Envisioning the Future for the Auraria Campus

A study of physical connections, campus vitality, and how to position the campus for the rest of the 21st century

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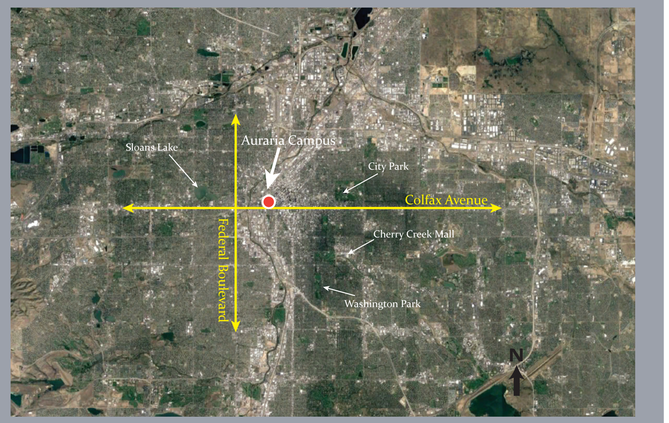
Client: Auraria Higher Education Center

Background and Existing Conditions Research

Location of the Auraria Campus in the greater Denver metropolitan area



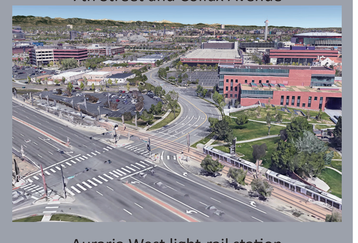
Planned development surrounding the Auraria Campus

The prospect of adjacent and surrounding future development was a major impetus for this capstone and campus leadership's goal to proactively respond to the proposed evolution of the area surrounding the campus

Existing Conditions Maps of Gateway Locations

Larimer Street and Speer Boulevard

7th Street and Colfax Avenue



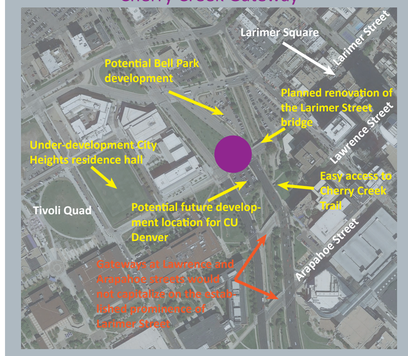
11th Street and Auraria Parkway

Auraria West light-rail station

Physical Connectivity: The Gateway Concept

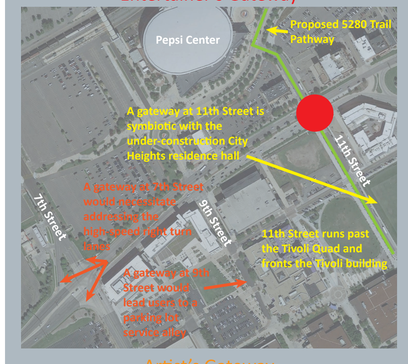
Four unqiue gateways are proposed to be created at what will become signature crossing points at Speer and Larimer, Colfax and 7th, Auraria Parkway and 11th, and the Auraria West light-rail station. The goal is to create visually stimulating, exciting access points to campus that will help better intergrate the Auraria campus with its surrounding context and make accessing the campus safer and more enjoyable.

Cherry Creek Gateway



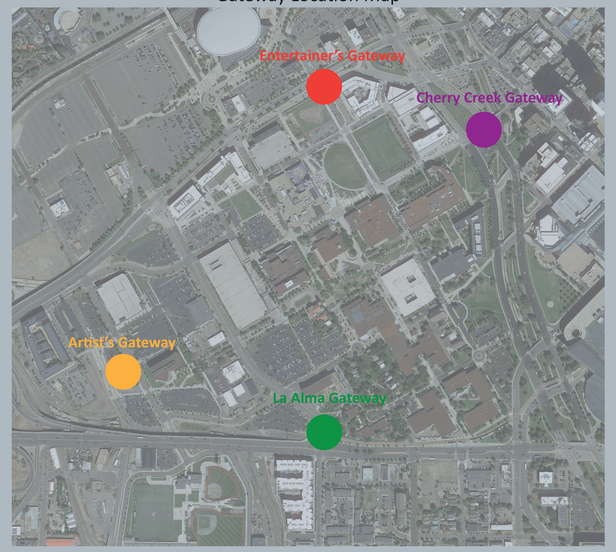
La Alma Gateway

Entertainer's Gateway



Artist's Gateway

Gateway Location Map



• The Cherry Creek Gateway is proposed to be created at the intersection of Larimer Street and Speer Boulevard. The proposed name for this gateway is due to the location of the gateway spanning Cherry Creek. This gateway will help to better connect the campus with the rest of downtown across the large barrier of Speer Boulevard. There are many reasons why this is the best location for an eastern gateway that are described on the map to the left.

• The La Alma Gateway is proposed to be created at the intersection of 7th Street and Colfax Avenue. This gateway will help to better connect the campus with the La Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood south of Colfax Avenue. The proposed name for this gateway is due to the intent to better connect the campus with the La Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood. 7th Street and 9th Street were both considered as the location for the gateway; however, 7th Street was chosen for the reasons described on the map to the left.

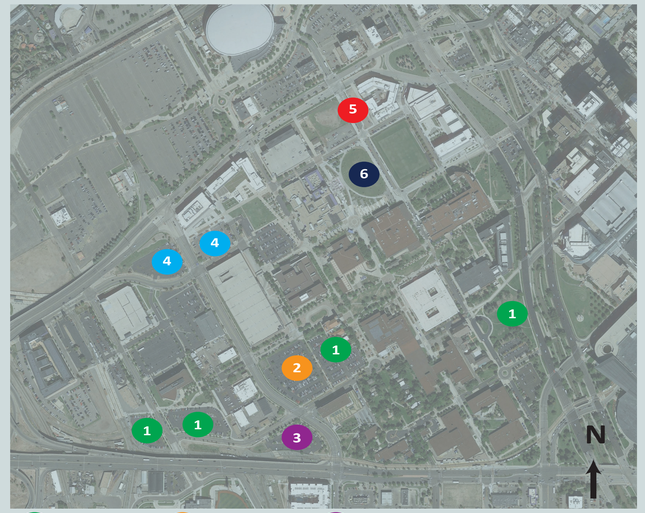
• The Entertainer's Gateway is proposed to be created at the intersection of 11th Street and Auraria Parkway. The proposed name for this gateway stems from the proximity of this intersection to the Pepsi Center, which is the home for two professional sports teams and hosts many other entertainers throughout the year. This gateway will help to better connect the campus with the land north of Auraria Parkway. While that land is currently developed as parking lots for the Pepsi Center, there is significant momentum in place to convert this land, and the land occupied by Elitch Gardens into a vibrant new part of downtown.

• The Artist's Gateway is proposed to be created on the land currently occupied by the 5th Street Hub, adjacent to the Auraria West light-rail station. This gateway will help enliven the westen side of the Auraria Campus and become a welcoming space where art can be showcased. The proposed name is due to the proximity to Denver's Meow Wolf and the hope that this proximity will inspire artistic collaboration that will become the hallmark of this gateway.

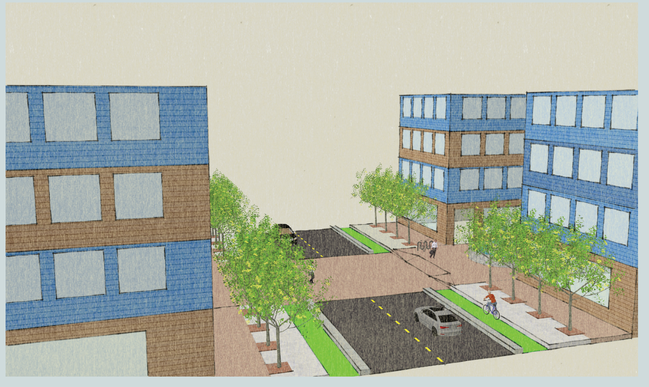
Example of vision for the Artist's Gateway

Campus Vitality

The Auraria Campus is an outstanding home for three educational institutions; however, campus leadership expressed the goal to improve campus vitality and generate new revenue streams that can support the educational mission. This capstone explored many exciting ways to enliven the campus that are displayed on the map below. Note that there are additional ideas presented in the report that do not have a geographic identifier and therefore are not included on the map.



Rendering of the proposed Auraria Village spanning the 7th Street and Walnut Street intersection



Positioning the Auraria Campus for the 21st Century

• The third objective expressed by campus leadership was to better understand how the campus can be best positioned for future success given the ever-changing and evolving educational landscape
• This section of the capstone involved reviewing the literature on the future for the college campus, researching new forms of educational dissemination, and postulating on how the Auraria campus can respond

Identified Solutions

– Re-think the use of campus space and infrastructure with an eye toward reducing capital expenditures, re-tooling classrooms for more collaboration, and enhancing the "live" experience
– Maintain close coordination between emerging industries and existing key industries to ensure a consistent employment pipeline for graduates
– Embrace new forums for campus, community, industry, and civic collaboration
– Re-imagine the campus/community relationship and work toward a more cohesive relationship

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