The Auraria Campus represents a unique higher education community in a dynamic and vibrant urban setting. The 150-acre campus, located in the heart of downtown Denver, is home to three distinct public institutions of higher learning:

- Community College of Denver (CCD)
- Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver)
- University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver)

The Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) is a separate state entity, providing the facilities, land, and shared services in support of these prominent academic institutions.

AHEC remains committed to providing an effective, efficient, and supportive environment, which facilitates the missions of the three institutions that share the Auraria Campus. Over the past ten years, significant accomplishments and goals have been collectively achieved on the Auraria Campus that have served to advance the campus community and provide a solid platform for future continued success. This report contains an executive summary of the major initiatives realized during this time period.
The Campus Master Plan was developed in 2012, envisioning and capturing the expanded conceptual neighborhood concept. Simultaneously, a Strategic Implementation Plan was developed, designed to outline development opportunities at 5, 10 and 15-year increments. Subsequently, a more integrated 2017 Master Plan was cultivated along with institutional input related to their own enhanced neighborhood plans, evolving into an active and dynamic visionary document designed to strategically guide future planning and development.

- As a result, more than $635M has been collectively invested in the development and renovations to the campus.
- The campus now represents more than 4.5M built square feet, adding almost 3.4M square feet since the campus first opened, with nearly 40% of that growth occurring during this period.
- Under the 2017 Master Plan, based upon maximum buildable square footage, there is potential to add an additional 1M to 1.75M built square feet to each neighborhood.
- The award-winning Tivoli Quad (The Quad), a core community gathering site, was envisioned, developed, and creatively funded to ensure that the most grounding element of the Master Plan was achieved. This included the addition of integrated roadways designed for pedestrian, bike, and vehicle access.
- Additional shared developments and renovations occurred, including:
  - Fifth Street Garage
  - Library renovation
  - Completion of the Science Building renovation and expansion
  - Completion of the final close-out for the Old Colfax land acquisition designed for the future athletic fields, clearing the way for full development
- Other Planning elements were executed, including:
  - Space exchanges were creatively negotiated and executed with the institutions, allowing for the reassignment of nearly 200,000 sf. These space exchanges were designed to pave the way for the institutions to gain contiguous spaces that improved their ability for long-term planning. This included reassignment of nearly 150 general classrooms so that the institutions could develop and outfit them to meet the specific needs of their particular programs.
  - A multi-year tri-institutional reprogramming effort was led for the Tivoli, developing a guiding strategic plan for the future that was responsive to the institutional changes in student life. The plan was immediately utilized, achieving more than 90% of the originally established goals.
  - A comprehensive signage plan was developed and adopted, and implementation has begun with monument signs that significantly celebrate the institutions and the Auraria Campus as “the place.”
  - The primary north-south 10th Street Pedestrian Mall (from Colfax to Larimer), that connects all neighborhoods, was redeveloped with pavers and a permeable drainage system. This removed the original asphalt roadway and curbs that had been in place since the campus opened, creating a strong pedestrian-oriented core.
  - Program Plans were developed for the tri-institutional Kenneth King Performing Arts Center and the Visual Arts Buildings to guide future opportunities.
  - View plane matters were addressed via extensive community and city outreach. This resulted in recognition that what mattered most to the community was the Tivoli building. Design guidelines were modified to include that construction in that area must demonstrate a respect for the Tivoli that reflects how the building is to be honored. New facilities under the Master Plan have now been built, unimpeded, and with community support.
  - The Design Review Board process was creatively modified to provide for design input and greater support for the diverse projects being built on the campus.

The following 3 years of stand-alone capital renewal projects (2019–23) have been developed in detail through use of a campus-wide facilities conditions index report. The next year project (following the steam system project) will result in additional savings in excess of $1M per year. This will also be dedicated to the campus-wide annual maintenance fund, which the institutions have also committed to growing by $100K per year. The groundwork has been laid to achieve internal maintenance funding of the 1% goal envisioned by members of the legislature, thus moving Auraria closer to self-sufficiency on maintenance.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:
Valuable partnerships have been formed with the City of Denver, Downtown Denver Partnership, neighborhood communities, and other important stakeholders, recognizing the positive physical, social, and economic impact of the campus. This has opened the door for previous and continuing collaborations on initiatives and projects that are critical to the success of the Auraria Campus and Downtown Denver.

Most importantly, countless goals were achieved because of the partnership and collaboration that has been forged with the leadership of the three institutions that so proudly share the Auraria Campus. Collaboration with the leadership of the three institutions has created a partnership that focuses on shared opportunity and has unlocked and utilized this unique campus in a way that has not occurred before.

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

MASTER PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLANNING:
The Campus Master Plan is a living document that should be continually assessed, as it is implemented and utilized. As the institutions become more detailed in planning their own priorities, the Campus Plan should be updated accordingly to keep it vibrant and effective.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAMPUS-WIDE PLANNING:
Critical infrastructure and campus-wide planning was completed, resulting in the following:
- An Infrastructure Master Plan
- Signage Master Plan
- Design Review Process
- Landscape Plan
- Lighting Plan
- Bicycle Path Route Plan
- Food Program Plan

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING:
The Plans should continue to be considered, implemented, and tested for ongoing effectiveness.

CAPITAL RENEWAL:
- 2018–2019 Capital Renewal Project:
  Development of the 2018-19 Capital Renewal Project introduced the initiative to replace the existing steam and hot water system serving 11 buildings on the campus. The plan is financially, economically, and environmentally responsible. The package addresses funding, schedule, and implementation strategy. Following a successful legislative process, the resulting savings of $1M per year will be dedicated to additional campus-wide maintenance.

- Extended Capital Renewal Projects:
  The following 3 years of stand-alone capital renewal projects (2019–23) have been developed in detail through use of a campus-wide facilities conditions index report. The next year project (following the steam system project) will result in additional savings in excess of $1M per year. This will also be dedicated to the campus-wide annual maintenance fund, which the institutions have also committed to growing by $100K per year. The groundwork has been laid to achieve internal maintenance funding of the 1% goal envisioned by members of the legislature, thus moving Auraria closer to self-sufficiency on maintenance.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:
Partnerships must always continue to be actively cultivated, particularly in light of turnover occurring in relevant constituencies.

Partnerships and the resulting collaborations are the core of campus success and should never be taken for granted. It requires constant cultivation and appreciation.

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

CAPITAL RENEWAL:
The 2018–19 Capital Renewal initiative is anticipated to be successful and therefore, moved to the implementation phase. The project has an aggressive 1-year completion schedule to allow for maximum utility savings. Utility costs for steam will rapidly increase, so time will be of the essence to complete this project.

EXTENDED CAPITAL RENEWAL:
The following 3 years of stand-alone capital renewal projects (2019–23) have been developed and submitted in the five-year state plan. The 2019-2020 Plan will need to be updated and submitted for the next year, continuing the savings potential for maintenance. This will require continued cultivation of the legislative body. NOTE: the agency contracts with a lobbying firm that assists with these endeavors.

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:
Partnerships must always continue to be actively cultivated, particularly in light of turnover occurring in relevant constituencies.
New Construction and Major Renovations
CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVE AND PROJECTS:
Consistent with the Denver Area Plan, numerous connectivity projec-
ts have been launched and completed, ensuring an integration of
the campus as a vibrant component of the city. Examples include:

- Known as the Conceptual Walkway Plan, a formal strate-
gic model for connectivity to downtown Denver via Larimer
Street was developed with multiple city-wide stakeholders. To
incrementally move forward to the ultimate goal, the vacated
bus lane was acquired to widen the pedestrian walkways,
ensuring that the full plan would be implemented with funds
acquired through the successful bid for the project in the
general obligation bonds (GO Bonds).

- An additional Connect Auraria Plan (the CAC Plan) was
devised with multiple stakeholders to address the various
connecting points around the campus. One of those evolved
into the Colfax and Lipan reconfiguration that was
planned and developed in partnership with the City Public
Works department and RTD, creating a safer environment for
the campus and community.

- Again, in partnership with the city, “now-term” improve-
ments were made to all crossings, including introducing the
campus’s signature red brick crosswalks, off-mall
planters, widened walkways, and institutional and campus
branding (via walkway flags). All of these were achieved in
partnership with the Downtown Denver Partnership.

- The Tivoli Quad was built and became an anchor for events
and a gathering space for the campus, the community, and
the city, ensuring connectivity through social events.

LAND NEGOTIATIONS/ACQUISITIONS:
- Significant and complex land negotiations were completed
with RTD, allowing for the addition of a second light rail station
on campus.

- The final Old Colfax land acquisition and required cleanup for
the future athletic complex was completed.

- The St. Francis Center building and land was acquired from
the Aurora Foundation, allowing AHEC to own the land, and
via a ground lease, permit CCD to purchase the building as
an element of their conceptual neighborhood.

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

FORMAL AGREEMENT ORCHESTRATION
AND DEVELOPMENT:
Tri-institutional agreements were developed and memorialized to
create a series of roadmaps for future decision making, not the
least of which has been dedicating annual funds to controlled
maintenance and developing a blended funding formula. Other
documents include:

- The Master Plan Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
and the partner document, the Neighborhood Facility
Designation & Related Space Exchanges MOA that
defines the norms of operating for the future (revised in
2012 and again in 2017).

- A tri-institutional operating and funding agreement for the
Library and a separate agreement for the Emmanuel Gallery.

- The La Alma Lincoln Park Neighborhood Agreement
was also executed, committing the campus to communicating
with these very important neighbors.

- Countless other agreements were negotiated and
executed to ensure the smooth functioning of the campus,
while supporting the needs of the institutions.

- The Tivoli Student Union stakeholders have developed
a long-term reprogramming plan that addresses revenues,
leases, and overall uses. New leases are currently
developed.

- The student facilities bond fund had a finite lifespan, putting
the campus in a sustainable revenue stream for the Tivoli and the
Early Learning Center referendum was developed with support for an
ongoing sustainable revenue stream for the Tivoli and the
Early Learning Center. In addition, a permanent revenue
stream was established for the sustainable campus
program, along with a five-year strategic plan, ensuring
ongoing energy saving initiatives, such as expanded solar
arrays, etc. In addition, a facilities conditions audit for the
Tivoli has been completed, identifying significant maintenance
needs. A financial package to address these maintenance
needs and supported by these extended revenues has been
preliminarily developed.
FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

FINANCIAL CREATIVITY:
The sky is the limit on this potential. One initiative that has commenced is the potential conversion of the current PE Building/Events Center into a new Auraria Campus Center for Events,” with the vacated swimming pool site and adjacent areas becoming a traditional conference center and the remaining portions of the building being a showcase for athletic events. This is a shared facility and will require institutional commitment, but MSU Denver is already a strong partner with the athletic events component. AHEC contracted a study that determined that the conversion is feasible, and a conceptual plan was developed, including models. This was combined with some parking funds to create the Quad, roadways, and amenities that otherwise could not have happened.

An important community gathering space, the Tivoli Quad, was identified as the number one priority for all three institutions from a campus life standpoint, but was understandably the lowest priority from a financial standpoint. A strategy was devised to acquire the final funds from the liquidation of the Auraria Foundation’s final assets and a student-backed fee for outdoor spaces. This was combined with some parking funds to create the Quad, roadways, and amenities that otherwise could not have happened.

An important, historic, and community-recognized facility, St. Cajetan’s, has been in the process of being lovingly restored, thanks to a partnership with History Colorado and a succession of grants designed to support the ongoing rehabilitation.

An initiative to redesign billboards located on campus since its inception was devised. Following a challenging process, in partnership with the city, the campus successfully converted one board into a digital model and increased revenues from $18K to $285K per year.

In recognition of the need to generate revenue for the Tivoli student bond fund, AHEC partnered with MSU Denver on their beer industry-training program. AHEC negotiated a commercial lease with the private retailer to secure student bond revenue, and MSU Denver built an academic program in partnership with the retailer. The academic beer industry welding program offered by CCD was also integrated.

A new blended funding formula was envisioned and adopted by the three institutions, based upon actual costs and occupancy/cycle used by each institution. In addition, prior to this period, the institutions had not contributed to the annual maintenance fund. After collaborative discussions, the institutions now support a fund that grows annually, with the current amount per year at $3.9M. This is being combined with the capital renewal savings of $1M per year, and subsequent savings from future capital renewal projects.

FINANCIAL CREATIVITY:
While countless commercial leases had been done, ground leases were a new element of the conceptual neighborhoods. Seven ground leases have been negotiated and finalized, including some unique packages involving public-private ventures. Base templates now exist, making future ground leases more routine. Countless square footage has also been exchanged internally to further the Master Plan and the potential of the conceptual neighborhoods.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND LEGISLATION:
AHEC opted out of the State of Colorado fiscal and procurement rules, electing to develop its own rules in order to more nimble serve the institutions. Multiple legislative initiatives were introduced and passed, including but not limited to the AHEC clean-up bill to recognize AHEC as a non-higher education entity that needs to participate in the benefit of higher education legislation. Campus-wide policy was also drafted and addressed through the Auraria Board, including the Naming Policy (to respond to building naming opportunities) and campus-wide events policies.

A comprehensive and exciting culture change was implemented for the agency, instilling a sense of customer-driven operations and pride in provision of the best services possible. Thus changing the view of the agency to one of partnership and problem solving. The theme behind the initiative was “One Auraria,” reflecting one team with multiple parts that works in unison for the success of the campus. The effort was re-emphasized with the introduction of the “Guiding Principles,” which illustrated the daily approach to service.

Multiple programmatic service areas have been evaluated and developed. The agency had audit results of no findings in 9 out of 10 years. Service areas were assessed under a formal transformation process. Staffing levels have been adjusted along with space realignment. This includes an expansion of the police department and the creation of a formal Auraria Campus Center for Safety to enhance campus-wide safety and emergency training and response.

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

GROUND LEASES:
Two more facilities are currently planned that will require ground leases. General term sheets will be outlined soon, and leases will be executed in the near future. One of these, the CU Denver first-year student housing, will represent the first time that there has been on-campus housing (even though there has been adjacent housing for almost 15 years). This will also require service and staffing adjustments due to the round-the-clock living (more police, grounds staff, etc.). There will be additional considerations with the public-private nature of the project. NOTE: The agency contracts with a real estate attorney to assist with these endeavors.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

LEGISLATION:
Along with the Capital Renewal Projects, steps have been taken to begin to address changing the legislative scoring process for AHEC, in recognition that AHEC is inadvertently penalized by the current numeric system. Great progress has been made with the current legislative body and the opportunity to capitalize on this exists in the next session.

FUTURE GOALS/CONTINUANCE INITIATIVES

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Programs must be continually reviewed for responsiveness. As mentioned previously, the bookstore operation is at a crossroads due to industry changes. Likewise, Media Services has continued to be reviewed as the institutional technology needs have become much more individualized (one size does not fit all). The Campus Center for Safety is a newly enhanced program that is anticipated to deliver much broader service to the three institutions.
This report was respectfully prepared for the Auraria Board of Directors by

BARB WEISKE
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Auraria Higher Education Center

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