

Old Colorado City Redevelopment (1)

Category: Old Colorado City Redevelopment - (1976-1985)

Published: Sunday, 30 October 2011 17:04

Written by dave

Hits: 6876

My Role in the Redevelopment of Old Colorado City 1975-1990



BEFORE West Colo Ave 1975, 50 of 100 Bldgs Empty

AFTER Same scene by 1985
Redeveloped 75%

The story of why and how the blighted, run down (by 1975) Westside of Colorado Springs got successfully redeveloped - both its core business district and its surrounding 8,000 home residential area - is a long one. Because I have been credited for leading the effort as an unpaid civic volunteer the last 36 years, I was asked in 2007 by the Board of the Old Colorado City Historical Society to write a piece for its West Word newsletter about the story. OCCHS itself is an organization I helped found in 1976 after it was clear that the Pioneer's Museum was not interested in the unique - and separate - 1859-1917 history of the original Colorado City, nor its cowboy frontier, then blue collar, railroad, gold mills, working man's 'Westside' of Colorado Springs 1917-1976.

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But the redevelopment of 'Old Colorado City' - with 50 of 100 small commercial buildings between 24th and 28th streets West Colorado Avenue totally empty - required a complex series of initiatives besides my intention to drive the process toward what the area - declared by City Council to be an area of Slum and Blight - that could be redeveloped entirely differently from the downtown Colorado Springs fixation on trying - and largely failing - to land just a few large companies and new buildings. Those initiatives required would be (1) making affordable loans available to compatible small would-be businesses, (2) historical renovation of at least the exterior fronts of the stock of 1890s architecture buildings, (3) streetscape public improvements, (4) selective public use of Federal Block grant, SBA guaranteed business loans, and EDA funds, (5) enhance off street parking, (6) achieve national historic district status, (7) recreate an active small business association, (8) found a new Old Colorado City Historical Society (9) develop public and people space for non-commercial activities, (10) vigerously promote the area with parades, fairs, and entertaining events centered on Bancroft Park, and (11) on the authentic and unique history of the pre-1917 original Colorado City area, and later the gold mill, railroad westside side of Colorado Springs. In short, to turn a municipal sow's ear into a silk purse.

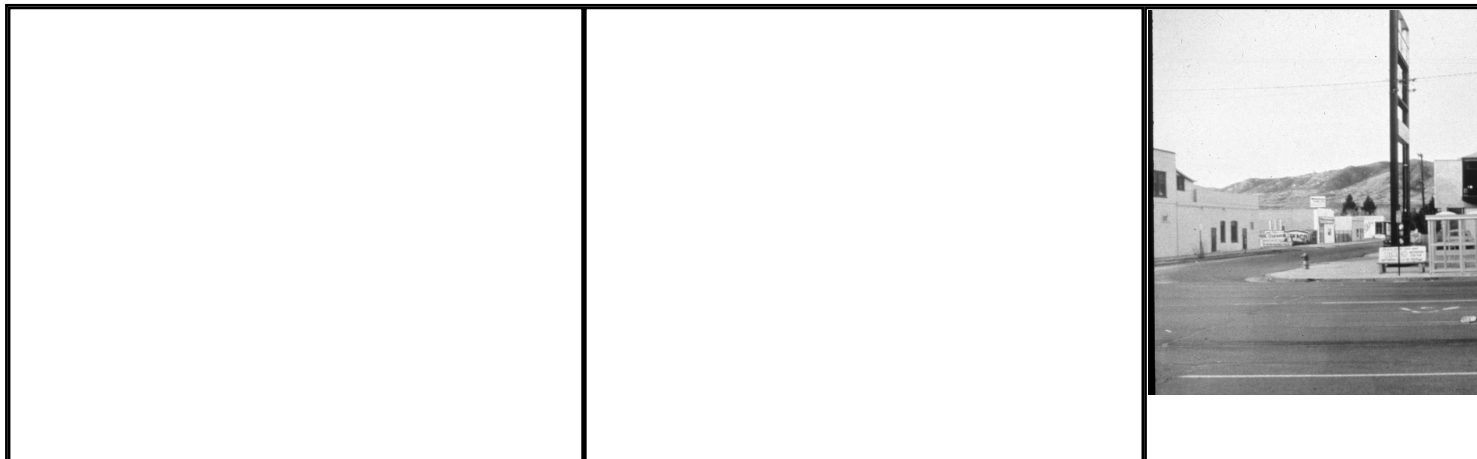
I carried out that role as the Chairman of the Pikes Peak or Bust by '76 Centennial Chairman, volunteer and 1 year paid Director of the West Colorado Springs Commercial Club, member of the Old Colorado City Development Company, Territory Days organizers, founder of Old Colorado City Historical Society and Board member, small business owner, nearby homeover after 1977, a founder of Organization of Westside Neighbors (OWN) and general gadfly from 1975 to 2011.

I have attached here as a PDF file that January, 2007 West Word issue, with several illustrations. Reading that will give you the sequential story of the redevelopment from 1975 up to 2007 and my role in it.

Click on ["OUR PAST - OUR PRESENT"](#) story.

After you read the above I here below illustrate many of the changes with photographs.'

How Bad Old Town Was by 1975



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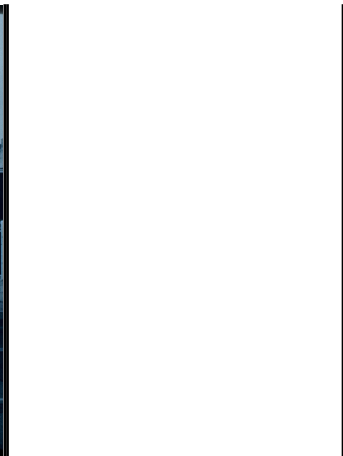
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2902 West Colorado Ave



South Side 2600 Block



Failed Shopping Center



Abandoned Motel after Colorado Avenue ceased being US 24 West.



One of 50 (out of 100) Empty Retail Store Spaces



Aged and exposed Utility crumbling city infrastructure



Slum area Businesses, even small time gambling in the 'Domino's' space



Largely empty Templeton Block at 2502 West Colorado Before Renovation



Bailey's Automotive in P Space where racing Un members worked in the

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Lobbying, Planning, Deciding



Gene Brent, Business Owner, Mayor Isaac, Councilpersons



City Staffers - Ringe, Patoni, Contractors, Architects jawbone



Old Colo City Development Company Board - Bill Henderson, Park Jackson, Don Bates, Gene Brent - while Wes Colbrunn whom I recruited was managing director.



West Com Norm direct

Groundbreaking, Heavy and Steady Work



Everybody Gets into the Act in front of the new City offices



Street Changes in front of Brent's Gun Store



Decorative three block Town'

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Showing First Results by 1979



Street Scapes and Grassy Medians with free, (no meters) but controlled parking in back paid for by EDA economic development funds.



Facade design by Elizabeth Wright Ingram. (Descendant of Frank Lloyd) 2d Floor became small 'Loft Theater' space.



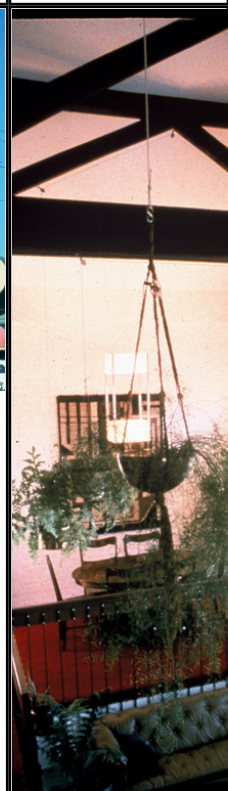
Original Wayco Meadow Muffin offices, and top



Arati Artists - the First of many art galleries and 'starvin artists' who located in 'Old Town.' Next to it, one of unique, filled in narrow, long, shops. Originally -1880s - 'Horse Alleys.'



First Business Condos sold in all Colorado Springs, under decorative Clock Tower



2d Story Loft H Colorado City T

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2902 W Colo Ave totally Remodled - was original first - 1860 - City Hall



Christmas Lighting appeared on shops first Christmas -1977



Simpich Chara sales outlet. Hi popular Art

Watch a 24 minute narrated Video of a variety of activities during the Christmas Season 2005, in Old Colorado City.

Just click here on [Christmas2005inOCC](#)

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Marketing Old Colorado City History



Main Brand Sign. "Old" Colorado City so as not to confuse it with 3 other modern (small) 'Colorado Cites - in Texas, Utah, and Colorado



Alaskan champion gold panner and local Uncle Dick Wooton. Held Colorado State Gold Panning Championships 1976-1980. 'Politicians Pan Off' happened in 1980 an Election Year - Governor Lamm running again participated. The theme was "Unless you can find the gold we aint gonna vote for you to spend it."

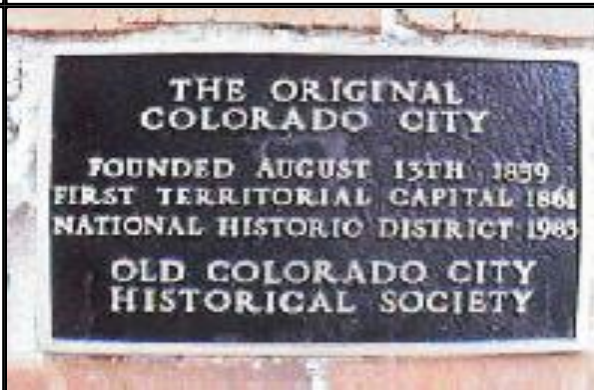


Promoting Colorado the 1859 Garvin Park. Ex Colorado S McCleary, who g away, s

State Legislature many came) to the -'Territory Days' Pa



Publications galore, including weekly insert in Colo Springs Sun - replica of heading of 1861 "Colorado City Journal." I published first modern



I lobbied the skeptical Council for them to apply, which they did, then I flew to Washington DC to follow up - and so Old Colorado City became the first National



Historical Marker buildings and so stan

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history of Old Colorado City in 1977.	Historic District in Colorado Springs - it was actually approved in 1982, not 3. Plaque is in the Horse Alley at 2516 West Colorado Avenue. Gave national recognition - thus promotion - of Old Town.	

Territory Days - An Enduring Tradition

As early as 1976, when it became clear to me that one major way to put "Old Colorado City" on the City-wide map and into the minds of residents would be to create a unique annual festival, which would springboard off the already coming 1976 Colorado Centennial and national Bi-Centennial

And as the favorable westside and city Press reaction to the first small 'Political' parade down Colorado Avenue showed, that a major parade followed by continued events in Bancroft Park, all happening over the three day Memorial Day Weekend, could start something big.

Over the next 38 years, there has been a 'Territory Days' festival that has reached - according to police - up to 145,000 people attending each year. on the peak Memorial Day Saturday. For 10 years it started with a Parade, then became a 5 block long Street Fair, with vendors coming from all over to participate.

To get a see most all of the Territory Day's activities in 2001, the 29 minute Video Tape below will capture it, from music to Gold Panning.many activities.

Just click on [TerritoryDays2001](#)

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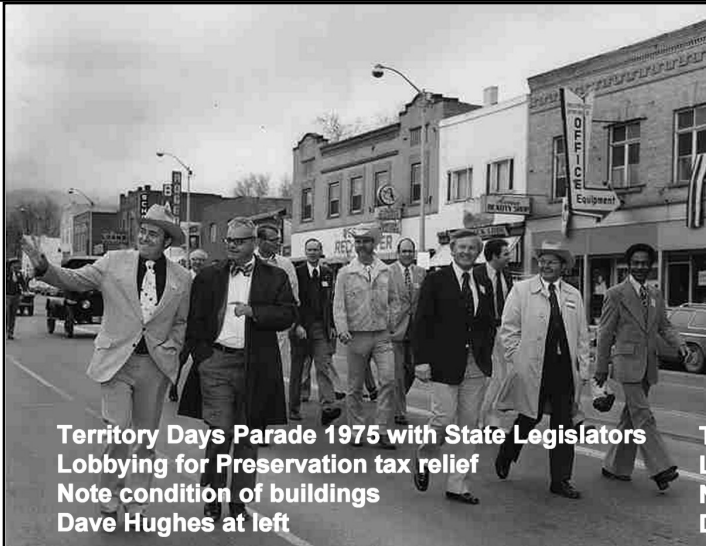
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Parades, Events, Fairs



Territory Days Parade 1975 with State Legislators
Lobbying for Preservation tax relief
Note condition of buildings
Dave Hughes at left

One of the First 'Territory Days' parades 1975. Tax relief passed for improvements of any commercial building in Colorado over 30 years old.



City, County, State VIPs attended first Territory Days Parade and Park event - on national TV. Thayer Tutt in Front Row. I wrote the Melodrama staged. It was performed in part by my 3 kids



Territory Days Memorial Weekend drew 140,000 Colorado C



Parades throughout the County and Pueblo. With our miniature Cabin on a trailer. Uncle Dick Wooten and my daughter Rebecca on it at the rear.



Bancroft Park Events - Entertainment, Dances, Musical, Plays, Fiddlers and other Historical Contests



Education near and in

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Culture, Art, Donations, Community



Indian art appeared in galleries.



Community gathering in Park under new Gazebo.



Widow Vera Chambon donates Tower Clock funds to City through my Pikes or Bust By '76 Centennial non-profit Committee in memory of her husband who owned Surplus City in Old Town.



Plaque at foot of Clock Tower in memory of Claire Chambon who built modernistic Plaza trying to revive business area then lost it in foreclosure. Old Colorado City saved it as small business condominiums with added historic building facade.

Dave Hughes, Vice Mayor Young, Vera Chambon

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Old timer Indian from Nursing Home on Westside. Old Colorado City, while gaining upscale shops was NOT permitted to gentrify and drive out long time westsiders or poorer people. The Westside - continuing a long tradition 'took care of its own.'



Old Town Businessmen discuss property taxes with Wes Colbrun in city meeting space.

Old Co
1889 C
westsid

MEASURE OF PROGRESS

Original Commercial Club (Business Association) Worksheet for the Board as of 1979, only 4 years after start of Redevelopment effort in late 1975. 44 building of the original 50 empty ones sold to owner occupants.

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By 1995 Old Colorado City had achieved every city goal - removal of slum and blight, increase of the tax base, increase jobs. And it was achieving all the Citizen goals - a nice place to live and work, public safety, historic preservation of both 'Main Stree America' and traditional residential neighborhoods. And a good place to raise a family.

To go to the OTHER consequences of the Redevelopment, in particular for the greater Westside of Colorado Springs, click on this URL below or go to (N)ext

OLD COLORADO CITY REDEVELOPMENT (2)

http://davehugheslegacy.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=427:old-colorado-city-redevelopment-2&catid=87&Itemid=210

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