

Civitas Wins International Making Cities Livable Award for Belmar Town Center
Colorado project lauded as “Healthy 10-minute neighborhood” for design and walkability



The Civitas-designed 100-acre Belmar Town Center in Lakewood, Colo., which includes the central piazza shown above, won an Honor Award for Excellence from International Making Cities Livable (photo courtesy of Civitas).

Denver, Colorado – June 19, 2018 – Denver urban design and landscape architecture firm [Civitas](#) has won an Honor Award for Excellence for its Belmar Town Center design in Lakewood, Colorado, from the recent 55th International Making Cities Livable (IMCL) Conference in Ottawa. The award acknowledges Civitas’ role in transforming the derelict Villa Italia suburban mall into the lively Belmar as a preeminent example of creating a “Healthy 10-minute Neighborhood” – the spring IMCL conference theme that refers to a neighborhood in which everyday trips such as to school, shops, services, work, recreation and public transit can be made by foot or bike within 10 minutes.

“A significant aspect of Belmar’s success is the quality of the public realm designed by Civitas,” [wrote the IMCL awards jury](#) in its statement about the project. “The attractiveness and walkability of the street grid combined with a park and eco-friendly street designs encourage active mobility. The lively, beautiful, and completely traffic-free plaza at the heart of the new center gives Belmar a gathering place and locus for growth of a new place-based community.”

Civitas principal Scott Jordan gave International Making Cities Livable event attendees deeper insight into the firm’s [Belmar design](#) as well as two more of the firm’s Denver projects – the Central Platte Valley and Stapleton. In his conference session titled

“Reclaiming Community – the River, the Shopping Mall and the Airport,” Jordan shared the design process and resulting outcomes for the metamorphosis of the three neglected sites into thriving “10-minute” communities.



L to R: River, Shopping Mall and Airport have been transformed into Central Platte Valley redevelopment, Belmar Town Center and the Stapleton community and parks system (photos courtesy of Civitas).

In each example, the Civitas design addresses Denver’s ever-expanding population base while providing high quality of life in increasingly dense neighborhoods with a focus around transit, enhanced pedestrian experiences and a robust parks system. For the River discussion, Jordan shared Civitas strategies around revitalizing the blighted Central Platte Valley in Denver into an engaged extension of the downtown core by linking recreational amenities directly to the city. For the Airport topic, he highlighted the firm’s role in reimagining the 4,200-acre site of the former Stapleton International Airport to create the beloved Denver community that, with its interconnected park systems and mixed-use town centers, has gained recognition worldwide for regeneration of urban brownfields.

Jordan also shared Civitas’ collaborative role with Elkus Manfredi Architects and Denver-based developer Continuum Partners in the transformation of a dying midcentury shopping mall into the Belmar Town Center in Lakewood for which they received the IMCL conference honor award. Organized around a large public “piazza” that celebrates civic and social activities essential to urban life and surrounded by a mix of uses, Belmar has become its community’s cultural heart. The 100-acre site now boasts a vibrant grid of 22 new city blocks designed to encourage pedestrian traffic, promote community building and emphasize the importance of public spaces.

The redevelopment provided an urban downtown for the Denver suburb of Lakewood, which previously had none. “The community now has a true center that continues to grow organically as a city should, based upon the framework that we put in place,” explains Civitas principal Craig Vickers, Lead Designer for Belmar Town Center. Of the recent award, Vickers says, “It’s an honor and truly satisfying to be acknowledged along with our design and development partners for the achievement of creating a place where everything is within a 10-minute walk and where people can put down roots and be proud of where they live.”



Created on the site of a defunct shopping mall, Belmar Town Center is now the year-round cultural heart of its Lakewood, Colo., community (photos courtesy of Civitas).

A national model for sustainable, smart growth projects, the Belmar Town Center has been receiving accolades since its inception, including recognition in the 2009 Publishers Award-winning book *Retrofitting Suburbia*. Civitas' work in Stapleton, begun decades ago, also continues with the construction of the [North Stapleton Open Space Plan](#), which won an ASLA Colorado Merit Award. When completed, the 470-acre plan, encompassing connecting parks, greenways and open space north of I-70, will introduce the most expansive native prairie grass landscape system within the Denver Parks network. And Civitas has a new "Healthy 10-minute Neighborhood" in the works with recently announced plans to create a lakefront town center for the Denver suburb of Broomfield.

Founded in 1984 with the core purpose of "creating healthier cities," Denver-based Civitas, Inc., 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. Recent honors received include both the 2017 International Architecture Award and 2018 American Architecture Award from the Chicago Athenaeum/European Centre; the Canadian Institute of Planners "Great Public Space"; a 2017 IMCL Merit Award; and an Excellence on the Waterfront Award from the nonprofit Waterfront Center. A consultancy and a design studio, Civitas advises on a wide range of strategies for re-imagining urban life and places, working in U.S. cities coast to coast and around the world. For additional information visit civitasinc.com.

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