

FROM SHOPPING CENTER TO CITYCENTER

CityCenter in Englewood, Colorado, may provide insights for inner-ring suburban areas in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. Located just south of Denver, Englewood's light rail transit (LRT) station opened in 2000 near a large shopping mall that was demolished in 1998 to make way for redevelopment. The 55-acre site represented an opportunity to turn the area into a more connected, walkable, and mixed-use district. To help catalyze development, the City created a new Civic Center and public plaza adjacent to the LRT station. The Civic Center includes City offices, a public library, and an arts organization.



CityCenter Englewood. Looking west toward Englewood Station in the distance with Englewood Civic Center to the left. (Photo courtesy City of Englewood.)

Initial redevelopment in the early 2000s had modest outcomes in terms of its transit orientation. At that time, the market for higher density and mixed-use projects was weaker than today. In addition to seeking tax base to increase tax revenue, the City responded to strong community support for replacing retail uses. Many retail uses primarily occupied single-story buildings with large amounts of surface parking. More recently, however, market conditions strengthened. The City is undertaking new planning efforts around higher-density TOD.

TOD: CHAPTER ONE

The *Cinderella City Mall* was among the largest retail centers in the area, and its closing in 1997 triggered redevelopment efforts. The City oversaw environmental cleanup of the site and created a nonprofit corporation to oversee redevelopment. The City invested \$22 million for site preparation, new streets, and the public plaza/park. Development currently includes 438 multifamily dwelling units, 300,000 square feet of retail, and 150,000 square feet of office space.

The City accommodated new lower-density retail, but they took actions to ensure that site plans would not preclude future TOD. The City sold 12 acres for a new Walmart store, but they maintained a right to repurchase the property if it were ever sold. They also gained an easement through the parking lot to maintain connectivity along Englewood Parkway. For retail sites south of Englewood Parkway, the City maintained long-term control through a ground lease.

FAST FACTS

TRANSIT

C/D LRT Englewood Station
Regional and local bus service

Free Art Shuttle
910-space park-n-ride

AREA DEVELOPMENT

55-acre redevelopment
438 multifamily housing units
300,000 sq. ft. retail
150,000 sq. ft. commercial

DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

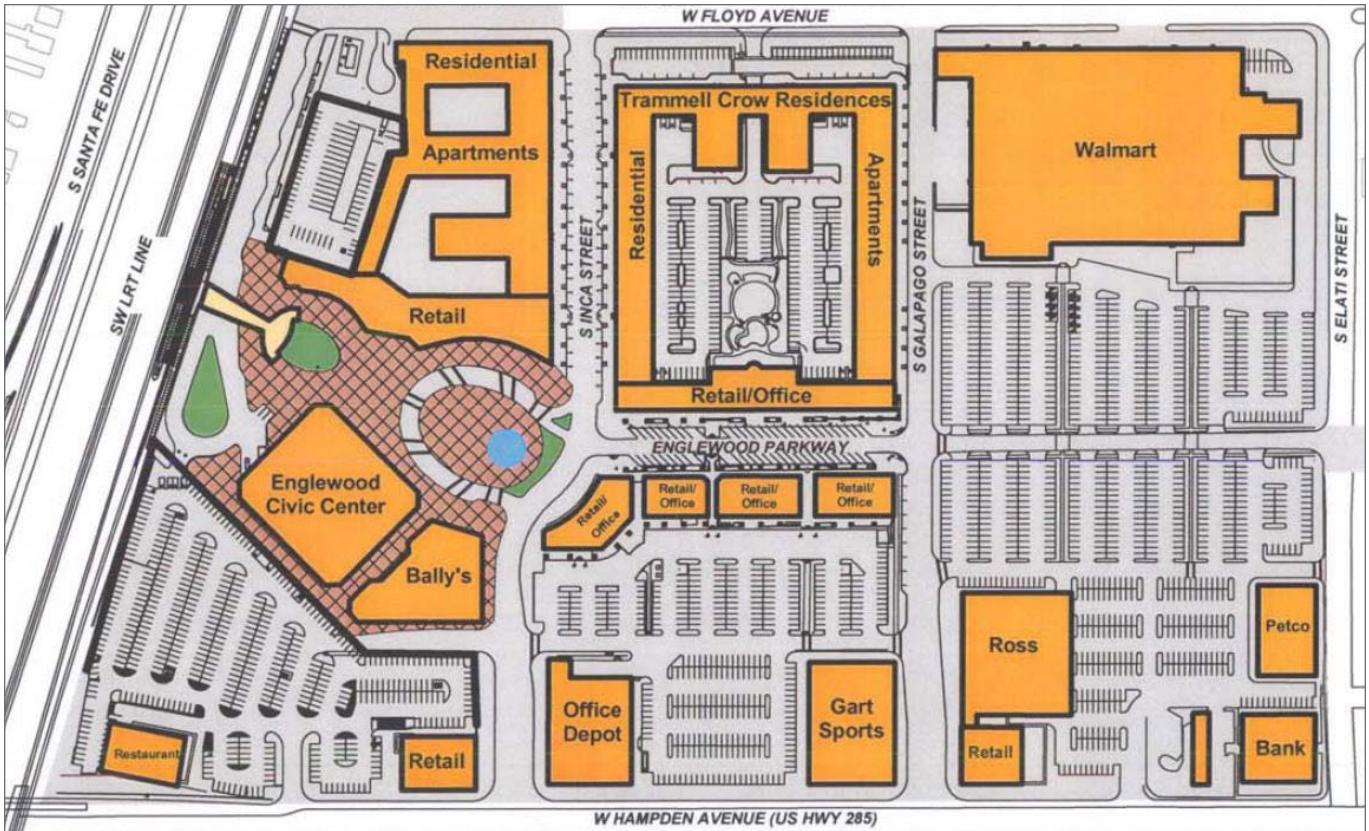
ArtWalk Apartments
Civic Center
Walmart

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

\$22 million City funding

TIMELINE

1968	Cinderella City opens
1997	Cinderella City closes
2000	Englewood Station opens
2000	City administrative offices move to Civic Center
2017	City adopts 2016 comprehensive plan



Englewood CityCenter. The 2002 site plan for the district included some TOD characteristics, but also accommodated big-box retail and significant amounts of parking. An easement through the Walmart parking lot maintains connectivity. (Image courtesy City of Englewood.)

TOD: CHAPTER TWO

The City of Englewood is now exploring opportunities for redevelopment of the lower-density retail uses in *CityCenter*. The market has improved for higher density, walkable, and transit-oriented development. At the same time, the original developer (Weingarten Realty) of the retail area south of Englewood Parkway went into foreclosure. Over 200,000 square feet of space on three blocks will be for sale. Because the City holds the ground lease, they expect to be involved in redevelopment, possibly through some kind of public-private partnership.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The City undertook a number of efforts to help catalyze further change, including the 2015 *Next Steps Study* and the 2016 update of the City's Comprehensive Plan, *Englewood Forward*. Objectives include better multi-modal access, streetscape improvements to Englewood Parkway, bicycle facilities on Floyd Avenue, infill development with minimum densities, and possible daylighting of Little Dry Creek.



Click on the image for a Google Maps view of the area. City-controlled parcels shown in blue, and parcels formerly controlled by original retail developer shown in red.

In 2016, *CityCenter* was part of an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) that evaluated a larger 128-acre area. The report addressed shortcomings of the original redevelopment and considered opportunities to improve connections to the east with South Broadway Street (with a storefront character) and the nearby Medical District (an employment base). The study also recommended reconstructing Englewood Parkway between the Civic Center and South Broadway Street to create a more pedestrian-friendly connection and encourage infill development.

Because of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, *CityCenter* is now part of a larger designated Opportunity Zone. Consequently, the City is seeing a lot of interest building in the area.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Although the City of Englewood laid the groundwork for future TOD, they still face challenges despite better market conditions. Walmart holds an easement to maintain clear sightlines from Hampden Avenue, the major arterial roadway to the south. This complicates redevelopment of parcels immediately south between Englewood Parkway and Hampden Avenue. The City is exploring alternatives, including encouraging redevelopment of a portion of the Walmart parking lot and/or consolidating the area's surface parking into a structure.

The Civic Center was created by renovating a building that had housed a Foley's Department Store. The City is finding it costly to maintain a presence in the Civic Center because it has more space than it needs. It may relocate its offices elsewhere in *CityCenter* and make room in the Civic Center for other tenants that would contribute to the area's vitality.

To help implement its long-term plans for redevelopment, the City hired a redevelopment manager in 2018. The City is exploring the use of a tool used by the Denver Regional Transit District, an [Unsolicited Proposals Policy](#). The policy provides a less time-consuming and costly alternative to a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The need to renegotiate and extend long-term ground leases in much of the area gives the City additional control on redevelopment outcomes.

HOW DOES THIS PLANNING SUPPORT TOD?

Connect: The City took the long view for redevelopment despite less than ideal redevelopment conditions. The City extended streets and maintained a public easement for connectivity.

Intensify: In its second phase of TOD planning, the City is considering possibilities for structured parking, smaller-scale retail, and minimum density regulations that are now better aligned with market conditions.

Demonstrate: The City's investments and strategies nearly 20 years ago demonstrated a commitment to TOD principles. These efforts laid the groundwork for new opportunities for TOD today.

LEARN MORE

[CityCenter Englewood Project Overview](#)
[ULI Colorado Englewood TAP Report](#)
[Englewood Forward \(comprehensive plan\)](#)
[Other City plans and studies](#)
[City of Englewood Community Profile](#)

City Contact

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Looking west from South Broadway Street toward the lower-density retail uses in *CityCenter*. Under construction are the Broadway Lofts (right, foreground) and Acoma Lofts (left, middle ground), 111 units of affordable housing. Potential daylighting of Little Dry Creek could occur in the area currently occupied by the large amount of surface parking.

FEEDBACK

Did you find this information useful? Do you have questions or suggestions for improvement? Contact us at TODGuide@metc.state.mn.us

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