



P.U.M.A.

Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.) produces this publication to highlight innovations and trends in community development, downtown management and marketing.

SPRING 2003

Commentary by Brad Segal

Reprinted from *The Denver Post*

During the past fifteen years, the fortunes of downtown Denver have been championed by Mayors Pena and Webb and a City Council that understood the community-wide benefit of a strong and vital central business district.

Downtown Denver emerged as one of the nation's urban success stories and solidified its role as the regional hub for business, transportation, culture and sports.

privileged and handicapped by a relatively paltry voter base.

To retain a strong voice amid the politics of scarcity, downtown must broaden its message and develop a common agenda with center city neighborhoods.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM
IN DOWNTOWN DENVER:



Photo courtesy of Downtown Denver Partnership

New Realities Require New Approaches

Due to a combination of factors, downtown's future vitality is vulnerable. The post 9/11 era of economic and political instability appears to be the new reality. Locally, Denver is challenged by a stagnant economy and a wholesale transition in local government as the May election will choose a new Mayor and replace 10 of 13 Council members. Continued support for downtown, particularly in a cycle of declining municipal resources, is not assured.

To remain competitive, downtown Denver needs to develop new approaches to respond to these new economic and political realities. Here are three key suggestions for maintaining a vital downtown.

Build Alliances: To influence municipal priorities, downtown must build strong and enduring alliances with its surrounding neighborhoods.

As evidenced by recent Denver budget cuts and desperate attempts at revenue enhancement, municipal resources are entering a period of erosion that could last several years. With declining resources, neighborhood and racial politics are likely to be intensified in the competition for a shrinking pie. Downtown is positioned at the end of this food chain, perceived as an enclave of the

Downtown is the dominant job base for these communities and the economic engine that will either help advance or stall neighborhood development. Bolstered by an alliance representing diverse economic, demographic and political segments of the community, downtown can lead the development of rational and effective public policy and establish the political infrastructure for long-term empowerment.

Create a New Plan: Despite Mayor Webb's support for downtown, the administration has lacked long-term vision. Webb's downtown policies were crafted by two politically expedient "Summits" in the 1990s, both designed to provide four-year action plans between elections.

The central business district has not undertaken a comprehensive planning review since the 1985 Downtown Action Plan. This plan helped guide many pioneering downtown development efforts, notably providing the framework for the revitalization of Lower Downtown initiated by Mayor Pena and the emphasis on center city housing embraced by Mayor Webb.

(continued)

PROGRESSIVE URBAN
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES

1616 SEVENTEENTH STREET, # 262
DENVER, COLORADO 80202
TELEPHONE: 303/628-5554
FAX: 303/628-5557
www.pumaworldhq.com

PROGRESSIVE
URBAN
MANAGEMENT

BE ON THE
LOOKOUT
FOR THESE
FRIENDLY
FACES IN:

DENVER AND PUEBLO, COLO.



Brad Segal

pumaman@ix.netcom.com



Anna Jones

pumajones@ix.netcom.com



Pamela Phox

pumaphox@ix.netcom.com

Brad will be leading a panel on Market-Based Planning during the upcoming American Planning Association annual conference in Denver on March 30.

Brad and Anna will be presenting a workshop on the "ABCs of Creating BIDs" at the annual conference of the Colorado Municipal League in Pueblo on June 19.

With declining government resources and uncertain economic times ahead, we are seeing an increased interest in business improvement districts (BIDs) in Colorado and throughout the nation.

Look for Pamela each first and third Tuesday as a new member of the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. Denver Mayor Wellington Webb recently appointed Pamela to serve on the Commission, which reviews applications affecting historic properties and neighborhoods in Denver. Congratulations Commissioner Phox!

New Realities Require New Approaches *(continued from cover)*

Downtown has since emerged as a multi-dimensional 24-hour environment, adding a vibrant nightlife, several destination attractions and thousands of residents. As downtown has changed, so have the underlying economic and political assumptions of the 1980s and 1990s that led to its renewal.

A new plan is needed for downtown. The plan must be based on current market realities and should bolster downtown Denver's evolution as the heart of a vital 24-hour city. The plan must also establish a vision for downtown beyond a politically convenient timeline. Let's be bold and think five, ten, maybe twenty years into the future.

Reinvent the City Support Structure: Finally, downtown and entire city should demand a complete overhaul of city government after the May elections. Like many American politicians, Mayor Webb benefited from an unprecedented era of prosperity in the 1990s. This led to a binge that included the rapid expansion of city government, local pork barrel policies, routine patronage and pet projects. We didn't seem to care, particularly as the prosperity fed our daily needs and inoculated us to the excesses.

The past eighteen months have begun to expose the folly of the prior ten years. A lame duck Mayor and City Council have resorted to a shotgun response to declining municipal tax revenues and budgets. Major civic decisions, ranging from a new city jail to significant service reductions, are being deferred. Avoiding needed and painful budget cuts, we have been subjected to a variety of short-sighted and self-defeating fee and indirect tax increases. One particularly insidious example is the recent 50% increase in downtown parking meter fees to help feed the dwindling general fund.

As the next administration puts the city's pieces back together, a coordinated inter-departmental approach to downtown should be encouraged. Policies should be managed by a myriad of agencies that communicate with one another and share a common vision, including planning, building, community development, parking management, transportation and economic development.

Led by a strong neighborhood/downtown coalition, guided by a new plan and supported by a revamped interdisciplinary local government team, downtown Denver could be well positioned to maintain its momentum through the next decade.



Photo courtesy of Downtown Denver Partnership

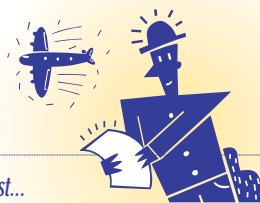
Denver's primary election will be held on May 6 with a run-off on June 3. In the Mayoral race, the P.U.M.A. office pool favors candidates John Hickenlooper, Don Mares and Penfield Tate.



P.U.M.A. PAL

In each issue of Progressive Urban Management, we highlight partners and clients who have been influential in our success:

Jane Jenkins, executive director of the Downtown Boulder BID, has become a tireless leader in advancing downtown revitalization in Colorado and the West. Since moving from Texas to become Boulder's first BID director four years ago, Jane has created one of the region's finest downtown management and marketing programs. As vice president of the Colorado Community Revitalization Association (CCRA), she has also been instrumental in guiding the growth of the successful statewide Main Street program. We know Jane as a valued friend, professional associate, client, fellow CCRA board member and International Downtown Association member.



AIRPLANE READING

A pleasant by-product of our travel schedule is that we get to read a lot. Here we share the best...

■ Refilling Colorado

Michael Leccese and Kathleen McCormick, *Planning*, January 2003

The January issue of *Planning* is devoted to Denver in advance of the American Planning Association's national conference in late March. We found this article to be of particular interest...

A half-dozen mixed-use urban neighborhoods taking shape in the rapidly growing Denver metropolitan area are being viewed as possible solutions to sprawl. A former Air Force base, a defunct shopping mall, a vacated international airport, an abandoned rail yard, a deserted industrial site, and a tree farm are being transformed into livable, mixed-use "refill" neighborhoods.

The configurations of the New Urbanism developments vary, most containing a blend of residences, businesses, shops and open space. In some instances, transit, movie theaters, ice-skating rinks, schools, or hotels are incorporated into the communities. In the article, a developer states that "Colorado's well-educated populace has connected the dots between density and land preservation... People care about the mountains, the wilderness, and they realize that you have to make redevelopment denser and more urban to protect that open space."

On the other hand, this movement towards refill could be stymied by resistance to regulation,

as demonstrated by voters' November, 2000 sound defeat of Amendment 24, a ballot initiative that would have required community comprehensive planning. Additionally, a weakening economy has put hotel, retail and commercial construction on hold, making mixed-use proposals more difficult to realize.

■ After the Mall

Christopher Swope, *Governing*, October, 2002

New Main Streets are popping up in inner-ring suburbs across the country as dying regional malls and old strip malls are being bulldozed and turned into pedestrian-friendly Main Streets with unique character. In the Denver suburb of Lakewood, demolition of the Villa Italia Mall and its vast parking field has given way to the beginnings of a grid of streets. Over the next few years, offices, homes, sidewalk cafes, a movie theater, a town green and, of course, shopping will rise up from the new streets. Until 1969, Lakewood, Colorado's fourth-largest municipality was a series of 13 unincorporated neighborhoods, each with its own commercial area, seeking to avoid annexation by Denver. As a result, Lakewood never had a downtown. "There was no *there* there," says a community planning official.

Now it will.



BOULDER GETS BOLDER

Nestled in the Colorado foothills and long blessed as a bastion of progressive thought and lifestyle, Boulder is encountering hard times. Decades of anti-growth sentiment and significant new retail and office competition are contributing forces to the depletion of Boulder's municipal budget and civic ego. Downtown Boulder and the world-renowned Pearl Street Mall have not been insulated from the city's change in fortune, evidenced by declining sales, increasing vacancies and soft rental rates.

To help reverse these trends, the Downtown Boulder BID is launching a new economic development initiative. The BID retained P.U.M.A. to conduct a needs assessment and help design the program in concert with the BID's Economic Vitality Committee, a group of downtown real estate professionals, property owners and civic leaders. Key program recommendations include:

- Employ a full time program manager and position the BID as a market information and business support portal.
- Create downtown economic development marketing materials utilizing existing consumer marketing products.
- Advance a downtown economic vitality policy agenda that includes improving parking, discouraging aggressive panhandling and promoting economic vitality as a community value.

For more information, contact Jane Jenkins, executive director of the Downtown Boulder BID at 303-449-3774, or for an electronic copy of the Downtown Boulder BID Economic Development Initiative report contact Pamela at pumaphox@ix.netcom.com.

TALE OF TWO CITIES

During this past winter, we have been involved in bi-coastal efforts to renew business improvement districts (BIDs) in two emerging downtowns. In Long Beach, Calif., the BID has required restructuring to respond to extensive new development and to simplify complexities within the original BID design. Significant changes include increasing resources for marketing and economic development, reducing the number of benefit zones and introducing building square footage as an assessment variable. The petition process to support the \$1.5 million BID renewal plan was initiated in March with an expected completion early this summer. Contact Kriag Kojian, president of Downtown Long Beach Associates at 562-436-4259.

On that other coast, we have provided technical assistance to the Downtown Norfolk Council in its effort to renew the downtown BID in Norfolk, Va. Similar to Long Beach, Norfolk has undergone a period of exciting new development resulting in a downtown that is rapidly becoming a major destination attraction. Unlike Long Beach, the Norfolk BID plan calls for the continuation of a similar budget and structure. The Downtown Norfolk Council will be advancing renewal plans for the \$1 million BID through the local legislative process later this spring. Contact Cathy Coleman, executive director of the Downtown Norfolk Council at 757-623-1757.

In addition to BID renewal efforts in Long Beach and Norfolk, we are currently involved in BID creation and/or renewal efforts in the following cities:

- Detroit, Mich.
- Lakewood, Colo.
- North Hollywood, Calif.
- Seattle, Wash.



NEW PRODUCTS

Downtown Strategic Planning Updates

As we near our tenth anniversary, several past clients are bringing us back to conduct Strategic Planning Updates. As opposed to conducting an intensive and costly new plan, the Update is ideal for a planning process that is about five years old and needs refinement. The process can be completed in two or three stages and includes:

- An external scan that utilizes stakeholder interviews to determine the current challenges and opportunities in the downtown market.
- An internal scan of the strengths and weaknesses of downtown organizations and partners.
- A working paper that summarizes our findings and makes recommendations for both downtown and the downtown management organization.
- A board of directors retreat to gain consensus on the recommendations and any organizational adjustments for moving forward.

For more information on Downtown Strategic Planning Updates, contact Brad at 303-628-5554 or pumaman@ix.netcom.com.

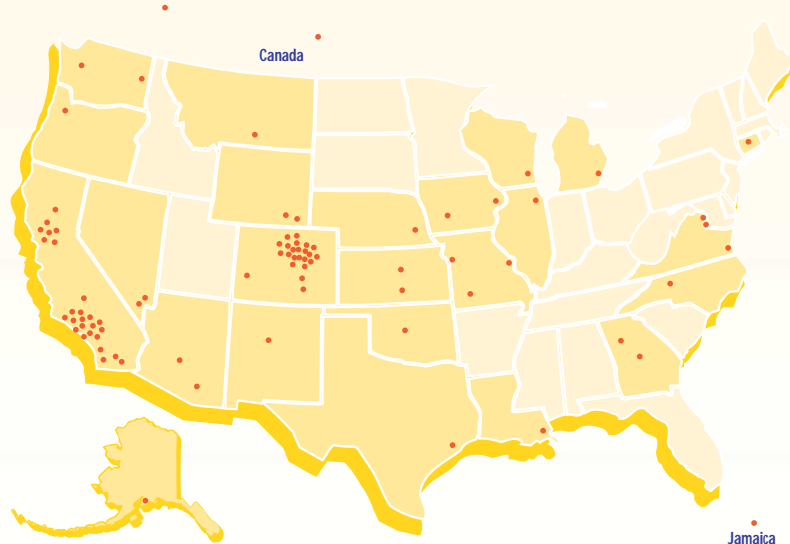
Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.) is a consulting firm providing management, marketing and financial services to advance downtown and community development. The firm has provided services to more than 120 clients in 24 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and Jamaica. Clients include downtown management organizations, local governments, community development corporations and private firms.

ABOUT P.U.M.A.

Specialties include:

- Market-based planning for downtowns, business districts and communities
- Business planning and retreats for civic organizations involved in downtown and community development
- Market research and project feasibility analysis
- Forming, expanding or renewing business improvement districts

Client Communities:



PROGRESSIVE URBAN
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES



P.U.M.A.

1616 SEVENTEENTH STREET, # 262
DENVER, COLORADO 80202
TELEPHONE: 303/628-5554
FAX: 303/628-5557
www.pumaworldhq.com