DRCOG

Denver Regional Council Of Governments

Birds of a Feather: The City as an Urban Nest for Young and Old

Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Conference

University of Denver Sturm College of Law

March 7, 2008

Children, Youth Environments

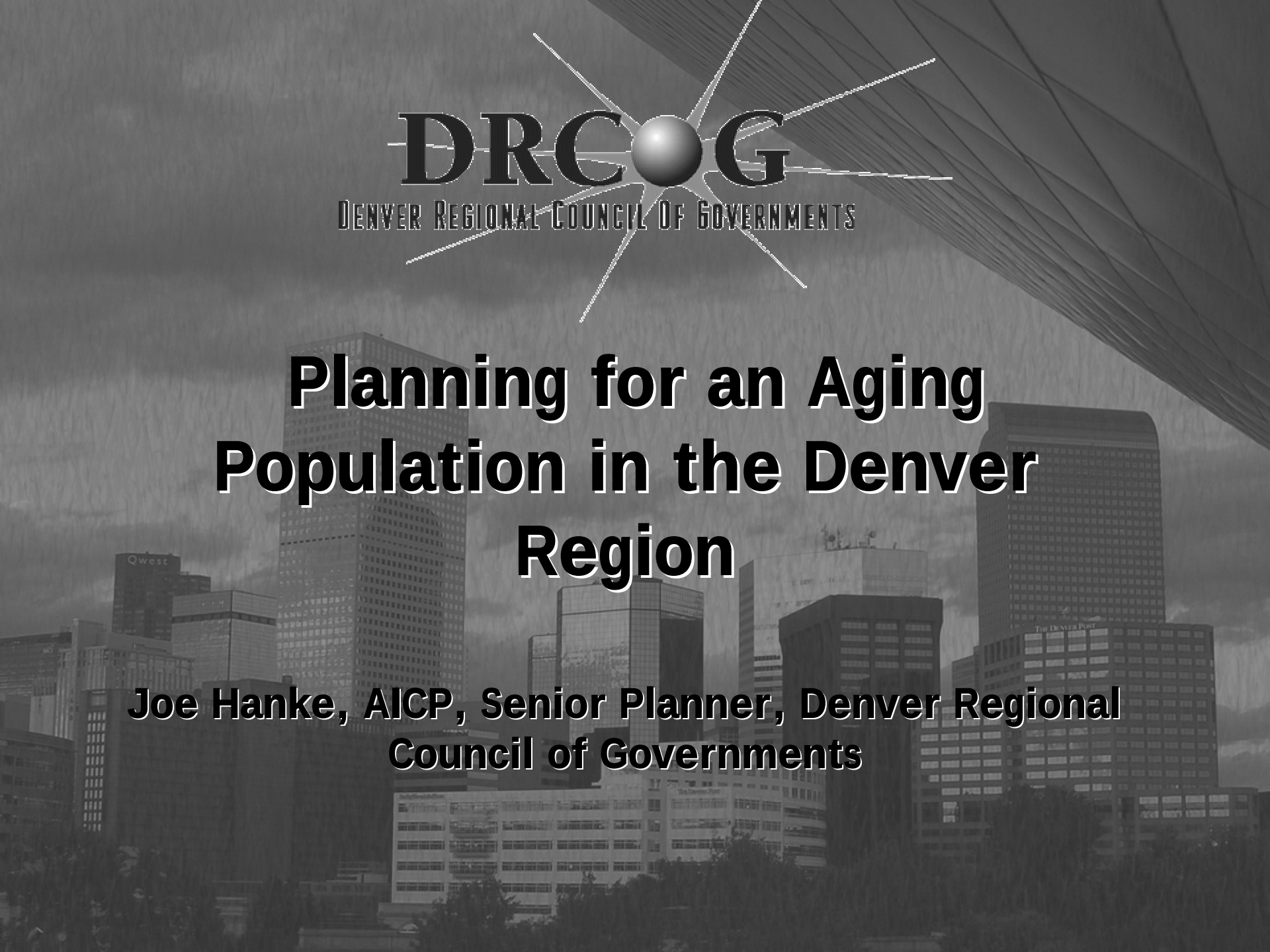
Center for Research and Design

Presenters

- Willem van Vliet, Ph.D., Director, Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design, University of Colorado at Denver
- Doug Linkhart, City Councilman At-Large, City of Denver
- Joe Hanke, AICP, Senior Planner, Denver Regional Council of Governments

Presentations

- Planning for an Aging Population in the Denver Region
- Creating Child-Friendly Cities: The Case of Denver
- Youth and Aging Activities and Programs in Denver



Planning for an Aging Population in the Denver Region

Joe Hanke, AICP, Senior Planner, Denver Regional Council of Governments

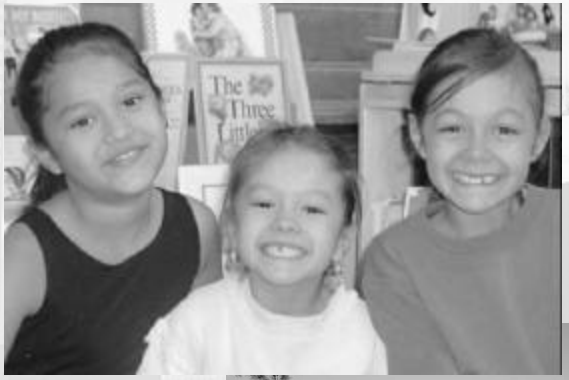
Supporting Regionalism

Mission Statement

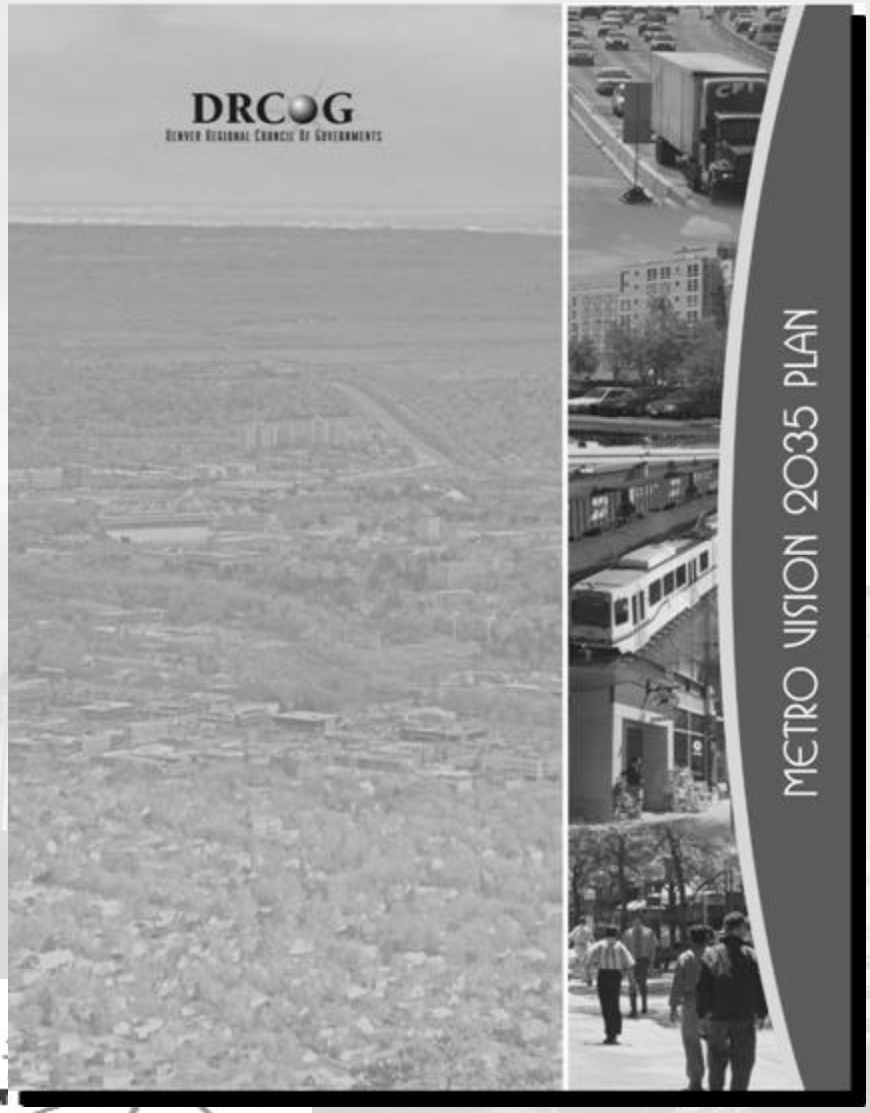
- DRCOG is a place where local officials can work together to solve the region's problems

What is Metro Vision?

Goal: Protect the quality of life that makes our region such an attractive place to live, work, play and raise a family



Three Key Elements



- Growth & development
- Environment
- Transportation

- Plus chapter on implementation

Growth and Development Element

- Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Urban Centers
- Semi-urban Development
- Freestanding Communities
- Rural Town Centers
- Senior-friendly Development
- Sustainability and Livable Communities
- Transit-oriented Development

Livable Communities for All Ages

Supportive Environments

- Built (Physical) Environment
- Social Environment
- Service Environments

Of Critical Importance

- Governance and Civic Engagement Processes

Senior-friendly Development

- Promote development patterns and community design features that meet the needs of seniors
- Encourage pedestrian-friendly street systems
- Provide transportation options
- Accessible building and park design
- Larger signs, better lighting

Area Agency on Aging

DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging Role:

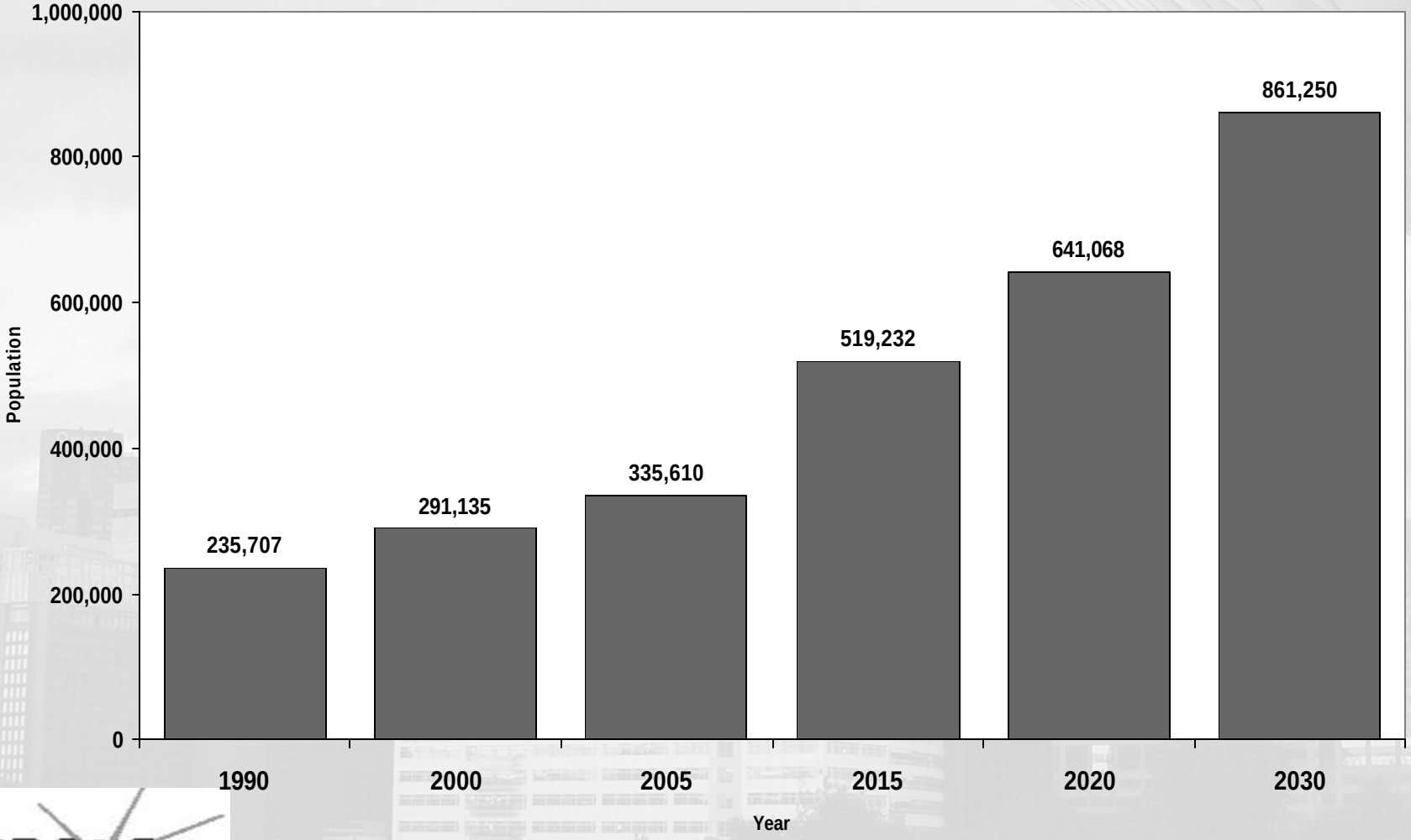
- DRCOG is Area Agency on Aging for Metro Region (except Boulder County)
  - Prepares the Four-Year Regional Plans for Aging Services
  - Conducts Periodic Strengths & Needs Assessments
  - Engages in Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy

Demographic Shifts

Demographics shifts are being examined as a part of DRCOG's and the AAA's regional planning role.

This demographic shift affects the DRCOG region in a variety of ways that require a deeper understanding of what local government's role should be related to regulating the built environment.

"Graying" of the DRCOG Region Population 60+ (1990-2030)

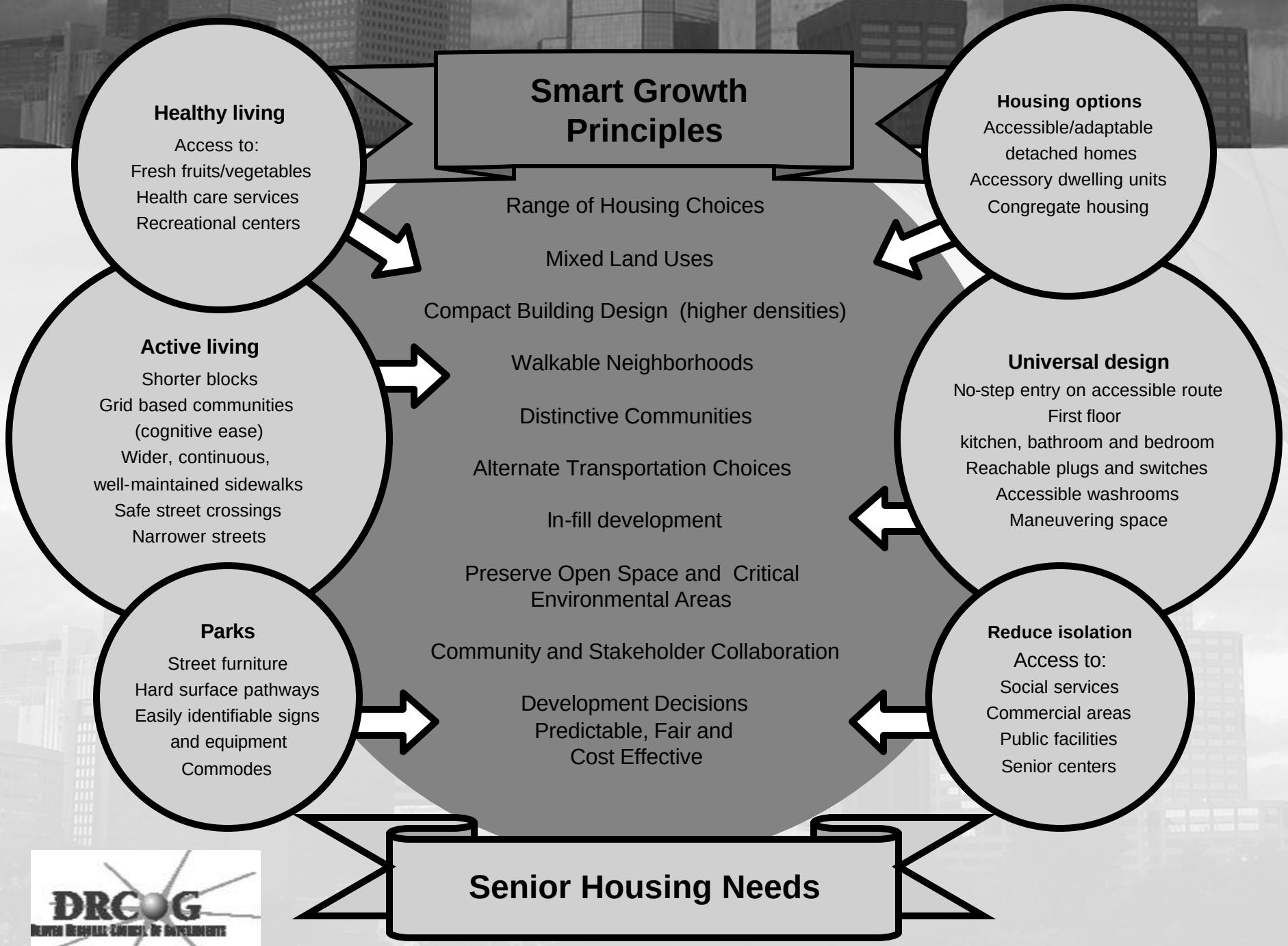


EPA Grant-funded Project

Study Purpose

- To assist DRCOG with researching Smart Growth principles and setting progress measures for the creation of senior-friendly guidelines to be used by local governments in the Denver region.

Special Acknowledgement: National Research Center, Boulder, CO


Smart Growth Principles
Healthy living
Access to:
Fresh fruits/vegetables
Health care services
Recreational centers
Housing options
Accessible/adaptable detached homes
Accessory dwelling units
Congregate housing
Range of Housing Choices
Mixed Land Uses
Compact Building Design (higher densities)
Walkable Neighborhoods
Distinctive Communities
Alternate Transportation Choices
In-fill development
Preserve Open Space and Critical Environmental Areas
Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
Active living
Shorter blocks
Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
Safe street crossings
Narrower streets
Universal design
No-step entry on accessible route
First floor
kitchen, bathroom and bedroom
Reachable plugs and switches
Accessible washrooms
Maneuvering space
Parks
Street furniture
Hard surface pathways
Easily identifiable signs and equipment
Commodes
Reduce isolation
Access to:
Social services
Commercial areas
Public facilities
Senior centers
Senior Housing Needs
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Study Components

- Case studies
  - Compile information from local communities in the U.S.
- Developer/builder group discussion
  - Get their input on regulatory impediments
- Public-sector group discussion
  - Get their input on developer's comments

Case Studies - Housing

- Housing accessibility
  - Universal design
  - Visitability
- Home Sharing
- Elder Cohousing and Cooperative Housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Elder Cottage Housing Opportunities
- Active Adult Communities
- Continuing Care Retirement Communities

Developer Input: Key Findings

- Enhance understanding of “active adult” vs. “traditional” communities
- Public works, water and fire departments provide biggest zoning and regulatory challenges
- Developers must educate municipalities on the latest market trends related to providing housing for the senior market
- Would like DRCOG to have a continued presence in this arena

Public Sector Input: Key Findings

- Better understanding of the characteristics of senior communities
- Public-sector departments must work together to overcome regulatory and process challenges
- The public-at-large must be educated on unique attributes of active adult communities
- Would like DRCOG to have a continued presence in this arena

What Can Local Governments Do to Plan for an Aging Society?

Regulatory and Design Guideline Considerations

- Visitability
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Other regulatory and design mechanisms

Visitability Defined

Visitability is a movement to change home construction practices so that virtually all new homes--not merely those custom-built for occupants who currently have disabilities--offer a few specific features that make the home easier for people who develop mobility impairments to live in and visit.

Source: Concrete Change (info@concretechange.org)

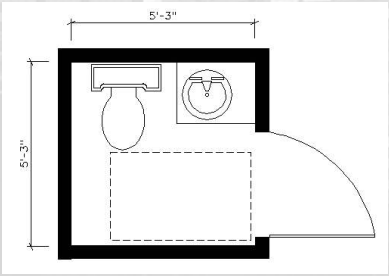
Visitability Features

- One 36” zero-step entrance on any accessible route—at the back, side, front or through the garage.

- Main floor interior passage doors with 32 inches *clear passage space*

- A main floor bathroom with basic maneuvering space. (door swing)

-Blocking between the bathroom studs for future handrail placement



-Source: Councilman Ruggeri, City of Lafayette

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What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)?

- A self contained housing unit secondary to the main residence.
- ADU's have many forms:
  - Attached as addition to house or second story over garage.
  - An ADU within the main residence, either in the basement or as a separate section of residence.
  - A stand alone detached unit like a small house or cottage.
  - A garage converted to an ADU.

Source: City of Arvada (Kevin Nichols)

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Why Consider ADU's?

- Provide a housing option that is often affordable to seniors, young single residents, and childless or empty-nester couples
- Offer an option that supports special family needs (such as care for a senior parent who also desires independence)
- Supply additional income for senior homeowners, allowing them to stay in their neighborhood
- Allow extra income for young families, in order to help offset the cost of a home in their desired neighborhood

Source: City of Arvada (Kevin Nichols)

ADU's Consistent with Comp Plan

- Foster Diverse Mix of Housing Types
- Increase Affordable Housing Options
- Address Special Needs of Growing Senior Population
- Encourage Compatible Infill

Source: City of Arvada (Kevin Nichols)

Common Features of ADU Ordinances

- Key Feature: Owner Occupancy
- Most allow ADU's as detached or attached
- Setbacks- as normally required by zoning
- Only 1 ADU per lot
- Parking Requirement
- Maximum Size Limit
- Orientation of ADU Entrance
- Design Standards- Relate to main house

Source: City of Arvada (Kevin Nichols)

Other Regulatory and Design Guideline Mechanisms

- Definition of "family"
- Housing options: shared housing, co-housing, ECHO housing
- Transportation-related options: Context-sensitive solutions/Complete Streets and TOD
- Community Design options: enhance visual appeal and address safety and security concerns

Resources

- Senior-friendly Development Website: http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=SeniorFriendly
- EPA grant-funded Project Executive Summary: http://www.drcog.org/documents/Executive%20Summary-16Apr07.pdf
- Transit-oriented Development Website: http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=TransitOrientedDevelopment

Contact Information

For more information about the topics presented:

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Creating Child-Friendly Cities: The Case of Denver

Willem van Vliet, Ph.D., Director, Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design, University of Colorado at Denver

Mission:

- Connecting the worlds of research, policy and practice to improve environments for children and youth.

Characteristics:

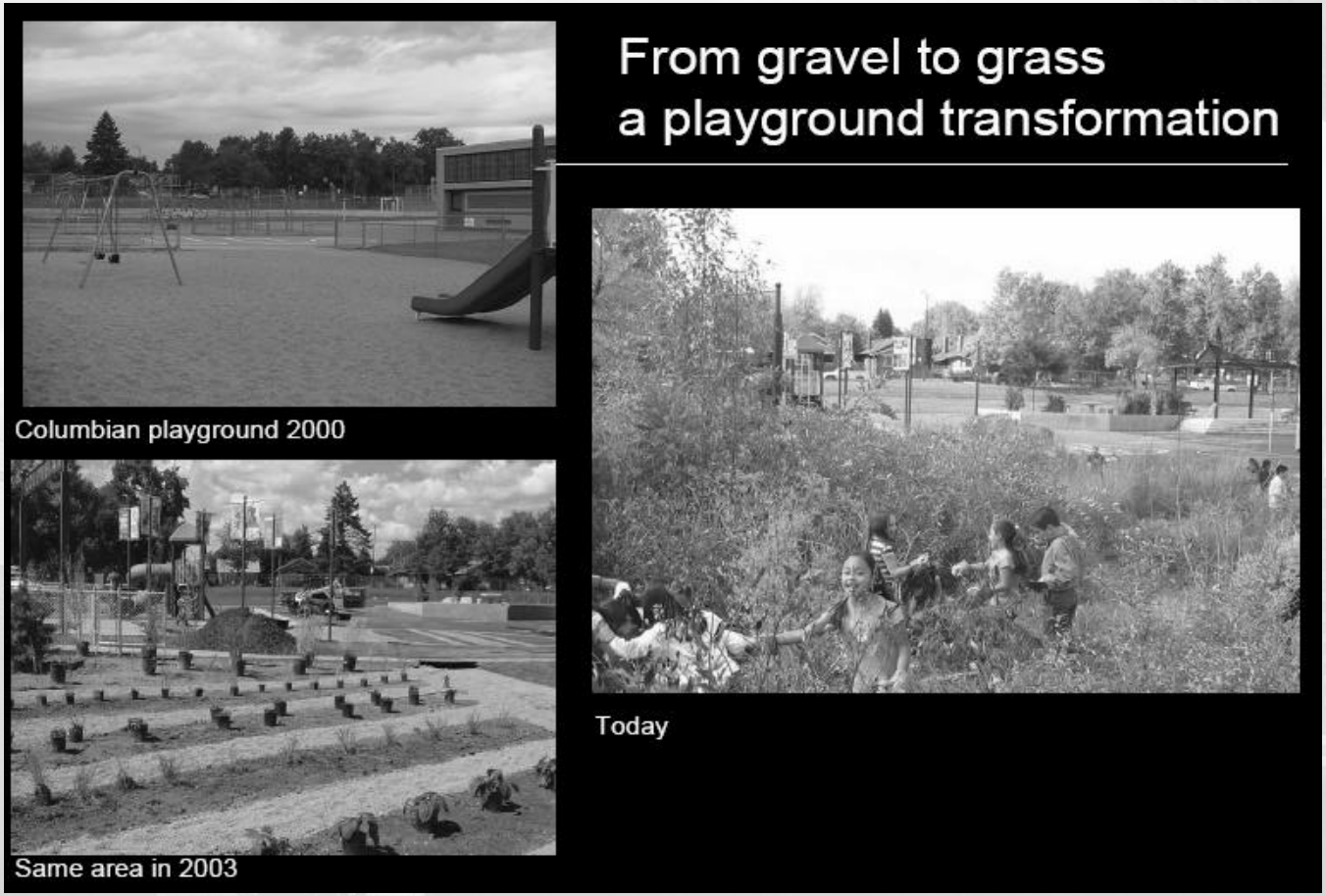
- Place based
- Building bridges and partnerships
- Acknowledgement of agency

www.cudenver.edu/cye

Learning Landscapes

- 51 built
- $25 million raised
- 8,000 community volunteers

- 18,000 students served
- 250,000 city residents served



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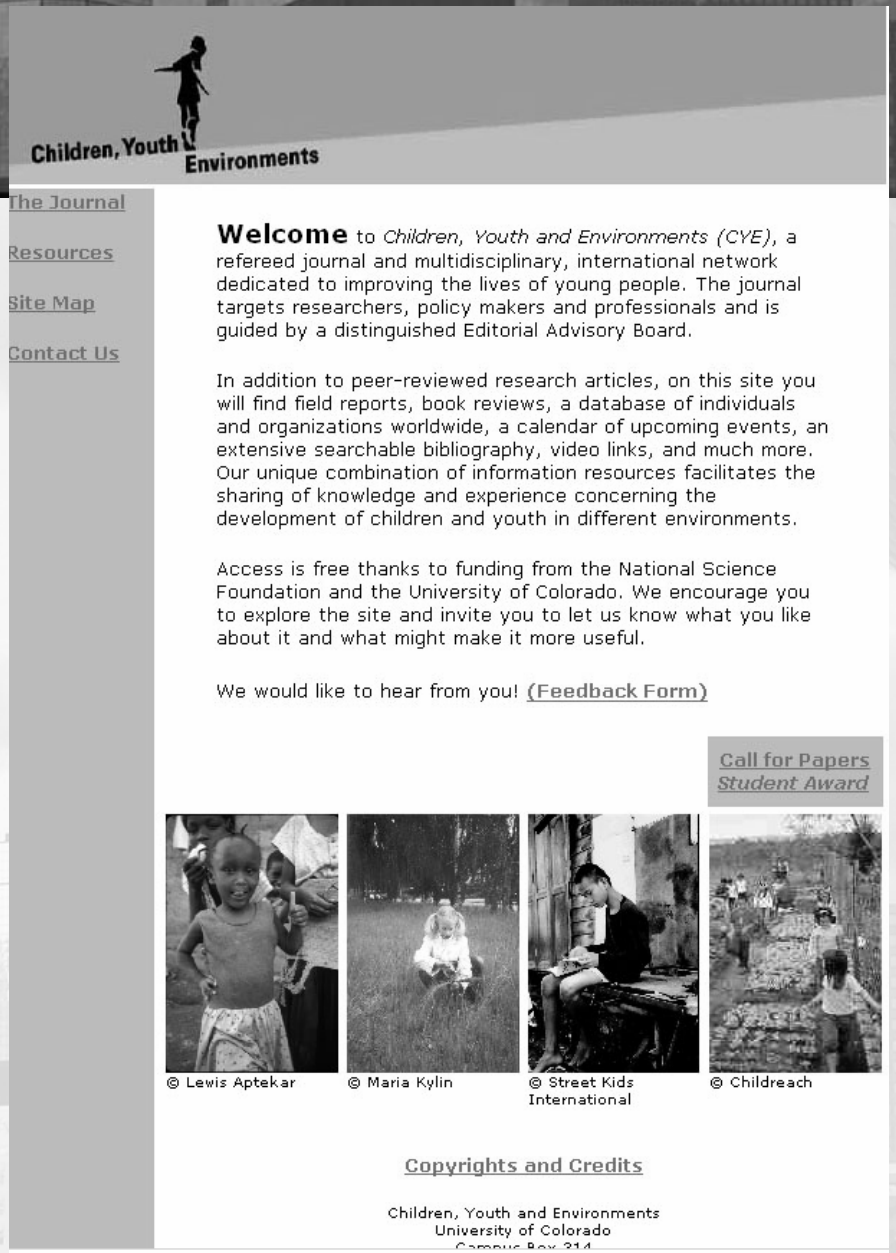
The CYE Journal

- **support for knowledge transfer**
- **online access**
- **readers in 160+ countries**

  - Research articles
  - Field reports
  - Book reviews
  - Databases
    - literature
    - directories
    - news
    - calendar



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DENVER: # 1 CHILD/YOUTH FRIENDLY CITY IN THE U.S.

Normative Policy Platforms

- **U.N. Habitat Agenda:**

  Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action:

  - **"...the wellbeing of children is a critical indicator of a healthy society."**

  - **Governments at all levels, including local authorities, should continue to identify and disseminate best practices, and should develop and apply shelter and human settlements indicators, including those that reflect the rights and wellbeing of children.**

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Normative Policy Platforms

- **U.N. Convention on the Rights of Child:**
  - **Recognizes the right of every child to:**
    - **a standard of living adequate for ... development**
    - **have their voices heard on all matters that affect them**
  - **Non-negotiable standards and obligations**
  - **States shall provide material assistance and support programs**

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Child-Friendly Cities Criteria

- Physical environment improvements
- Participation
- Institutions
- Regulatory frameworks
- Budgets
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Plans of action
- Public awareness
- Training

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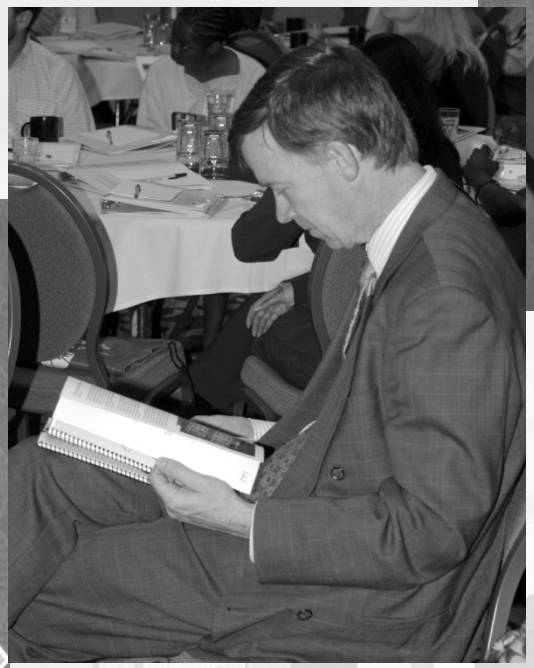
Kick Off, June 13, 2006



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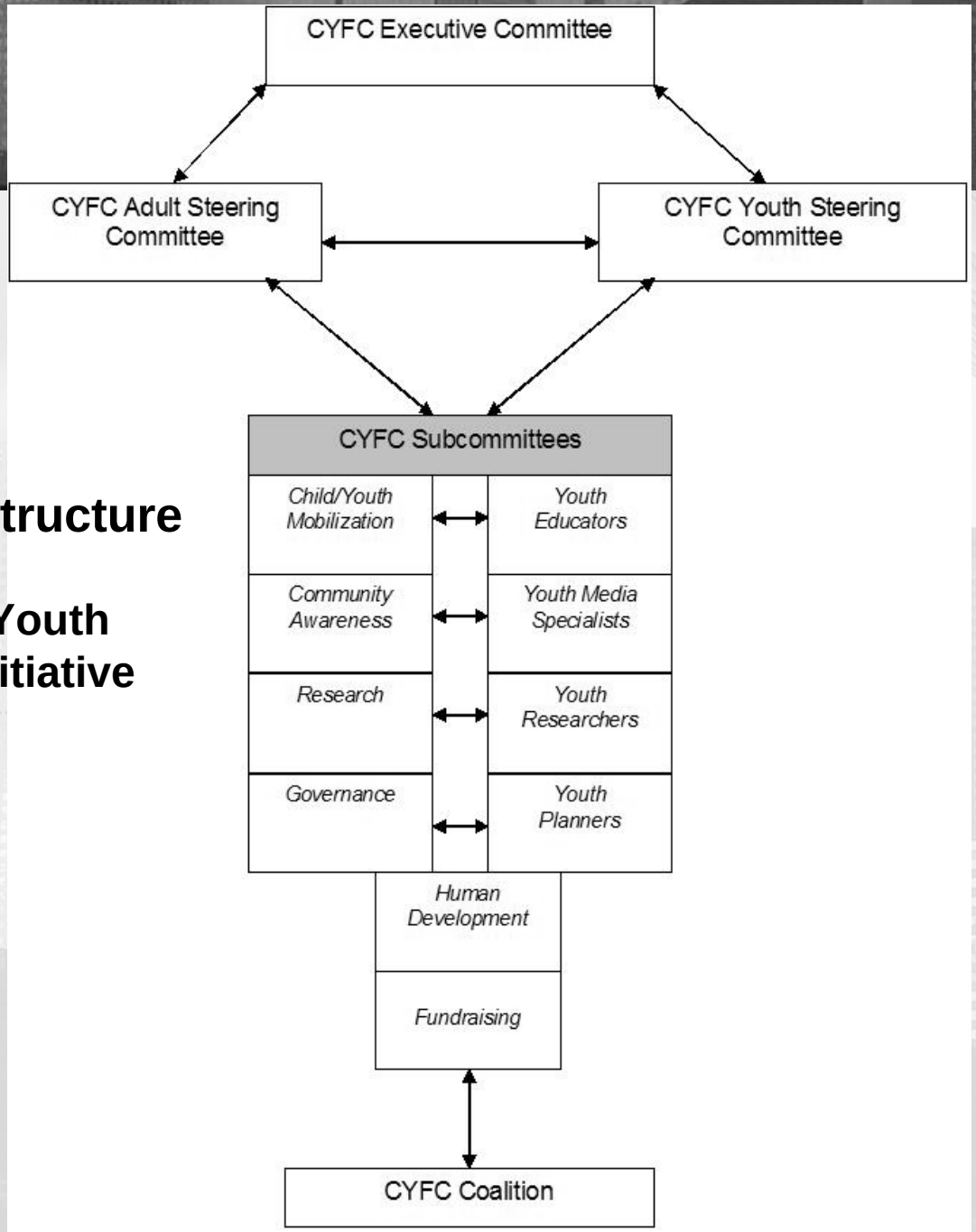
Organizational Structure

Denver's Child/Youth Friendly Cities Initiative



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Characteristics

- City-wide
  - Geographically
  - Socially
  - Organizationally
- Place based
- Participatory
- Process oriented

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Visioning

DENVER
child & Youth
FRIENDLY CITY

BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION!

1. What are the best things about Denver for young people? In your neighborhood? In the city?

2. If you were in charge of the city, what would you do to make Denver a better place for young people?

NAME _____ AGE _____ CIRCLE: m / f NEIGHBORHOOD _____ ZIP _____

Would you like to stay informed about this work? If so, please write your contact information below (e-mail, address, or phone):

_____

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www.cudenver.edu/cye/cyfc/voices.htm

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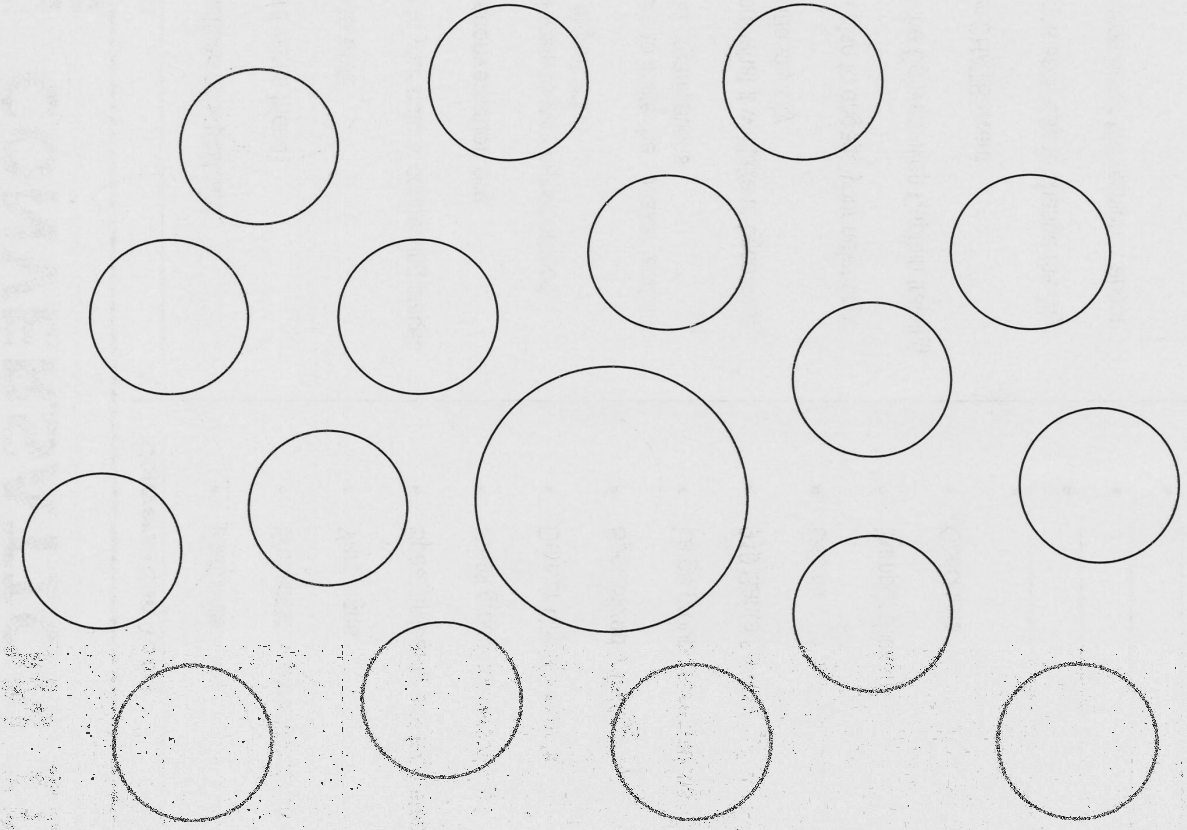
Natural Connecting Places



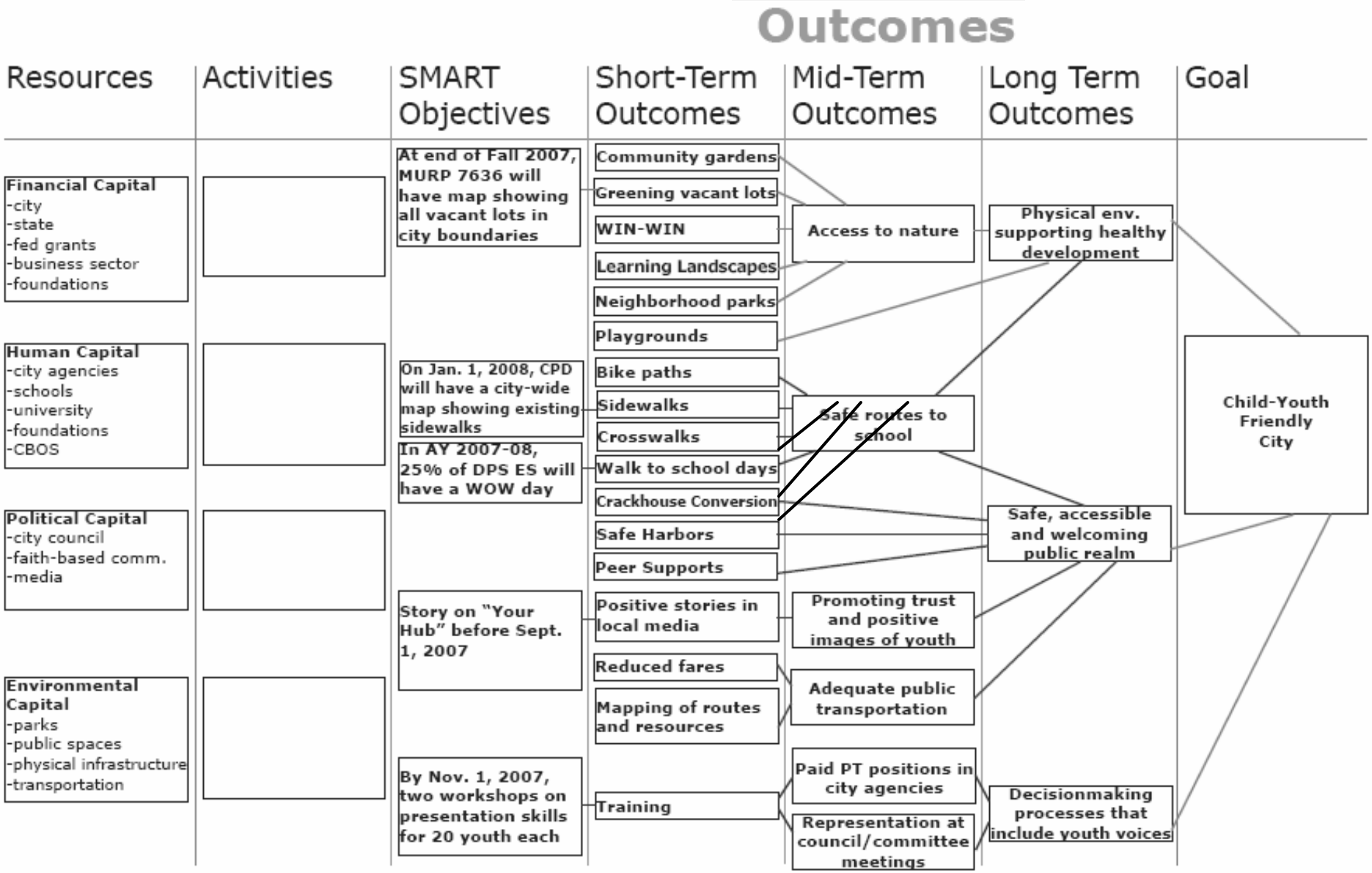
1. _____

2. _____

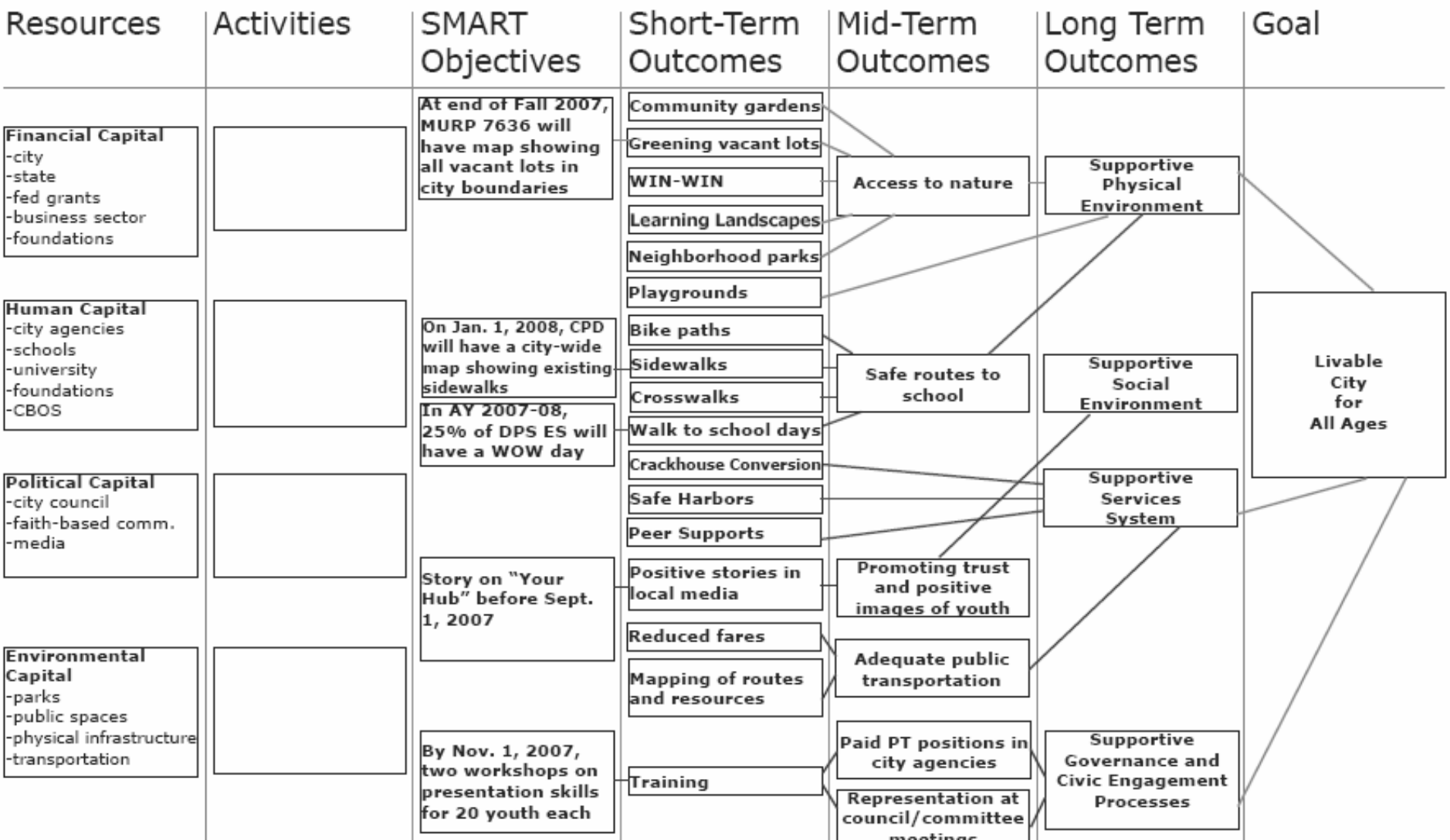
3. _____

Founding Partners

LOGIC MODEL: Child- and Youth-Friendly City



LOGIC MODEL: Livable City for All Ages



Challenges to IG Collaboration

- Funding streams
- Mandates of organizational stakeholders
- Different skill levels, knowledge and experience
- Limited mobility
- Schedules of youth
- Cohort transitions
- Mutual misperceptions

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Benefits of IG Collaboration

- Use of resources
- Sustained community development
- Political mobilization
- Policy formulation and implementation

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University of Colorado

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Denver Regional Council Of Governments

Youth and Aging Activities and Programs in Denver

Doug Linkhart, City Councilman At-Large,

City of Denver

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Activities to Support Youth

- Expanded Recreation Center Hours & Programs
- Library Programs
- Summer Youth Employment
- Youth Summit
- Youth & Child Friendly Cities Project
- Preschool Matters
- Denver Scholarship Program
- Pedestrian Plan
- Bicycle Plan
- 5 x 5 Cultural Program

Activities Related to Aging Adults

- Office on Aging Formation
- Summit on Aging
- Aging Commission
- Aging Action Plan
- Silverprint Colorado
- Snow Shoveling Assistance

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Questions/Comments