



## Redevelopment of Public Plazas Longmont, CO //

### CHALLENGE STATEMENT //

The City of Longmont's downtown plazas are underutilized, despite the continued growth of the community's vibrant downtown. The Longmont Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) wants to increase the public use and engagement in these plazas, located on its main street.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF STUDIO WORKSHOP //

Spearheaded by the Downtown Development Authority (LDDA), this project aims to bring together disconnected neighborhoods by leveraging the existing two plazas into communal gathering places. While the City has engendered a sense of identity within and around the historic downtown area, the LDDA envisions plazas used by local workers and families as launching points for community events or an evening out on the town. While participating in the Challenge Studio, the team first outlined the need to develop an effective citizen engagement strategy to incorporate more voices to assist crafting the vision of the plazas.

### TEAM MEMBERS //

Kimberlee McKee, Rob Warner, and Del Rae Heiser – Longmont Downtown Development Authority  
Kirsten Pellicer – Longmont Downtown Development Authority/Local business owner  
Eric Syverson – Project Coordinator/MPA Student  
Blair McGary—Town of Silverthorne  
Ian Swallow—Boulder County Housing Authority  
Brandon Stam—Grand Junction Downtown Development Authority  
Kathy Lane—Boulder Public Library  
Abbe Ewell Longstein—Kaboom!  
Fernanda Iwasaki—CU Engaged Scholars  
Tasha Wilson—Town of Frisco  
Natalie Johnson—Metropolitan State University Denver

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION //

The City of Longmont has a vibrant urban corridor along its Main street, within which there are two public plazas: 6<sup>th</sup> Ave and St. Stephens. St. Stephens is owned by the LDDA, who currently hosts interactive games and public art in the plaza. This plaza is located next to a historic church, which has recently come under new ownership. St. Stephen's Plaza is also bordered by a new kitchen company and a daycare.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Ave plaza is located next to a senior living center and the future site of an affordable housing and parking garage development. This future development is currently being planned by Boulder County Housing Authority. Across the street from the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave plaza, Boulder County recently built a community

center, employing hundreds of county residents

Both plazas are located on key parcels on the northern end of Main Street. On top of this project, the City of Longmont has invested millions into updating its alleys and breezeways. The City's population often clusters in their own neighborhoods however and the community doesn't take advantage of downtown enough. To the detriment of downtown businesses, few residents think of using the plazas as a gathering point.

**Population:** 92,858

#### **Stakeholders + Partners**

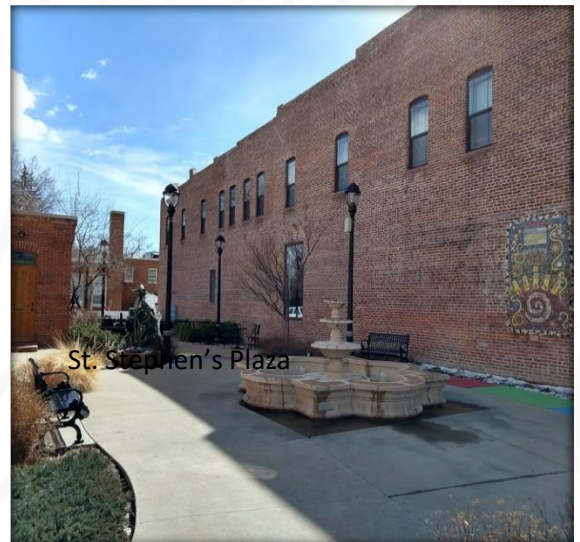
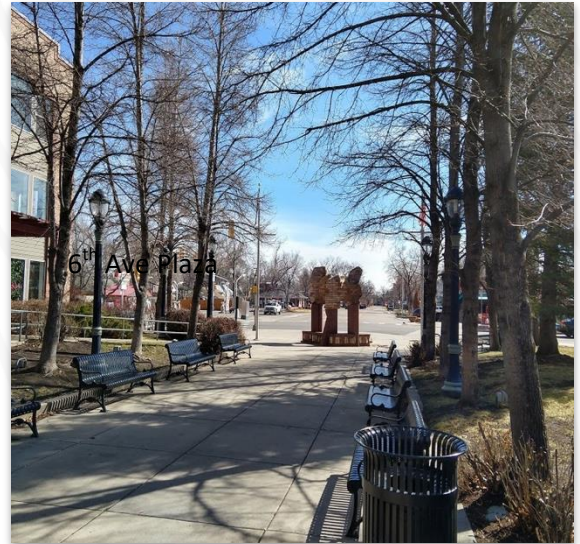
- Team members (Longmont DDA)
- Local business owners
- Boulder County
- Residents of Longmont
- Art in Public Places
- Community Organizations
- Local Schools

#### **Assets**

- Art in Public Places
- Nearby affordable housing development
- LDDA and Boulder housing cooperation/buy-in
- Previous success at increasing engagement (St. Stephen's Candyland)
- Recently redeveloped connecting alleyways

#### **Obstacles**

- Transient homeless population that sometimes occupy the plazas
- Possible increase in noise activity (6<sup>th</sup> Ave near assisted living center)
- Fountain in St. Stephen's leaks and constrains use of space.
- Convoluted ownership of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave plaza
- Statue blocking view/full use of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave plaza
- Financing plaza redevelopment



### **Challenge Studio Overview //**

The team was thrilled to be a part of a productive three days at the challenge studio, where they were able to consult with public sector and non-profit leaders. Initially, the conversation focused on successful public engagement strategies previously undertaken by the LDDA. LDDA leaders and staff, including Kimberlee, Rob, and Del Rae focused on avoiding the "Same Ten People" problem in their engagement efforts and were curious as to what made other community engagement strategies effective. Many ideas were presented, such as Google's Unity Project for public voting on potential ideas or holding community events that allow people to comment on possible ideas for development.

The conversation then focused on how to redevelop St. Stephen's Plaza through temporary or quick action and how to put together a long-term plan to develop the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave plaza. At the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Plaza, possibilities discussed ranged from public gardening to a woonerf (a road designed for shared use) for specific events. For St. Stephen's, the conversation concentrated on how to obtain commitment from nearby businesses and organizations to use the space, and ideas for replacing the plaza's faulty fountain. The LDDA staff explained to the rest of the group their perception and data regarding what the community is looking for in these spaces. Building off the experiences and suggestions from this Challenge Studio, the LDDA is now presented with an action plan for how to proceed in their overall redevelopment plan.

## **ACTION STEPS //**

### **1. Develop a viable citizen engagement strategy**

- a. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Plaza
  - Hosting community events: Breweries or local block party in the plaza are options.
    - Utilize less formal strategies, like the Google Unity Project or downtown chalk board, to get a sense of new development ideas.
  - Engage surrounding stakeholders: disperse a citizen survey to the adjacent Boulder County employees and senior center for input in plaza redevelopment.
- b. St. Stephen's Plaza
  - Establish formal use of the plaza: administer community schedule for plaza use.
    - Coordinate with local businesses (Kitchen Company, Yoga Studio) to gauge interest in holding events at the plaza.

### **2. Create a vision plan for plazas**

- a. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Plaza
  - Coordinate redevelopment with Boulder Housing Authority.
    - Key to obtaining an additional funding source.
  - Present redevelopment ideas to community.
    - Potential ideas from Challenge Studio: Woonerf (shared street space); public garden/sensory garden; urban beach; temporary/permanent playground equipment.
- b. St. Stephen's Plaza
  - Research and plan to replace fountain.
    - Develop estimates for splashpad construction.
  - Increase public bike racks behind plaza.
  - Install multi-use public Kiosk
    - Engage local business to secure another use for the kiosk and further increase use of the plaza.

### **3. Secure outside funding**

- a. Shore up LDDA and Boulder Housing Authority Funding.
  - Key to obtain outside funds.
- b. Reach out to foundations, nonprofits and public entities for possible funds or partnerships
  - Ideas presented at the Challenge Studio include: GOCO, DOLA mini grants, and Kaboom!
- c. Hold local fundraisers to bolster funds.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES //

Create lasting, engaging communal gathering spots that integrate all members of the Longmont community into their vibrant downtown community.



Challenge Studio at the 2018 DCI IN THE GAME Conference.