four distinct neighborhood districts.

Example:

- **Mountain neighborhood:** Identified by mountain views and new connections to local trails.

- **Farm/Field:** A place associated with community gardens, BBQ areas, and playing fields.

- **The Park:** Defined by active recreation such as playgrounds, volleyball and basketball courts, and a pump track.

A place for adults and kids of all ages to hang out, play and have fun.

- **The River:** A safe riverfront play and interpretive area defined by a raised platform providing a secure place to experience wildlife, seasonal changes and the water.

The addition of specific amenities helps “brand” each neighborhood. Some of this can happen with simple paint; for example, choosing a different color scheme for the buildings of the four distinct neighborhoods; and by using paint on pavement to define on-street parking, bike lanes, and safe crosswalks.

- b) Identify potential community leaders through the local Family Leadership Training Institute. Reach out to adjacent communities such as Brett Ranch to explore shared, collaborative amenities, such as a community garden. The panel also recommends creating a leadership role in the form of a community liaison or health coordinator for LCV. This role is important in creating stronger ties between LCV management, the LCV community, and Eagle County. The position is likely to be a volunteer role, filled by a local residents either from the Family Leadership Training Institute or from Brett Ranch.
- c) Encourage community experts to engage the residents of LCV in educational programs. For example, during the slow mud season, river and fly fishing guides could bring a fun instructional session to LCV. This can help connect residents to the river and to the recreational culture of Vail Valley.

Connection:

- Create a more logical new system of pathways that leads to new destinations as amenities are added to LCV.



- Rework LCV Drive with parking on one side—this will both slow traffic and help solve parking issues. This has been tried successfully at Miller Ranch, where the streets are 26 feet wide, the same as LCV Drive.

- Create an interpretive riverfront area with a raised platform. This will allow residents (especially kids) to experience and learn about the river while greatly reducing safety hazards.

Sketch circulation plan directs residents to community room and local transit.

Convenience/Safety:

- Create a new system for placing trash receptacles and dumpsters. Place trash cans near play/public areas. Consider a more convenient system of trash drop off that discourages residents from leaving trash outside their doors.
- Bring back recycling programs and use as an educational tool.
- Add raised/colored crosswalks to LCV Drive.
- Discourage or prohibit public drinking (this may be a sensitive cultural issue).
- Improve lighting.
- Create spaces where adults and kids of all ages can share outdoor recreation.

- Conduct a baseline health survey identifying current health conditions at LCV.
- Begin scouting and designating community leaders from among long-term residents.
- Study the best locations for a soccer field (this may be a mini-turf field) and other athletic/recreational facilities.
- Hire an on-site health coordinator.
- Study better placement of trash cans and dumpsters and an improved system of collection.
- Experiment with different configurations of LCV Drive with paint; for example create crossings, parking lanes, a bike lane. These can be easily changed or reversed.
- Reach out to adjacent, higher-income communities for volunteers to work in the community.
- Begin master planning for neighborhood identity, improved circulation, and the addition of landscape amenities. These should all work together to create a more identifiable, walkable, convenient and safe community.
- Integrate LCV into county-wide trail planning.
- Hire an additional office staff person and maintenance person to assist with grounds upkeep and management.

Appendix:

Volunteer panelists participating for ULI Colorado:

Kimball Crangle (workshop panel chair)

Colorado Market President, Gorman & Company.

Kimball recently joined Gorman & Company as their Colorado Market President. Gorman & Company works closely with local governments and community groups to help communities meet their development, planning, economic and social goals. Prior to this, Kimball served as a Senior Developer with Denver Housing Authority, joining DHA in 2008. She acted as the Project Manager for the Mariposa Redevelopment. Mariposa is garnering national attention for sustainable construction, healthy living and a design-integrated approach to community outreach. Kimball's career has focused on housing development and policy through financing, construction, policy and implementation.

Brooke Akins

Denver SHCM Regional Manager, Ross Management

Brooke has proven her ability to manage the most complex, diversified apartment portfolio, by working her way through the ranks from a part-time leasing assistant to a Regional Manager. Brooke has a business degree and maintains her currency in property management and LIHTC compliance through ongoing training through AHMA, NAHRO, Apartment Association, Denver Housing Authority, and Yardi.

Julie Edwards

Director of Sustainability, OZ Architecture

Julie serves as a LEED/Sustainability consultant on projects, promotes sustainable culture at OZ, develops green business practices. Julie has been at OZ for 14+ years and is involved in project types including multi-family housing, municipal, mixed-use and education. Relevant experience for ULI BHP Workshop: commercial projects with edible landscaping – typically using planters or parking lot islands; community gardens and supporting amenities; schoolyard/residential wildlife habitat program; educational signs and graphics for children; background in early childhood development.

Tom Lyon, AIA

Principal, Wolff Lyon Architects, Boulder, Colorado

Tom focuses on traditional neighborhood design, affordable housing and mixed-use development. Tom and his partner John Wolff have been architect, contractor and occasionally developer on a variety of projects over the years. Tom oversees the design and documentation processes of the firm as well as fully illustrating designs with distinctive color renderings. His strong background in studio art is revealed in his imaginative and often playful designs. Tom has the ability to quickly sketch possible solutions to a problem so they can be evaluated by the client and other members of the design team. Tom was a founding member of the Affordable Housing Alliance (AHA), which developed 14 units at the Holiday Neighborhood in North Boulder. Tom holds a Master's Degree in Architecture from the University of Colorado. Including his designs for Miller Ranch in Edwards, his work has won many awards and has been featured in numerous national publications.

Terra Mazzeo

Associate Principal, 4240 Architecture

Terra has work on master plans and design guidelines for the World Trade Center redevelopment and Disney's Animal Kingdom Vacation Club as well as in her hometown of Denver. Terra's multifamily experience includes Crescent Flats at Stapleton Town Center and Delany Lofts, both in Denver. She also worked on creating community spaces at the Mariposa project transforming public housing in Denver. Previously she worked for Tryba Architects and RNL and has degrees from CU Boulder (environmental design) and CU Denver (Masters of Architecture). Her work has won numerous professional awards. She is active in ULI, the US Green Building Council, and Architecture for Humanity.

David O'Neil

CEO/Founder, Brynn Grey

David founded the company in 1994 and has been developing traditional neighborhoods in Summit County since 1999. Most recently, he is the developer of the Whole Foods Market planned for Frisco, Colorado. David is also member of the Colorado Bar and has practiced land use and real estate law. Previously, David was a partner in Eighth & Pearl, LLC, Developer of the Eighth & Pearl Shops and Residences in Boulder. Awards include: EPA National Award for Smart Growth Achievement; Metropolitan Homes Design 100; Sunset Magazine Merit Award; and, Congress of New Urbanism Charter Award. A Denver Post editorial declared one of his projects, "a model for the entire state". David attended the University of Denver (Bachelor of Arts; Juris Doctor) and the University of Colorado (Masters of Public Administration). David served as a Juror, French Gulch Studio, Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, 2006. He has also spoken on housing and public/private partnerships at numerous conferences.

Dave Thorpe

Vice President, Shaw Construction

David has over 25 years of real estate development and construction experience in a variety of markets and product types. His background includes work in commercial and resort development, home building and management consulting. He has contributed to projects ranging from a few thousand square feet to over 7 million square feet. Dave is a graduate of North Park University in Chicago, and he holds an MBA from The Ross School of Business at The University of Michigan. He lived in Vail Valley from 1995 to 1998, and from 2004 to 2007, when he Dave worked for Vail Resorts Development Company (VRDC) as a Project Manager, Preconstruction Manager, Director of Development and Vice President of Development.

Stakeholder Interviews

- Ken Marchetti, Edwards Metro District
- Chris Farrington & Dan Murray, LCV Property Managers
- Juan Fregoso, Edgar Aroyo, Norma Gurrola, Daisy Colmenero, LCV residents
- Bill Wright & Alfredo Chavez, LCV property maintenance reps
- Kathy Chandler-Henry, Eagle County Board of County Commissioners
- Cliff Thompson, Brett Ranch
- Ellie Caryl, Eco Transit & Trails
- Evangelina Munoz-Ruiz, Early Head Start casework
- Jill Klosterman, Eagle County Housing
- Kris Valdez, Eagle County Planning Department
- Karen Koenemann, Eagle County Public Health and Environment
- Elena Scott and Megan Testin, Norris Design (landscape architects hired for LCV redevelopment)

Acknowledgements & Thank Yous

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ULI Colorado Building Healthy Places committee: Brian Levitt, Nava Development; Susan Powers, Urban Ventures LLC; Josh Radoff, YR&G



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Leadership in Responsible Land Use

Chair: Kirk Monroe, Vectra Bank Colorado
Staff: Michael Leccese, Executive Director
Kacey Wilkins, Development Director
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