



FRIENDS OF LITTLE SAIGON INITIATIVE

ABOUT

The "Friends of Little Saigon" initiative, led by WalkDenver and the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative, is focused on community beautification and stewardship of the pedestrian environment along Federal Boulevard between Alameda and Mississippi in Southwest Denver. This area is formally designated as the "Little Saigon Business District."

As part of this initiative, we are working with community members to identify community-desired placemaking enhancements in the district that support the dignity and enjoyment of people walking and accessing transit along Federal. This may include elements such as sidewalk or intersection murals, street furniture, decorative lighting, planters, bus stop amenities, wayfinding, art installations, etc. We canvassed the corridor with a survey asking for feedback on what is most desired when commuting, shopping or working in the area.

Drawing upon community input, we implemented two short-term demonstration projects focused along the corridor, which used low-cost materials to test out designs that could be installed more permanently in the future. We also hosted community events that invited people to interact with the demonstration projects while celebrating the local multicultural flair of the corridor.



WHAT WE HEARD....

"WOULD LOVE THE AREA TO BE A PLACE TO GO INSTEAD OF A PLACE TO DRIVE THROUGH."

"WE LOVE S FEDERAL – PLEASE INVEST MORE RESOURCES TO HELP IT GROW!"





PLACEMAKING SURVEY RESULTS

A survey of 489 local business and property owners, residents, and visitors in the Little Saigon District found that pedestrian lighting, trees and greenery, and art are top desired improvements on the corridor. In conversations with the community, we also heard a desire for safe community events highlighting the cultural diversity and ethnicity of the corridor, as well as concerns about preventing gentrification and displacement as improvements are made to the corridor. Surveys collected at community events demonstrating these types of improvements (see next page) reaffirmed strong support for making Federal Boulevard a safer, more walkable, multicultural destination.

WOULD YOU BE MORE LIKELY TO VISIT S FEDERAL BOULEVARD IF ...

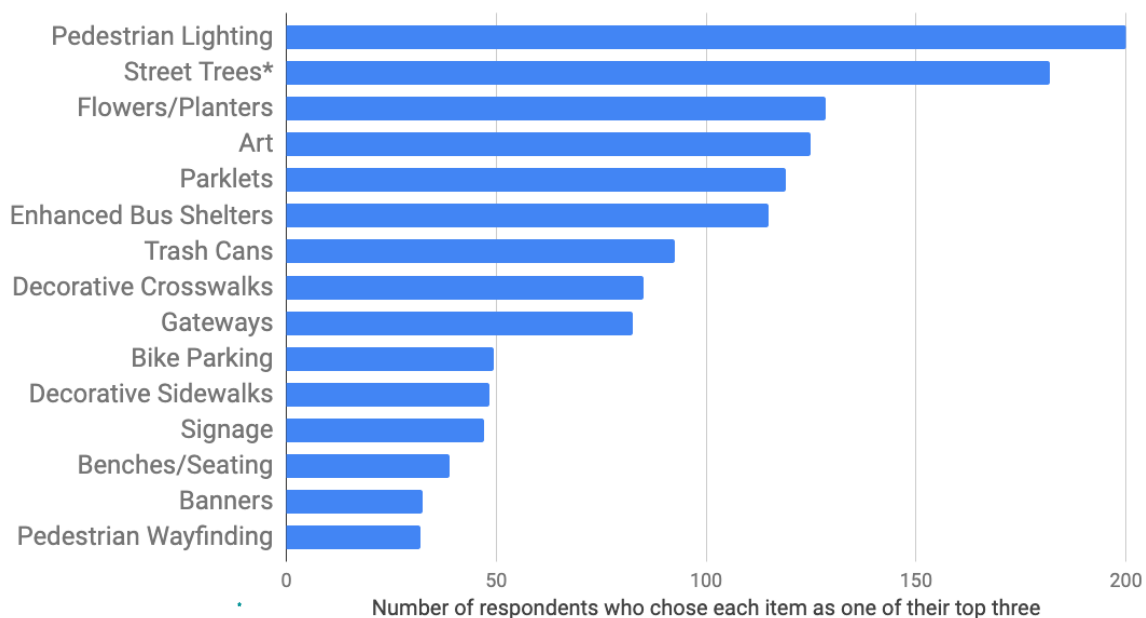
... IT WAS SAFER AND MORE COMFORTABLE TO WALK?

83% SAID YES

... THERE WERE MORE CULTURAL EVENTS?

98% SAID YES

Placemaking improvements that people would most like to see on South Federal



Note: Some versions of the survey did not include "Street Trees" as an option. The survey was available in Vietnamese, Spanish and English.



2019 LITTLE SAIGON CULTURAL EVENTS

The Friends of Little Saigon hosted the first ever Little Saigon Night Market on June 21. For the event, the parking lot of the Asia Center on S Federal and Mississippi was repurposed into a multicultural marketplace and public plaza complete with an artistic pedestrian walkway, trees, plants, lighting and public seating. A colorful koi fish mural was also installed at a nearby bus stop. An estimated 500 people attended despite cold, rainy weather.

Business owners requested a second event on the corridor, so the Friends of Little Saigon hosted the Mid-Autumn Festival on September 13. The event drew an estimated 5,000 people to the Far East Center at S Federal and Alameda Ave, where the parking lot was once again repurposed into a marketplace and plaza and a vibrant mural was added to a large, blank wall.

The success of both these events demonstrated the economic benefits that come with creating a more walkable and welcoming environment, and made it clear there is an appetite in metro Denver for culturally-focused districts and events.





THE FUTURE OF THE FRIENDS OF LITTLE SAIGON INITIATIVE

The Friends of Little Saigon partners are currently working with business owners to explore establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) in the area. BIDs are formed to promote the continued vitality of commercial business areas, as well as the health, safety, prosperity, security, and general welfare of the community. Across the US, Vietnamese-American communities have come together to create Little Saigon districts to celebrate Vietnamese culture, history, and businesses. The Federal Boulevard corridor has the potential to be the next great Little Saigon.

As part of this effort, we are continuing our collaboration with the business community, including discussing their concerns regarding the impact of higher taxes and the need to build trust in local government. Ultimately, many businesses and property owners believe in the benefits of a BID will outweigh their concerns. The BID would not only allow local property owners a greater role in guiding improvements along the corridor but would provide a unified, collective voice for the community and boost the economic vitality of the area.



The Friends of Little Saigon initiative is made possible by generous grants from the Colorado Health Foundation and Partners for Places. For more information on the initiative visit walkdenver.org/littlesaigon or email Cindy Ambts at cindy.ambts@walkdenver.org.

