

CITYCRAFT VENTURES, LLC

Denver CityCraft

Denver, Colorado



View of west Denver project area along light rail line

Revitalization of the 6,000-acre Sun Valley and Greater West Denver area is a priority for the City of Denver and the Denver Housing Authority. Cut off from Denver's nearby central business district by a lack of road connectivity, and plagued with low income and high levels of unemployment, the area's neighborhoods have become both physically and psychologically isolated.

Biohabitats helped a partnership group—including CityCraft, the City and County of Denver, the Gates Family Foundation, the Denver

Housing Authority, the Denver Foundation, and Enterprise Community Partners—to assess the potential for West Denver to become a model for sustainable and resilient urban regeneration at the district scale. The first phase of this effort involved collecting data and information to assess current conditions at the systems-level scale and understand how those conditions evolved. In the second phase, the information was analyzed, and a framework for strategically integrating solutions for issues was recommended. Recommendations centered around a long-term, collective

An integrated approach to restoring natural, financial and social capital is being tested in west Denver as a national model for urban regeneration at the district scale.

impact approach to restore the area's economic, environmental, and social health.

Biohabitats led the evaluation of the project area's natural capital and ecosystem services. This included describing the natural systems and ecological history including current conditions, key ecosystem services, and opportunities for restoration and regeneration of urban ecological systems. In addition to reviewing available documents, conducting site visits, and performing asset mapping, analysis, and synthesis, the Biohabitats team was asked to identify previously undetected economic/environmental/social links related to the revitalization and to develop integration initiatives to address these issues. Core assets identified included parks and open space, gulches,

the South Platte River, trails and corridors, schools, and other community centers.

Integration opportunities were developed that included cross-sector ideas for improving green infrastructure, ecosystem health, education, art, job creation, healthy lifestyles, food supply, and safety. Informed by Biohabitats findings, the study highlighted the need for strategic selection of restoration projects, innovative investment structures, institutional engagement for scaling of investments, and incentivizing resilient infrastructure.

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