

**Civitas/Parsons Brinckerhoff Selected for Denver National Western Center Master Plan**  
*Gateway project will create cultural destination for exchange of ideas, art and science*



A rich Western cultural history and industrial and environmental site challenges will factor into the master plan for the new National Western Center.

Denver, Colorado – April 28, 2014 – Denver-based urban design studio and strategic consultancy Civitas Inc. will play a key role in envisioning an active year-round future for Denver’s new National Western Center development, announced Civitas founding principal Mark Johnson. Civitas is part of the multi-disciplinary team led by Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc. selected by the City and County of Denver to create a coherent master plan that embraces the site’s deeply authentic Western heritage while reconnecting with historically disenfranchised northwestern neighborhoods and the area’s South Platte River environment.

Cultural and scientific institutions partnering in the new district include the City and County of Denver, National Western Stock Show, Colorado State University, History Colorado and the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. For Johnson, a starting point involves examining the 100-year trajectories of these partnering institutions to determine a future for the site that is “aligned with the organic direction of all five institutions, plus the neighborhoods.”

While finding ways to create significance for the new district on a local, regional, national and even global level is crucial, Johnson, whose responsibilities include serving as site planning lead for the National Western Center development, explains that the process

takes place simultaneously on two tracks. “We are looking at how we create synergies and find intersections that will invite, inform and entertain the public in a vibrant way year-round,” he says. “At the same time we are dealing with all of the very complex physical issues of where does it go and how.”

The site’s numerous challenges include reconnecting in a positive and healthy way with the northwestern communities of Elyria, Swansea and Globeville, as well as dealing with logistical and environmental challenges raised by the area’s more than a century-long industrial history that ranges from mining and smelters to stockyards and packing houses, all crisscrossed by five different rail lines.

The immense scale of the project and multiple moving parts are what ultimately intrigued Johnson. “I’ve worked for 18 years in the Platte Valley and 26 years with Stapleton in ways that have transformed and benefitted Denver, and the love of that work has sent me around the globe for similarly transformative urban design projects. This is the first opportunity to come along in recent years that promises to create that level of benefit here at home.”

With a core purpose of “creating healthier cities,” Civitas is an idea-based practice of urban designers, architects and landscape architects engaged in strategic planning for urban change and project design for built works. A consultancy and a design studio, Civitas advises on a wide range of strategies for re-imagining urban life and places. For more information, visit Civitas online at [www.civitasinc.com](http://www.civitasinc.com).

Media contacts: ilana Fowler, Civitas, Inc., [marketing@civitasinc.com](mailto:marketing@civitasinc.com), 303.571.0053; Darla Worden, WordenGroup Public Relations, [darla@wordenpr.com](mailto:darla@wordenpr.com), 307.777.7667

###