

# ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

## Project Downtown

### City Council Presentation



# OUR TEAM

## In the Room



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# AGENDA

- ① Project Purpose
- ② Why Invest in Place
- ③ Comparative Case Studies
- ④ The Littleton Context
- ⑤ Economic Impact Analysis
- ⑥ Key Takeaways



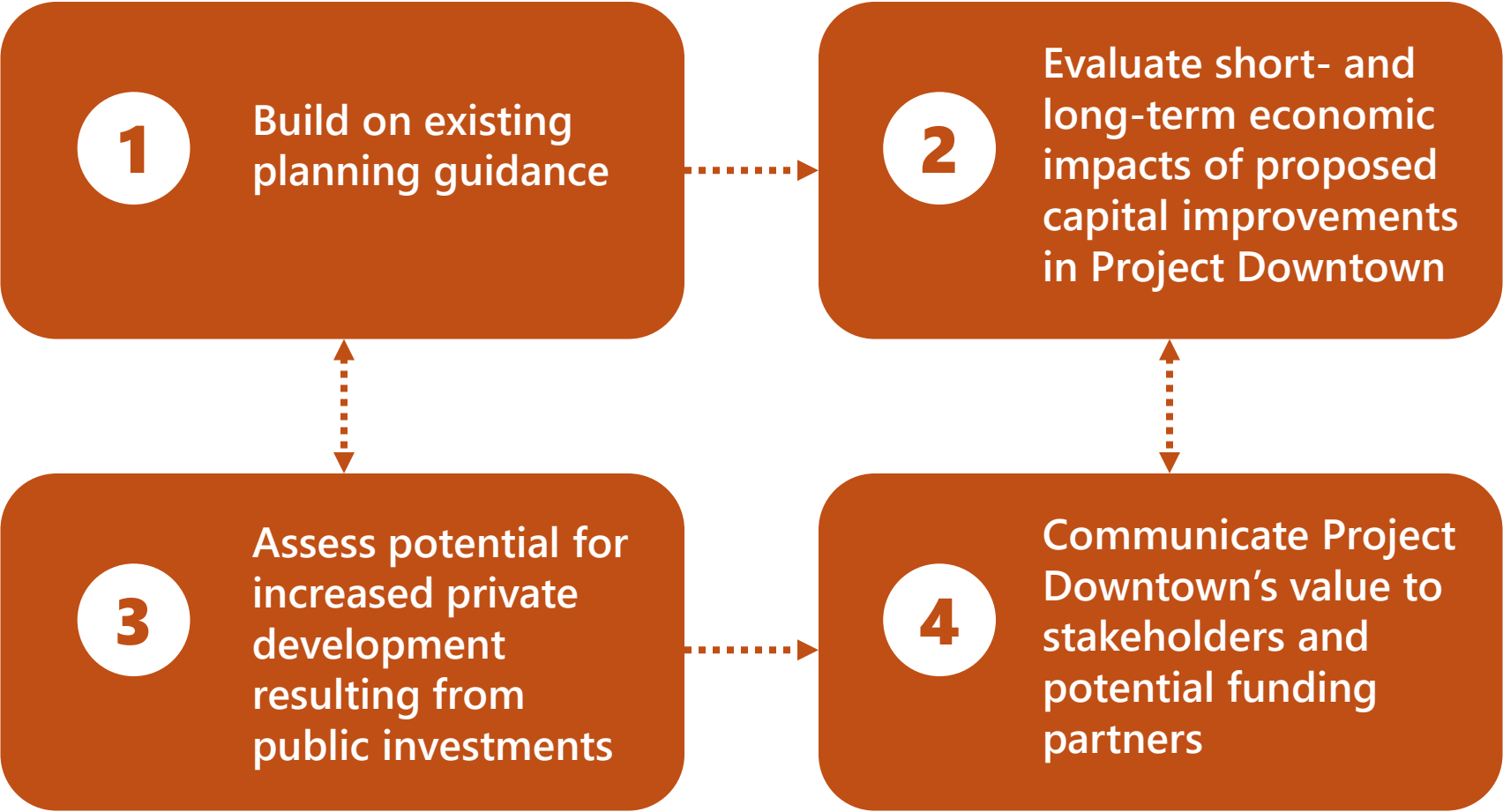
**PROJECT PURPOSE**



# POINT-IN-TIME

## Analysis of Downtown

Economic impact analysis demonstrating how downtown improvements can spur development, business growth, and long-term vitality.





# THE OUTCOME

## Analysis of Downtown

Prioritize investments that deliver the highest public value and sustain long-term community growth.

Identify a public investment strategy that:

1. Delivers the greatest benefit to the community
2. Supports the community's long-term vision
3. Shows where funding can help spark private investment



A diagram on a solid orange background. In the center is a light gray horizontal rectangle with slightly rounded corners. Inside this rectangle, the text "WHY INVEST IN A PLACE?" is written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. Above the rectangle, a thin white vertical line extends from the top edge of the frame, ending in a small white arrowhead pointing down at the top of the rectangle. Below the rectangle, another thin white vertical line extends from the bottom edge of the frame, ending in a small white arrowhead pointing up at the bottom of the rectangle.

**WHY INVEST IN A PLACE?**



# LITTLETON

## A Cutting-Edge Small Town

Highlight Littleton's unique assets: historic charm, vibrant downtown, transit access, and outdoor connectivity.

**Vibrant, historic downtown** with local retail and restaurants



**Strong small business community**



**Multi-modal connections** with walking, biking, and transit options



**Access to outdoor recreation:** parks, greenways, trails, and waterways



**Commitment to arts and culture**



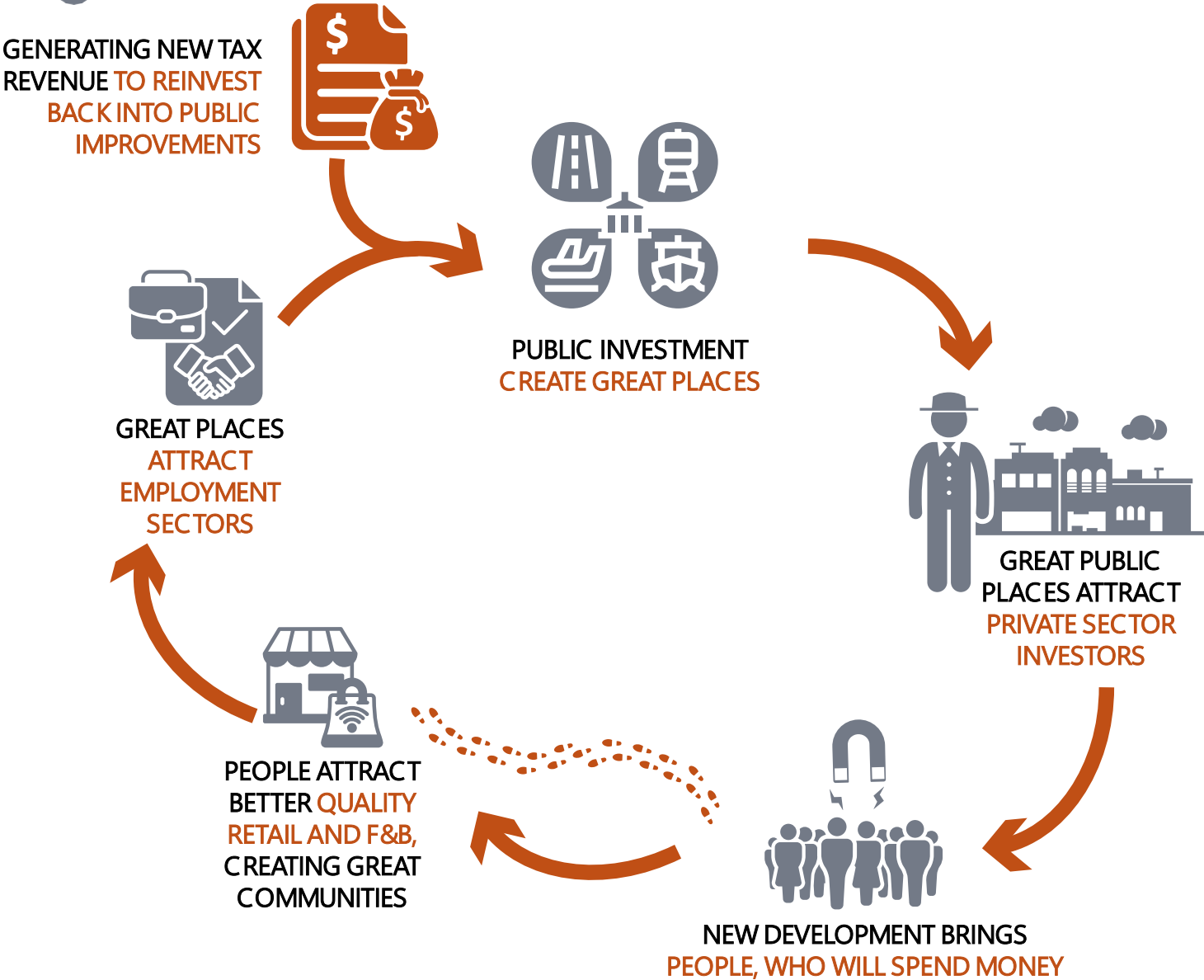
**Small-town feel** with proximity to big-city amenities



# GREAT PLACES

Spark Investment

Public investment sparks growth—reducing risk, attracting private capital, boosting property values, and strengthening cities.





# Smart Public Investment

## Generate Long-Term Returns

Use the right public financing tools to fund high-return, high-impact projects.



### AVAILABLE PUBLIC FUNDING TOOLS

- Certificates of Participation (COPs)
- Capital Sales Tax Dollars (part of the city budget)
- General Obligation Bonds (voter-approved debt for major projects)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) (future growth pays for today's improvements)
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA) revenues
- Other Special Districts: Metropolitan Districts (BIDs), Business Improvement Districts (GIDs), Local Improvement Districts (LIDs)



### Prioritize Investments That Deliver the Greatest Benefit and Return

Projects must strengthen the local economy, increase activity, and grow revenues that help pay the debt.



# GUIDED GROWTH ENHANCES What Makes Littleton Unique

Align growth with  
community priorities  
and values.



## Growth that Honors Littleton

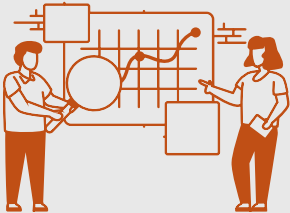
Clear, consistent planning ensures new development strengthens Littleton’s character, reflects community priorities, and supports future investment.



**Historic Downtown**  
Planning helps ensure new development fits Littleton’s scale and character.



**Engaged Community**  
Clear expectations guide private investment toward community priorities.




**Opportunity for Investment**  
Coordinated growth reduces case-by-case conflicts and uncertainty.



**Signature Amenities & Events**  
Proactive policy allows us to strengthen what residents value most.



An aerial night photograph of a town street, likely in Littleton, Colorado. The street is lined with trees wrapped in warm white lights. On the left, a brick building has an outdoor dining area with white tables and umbrellas. On the right, a building is decorated with string lights. The street is illuminated by streetlights, and the background shows a dark mountain range under a twilight sky.

You can manage growth  
carefully to preserve Littleton's  
small-town character.



# COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES



# RiNo ART DISTRICT

Denver

1980'S – 2000'S

A mix of industrial buildings and collection of smaller single family residential on the north end of Downtown.





# RiNo ART DISTRICT

## Denver

### 2005 – Today

Formation of the RiNo Art District in coordination with multiple infrastructure and planning initiatives to generate \$850M in private investment through 2019 and an **estimated \$2B+** of total private development.





# RiNo ART DISTRICT

Denver

Neighborhood Planning  
and Action Plan



## Public/Private Investment



**\$30 MIL**

Brighton Boulevard  
streetscape enhancements



**\$6 MIL**

Pedestrian bridge at 38th  
& Blake



**\$12 MIL**

RiNo Art Park and green  
space along Platte River



**\$250 K**

Two-way street conversion,  
stop signs, and crosswalks



**+\$1 MIL**

RiNo BID annual funding of  
artist stipends, events and  
programming, and advocacy.

## Return on Investment



**HOUSING**

Over 9,000 residential units  
built in the last 20 years



**VISITORS**

RiNo's art programming  
annually generates 1.7 million  
views across social media  
channels; 158,000 visitors to  
RiNo Art District during the  
festivals; 40,000+ square feet  
of new murals; 365 gallons and  
3,500 cans of paint used.



**TAX BASE**

The commercial property tax  
base has grown by nearly 1,400%  
since 2015. The assessed values  
increased from \$50 million in  
2015 to \$744 million in 2024.



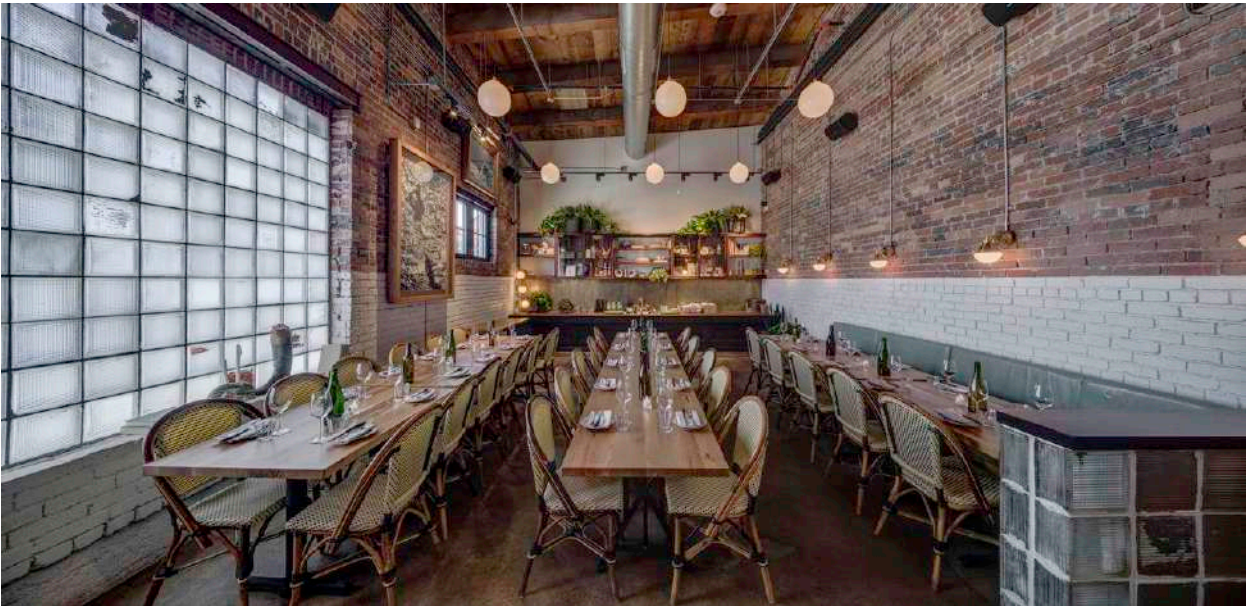
# RiNo ART DISTRICT

## Denver

Adaptive Reuse and Innovative Design

### Creative District Impact

The growth of the Art District inspired the reuse of industrial buildings for new retail stores and restaurants, as well as new buildings with innovative designs and construction types to reflect the creative culture within the neighborhood.





# RiNo ART DISTRICT

Denver

Lessons Learned



## RETURN ON INVESTMENT



**~\$50 MIL**  
OF PUBLIC  
INVESTMENTS

SPURRED

**+\$850 MIL**  
OF PRIVATE  
INVESTMENT

GENERATED

**+1,400%**  
TAX BASE  
INCREASE

INITIATED

**+9,000**  
RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN  
THE LAST 20 YEARS

**from \$50 to \$744M**  
ASSESSED VALUES  
INCREASE



# FESTIVAL PARK

Castle Rock,  
CO

Comparison with  
Littleton's Bega Park.

## Underutilized Public Park

1. Limited shade pushed visitors onto the bike trail, creating safety and circulation issues.
2. No flat event space; activities spilled into an overly wide, heat-radiating street.
3. Retaining walls restricted the park's flexibility beyond small concerts.
4. Creek was inaccessible and invisible; engineering showed need for flow-mitigation structures.
5. Kids sought creek access but vegetation and bike traffic blocked safe entry.





# FESTIVAL PARK

## Castle Rock, CO

To incentivize development around the park, the city allowed for higher density development to capitalize on the park investment.



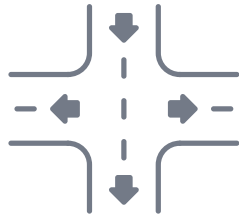
Not only an economic success, but **a community success**, the park became heavily used in all seasons by all age groups.



# "The BLVD" Case Study

Lancaster,  
CA

Comparison with  
Littleton's Main Street.



## 9 BLOCK

MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
Downtown had become an auto-dominated corridor with disinvestment and vacant storefronts.

## \$12 MIL

CITY MADE AN INVESTMENT

To revitalize the core, support local businesses, and create a walkable, mixed-use "main street" tied to the Metrolink station.

- **Road diet:** Reduced from four travel lanes to two, removed several traffic signals.
- **Rambla median:** Installed a tree-lined central median providing flexible space for parking, events, outdoor dining, vendors, art, and lighting.
- **Widened sidewalks:** added street trees, landscaping, and pedestrian-scale lighting.
- **Improved on-street parking:** and crossings to slow traffic and support retail.

BEFORE



AFTER





# "The BLVD" Case Study

Lancaster,  
CA

City investment in streetscape and roadway reconstruction was roughly \$11–11.6 million in 2012.



The BLVD became a regional destination with farmers’ markets, holiday festivals, outdoor dining, and cultural events, significantly improving perceived safety and vibrancy.

**\$125–130 MIL**

LEVERAGED  
PRIVATE  
INVESTMENT

**\$273 MIL**

IN ECONOMIC  
ACTIVITY LINKED  
TO THE PROJECT

**2X TAX**

NEARLY DOUBLED  
TAX REVENUE

**60% CUT**

IN AUTO-RELATED  
ACCIDENTS

**+1,900**

NEW JOBS

**OVER 40**

NEW BUSINESS



A diagram on a solid orange background. In the center is a light gray horizontal rectangle with slightly rounded corners. The text "THE LITTLETON CONTEXT" is written in orange, uppercase letters inside this rectangle. A thin white vertical line with a downward-pointing arrowhead at the top extends from the top edge of the rectangle. Another thin white vertical line with an upward-pointing arrowhead at the bottom extends from the bottom edge of the rectangle.

# THE LITTLETON CONTEXT



# BUILDING ECONOMIC IMPACT

As  
Recommended  
per Littleton's  
Existing Plans

1. Identify which proposed projects will have the **largest impact**
2. Group projects into cohesive frameworks
3. Target **public investment** to highest impact projects





...and more



## INVESTMENT SCENARIOS

How different investment levels can shape Littleton's downtown future.

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT OUTCOMES

How different investment levels generate **new jobs** and increase revenue through **sales, employment, and taxes**.



#### THREE SCENARIOS TO REVIEW

1. **Ad hoc Investment** – reactive, emergency maintenance as needed, with minimal catalytic potential
2. **Medium Investment** – approved improvements that spur opportunities along Main Street
3. **Maximum Investment** – Project Downtown improvements that unlock greatest potential for investment and growth across downtown

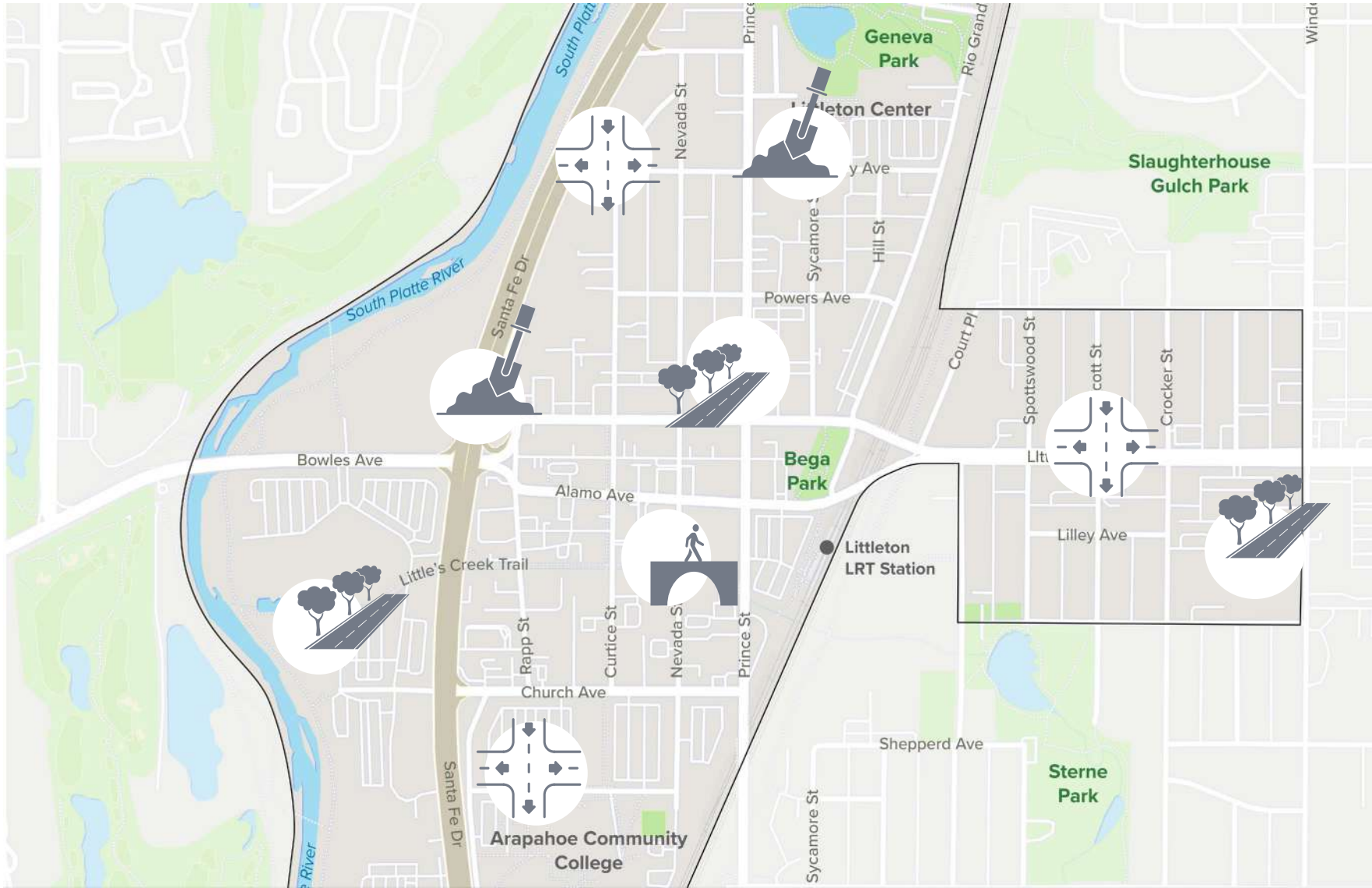


# INVESTMENT SCENARIOS

Ad hoc Investment Option.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS:

- 1. Ad hoc maintenance
- 2. Emergency repairs



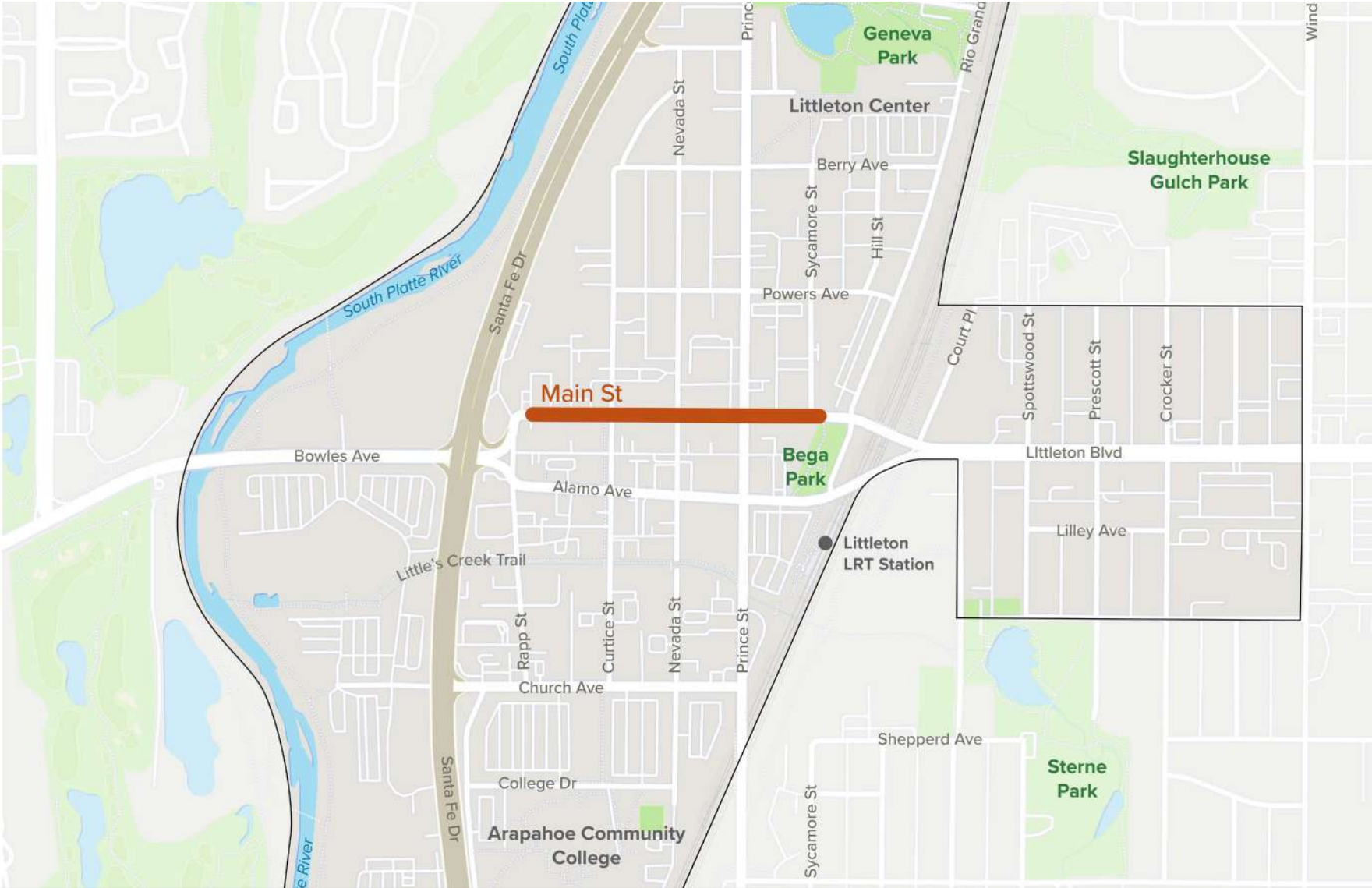


# INVESTMENT SCENARIOS

Medium Investment Option.

**PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS:**

- 1. Main Street





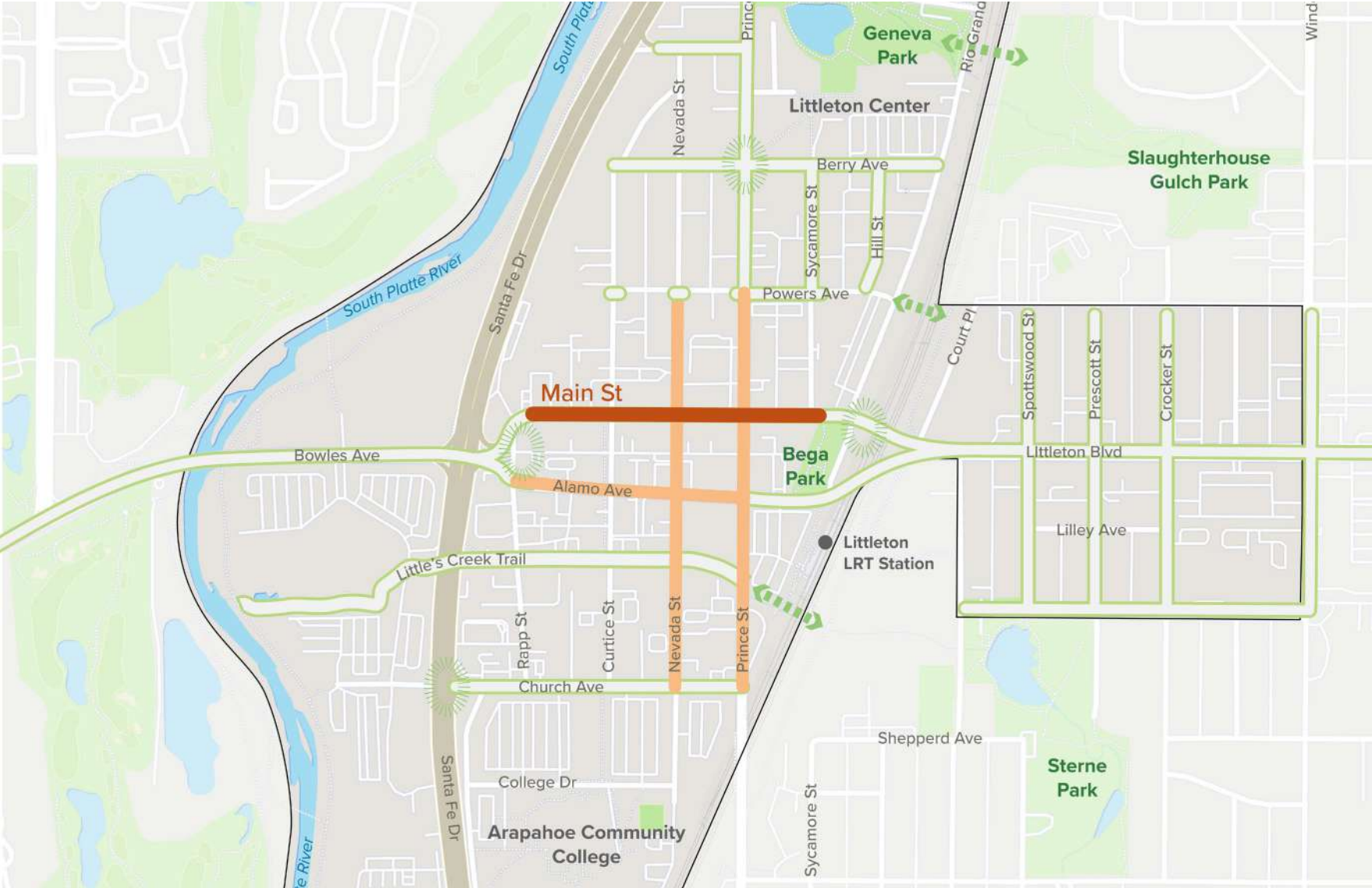
# INVESTMENT SCENARIOS

Maximum Investment Option.

**PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS:**

- 1. Main Street
- 2. Prince Street
- 3. Alamo Street
- 4. Nevada Street

Others happen over time





# STRATEGIC GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Growth that  
Supports and  
Respects  
Downtown  
Scale



## REDEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- 1. Add vitality to the downtown, without overshadowing it
- 2. Bring density to the edges, to support local community
- 3. Connect it all through targeted public improvement projects



Medium  
Scenario

Office/Commercial: 121,000 SF  
Retail: 25,000 SF  
Multi Family: 476,000 SF or 529 UNITS  
Parking: 220,000 SF  
Total: 840,000 SF



Maximum  
Scenario

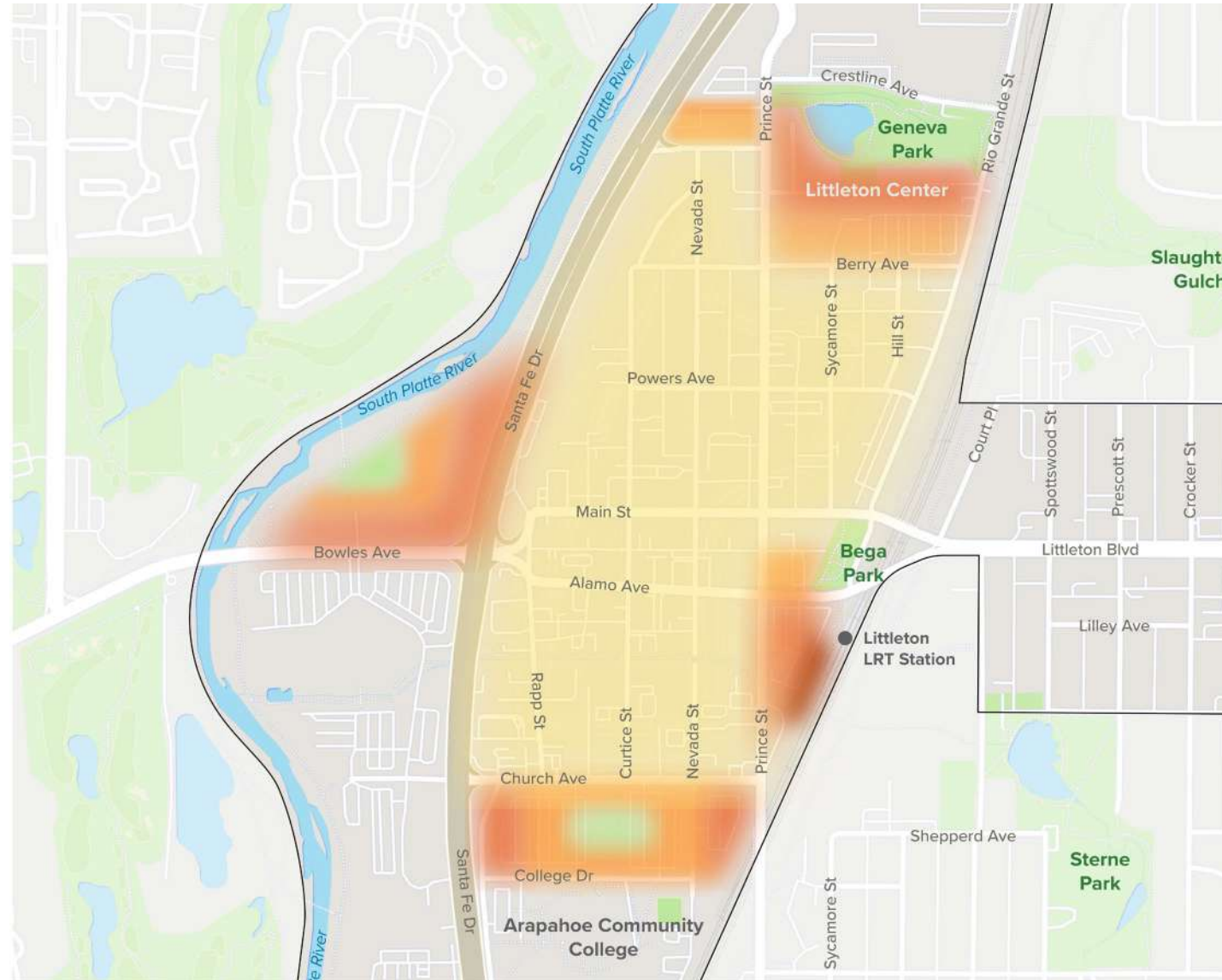
Office/Commercial: 550,000 SF  
Retail: 125,000 SF  
Multi Family: 2,500,000 SF or 2,800 UNITS  
Hotel: 60,000 SF or 130 Rooms  
Parking: 547,000 SF  
Total: 3,800,000 SF



# Assumptions

## Guiding Future Development

- New buildings in the historic core match existing building height
- New buildings that are denser than existing:
  - are at the edges
  - use setbacks for human scale
  - incorporate open spaces



OPEN SPACE

3 STORIES  
MATCHES EXISTING  
SCALE

3-4 STORIES  
WITH SETBACKS

5+ STORIES  
WITH SETBACKS



# ZONING REGULATIONS

Preserve  
Littleton’s  
Cherished  
Character

Zoning and design  
standards help control  
building height,  
massing, and the  
character of the  
streetscape.



A diagram on an orange background. In the center is a light gray horizontal rectangle with rounded corners containing the text 'ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS'. A white arrow points downwards from the top edge of the rectangle, and another white arrow points upwards from the bottom edge of the rectangle.

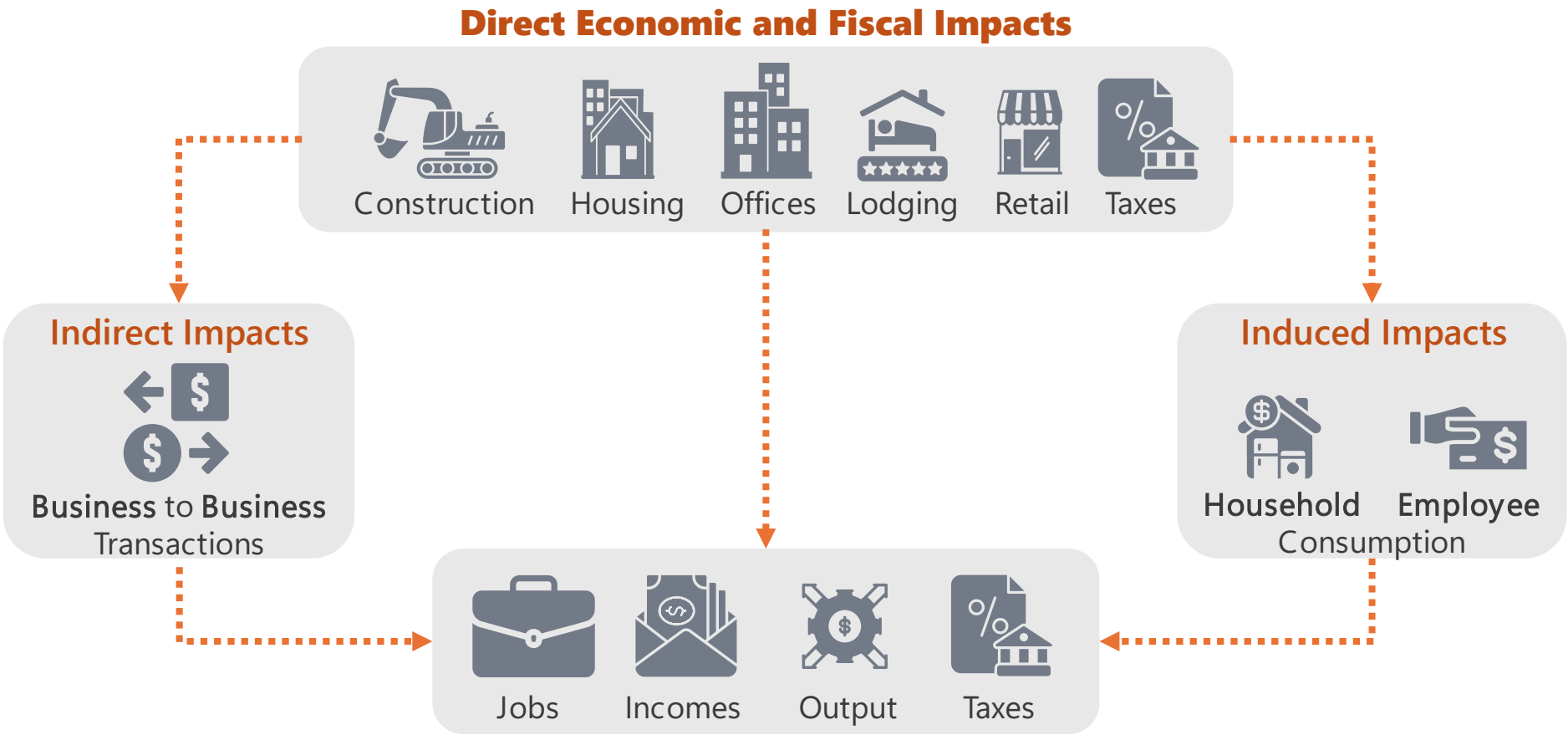
# ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

One-Time  
&  
Ongoing

Measuring the  
economic and fiscal  
impacts.





# ECONOMIC IMPACTS

## Immediate and Future Returns



### 1. ONE-TIME Impacts

These happen **during construction** of public improvements and private development.

This includes:

- Spending on materials
- Jobs and payroll for construction workers
- Local spending by those workers  
Architect, engineering, consultant, and financial services

→ These impacts **happen once**, during the build-out phase.

### 2. ONGOING Impacts

These occur **every year after the project is built**, once the area is active.

This includes:

- Business-to-business transactions (suppliers, vendors, services)
- Employees spending their income (food, retail, services)
- Households spending if new housing is added
- Visitor spending (restaurants, lodging, tourism)

→ These are **long-term recurring benefits** that stabilize around year 30.



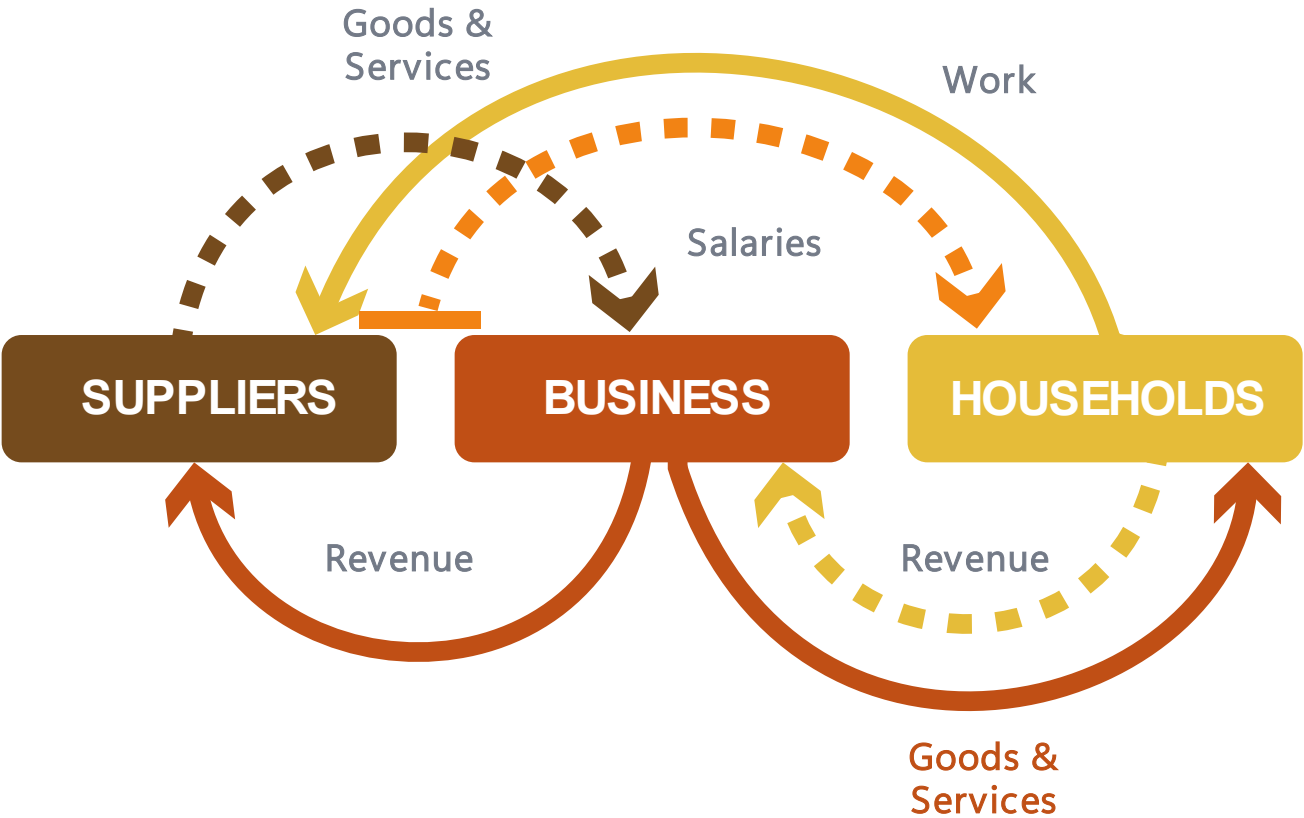
# CIRCULAR ECONOMIC FLOW

## The Multiplier Effect

This loop fuels indirect  
and induced impacts



Construction creates one-time impacts, and completed development creates ongoing economic activity, jobs, spending, and tax revenue, through business, household, and visitor spending.





# ECONOMIC IMPACT MODEL

## IMPLAN

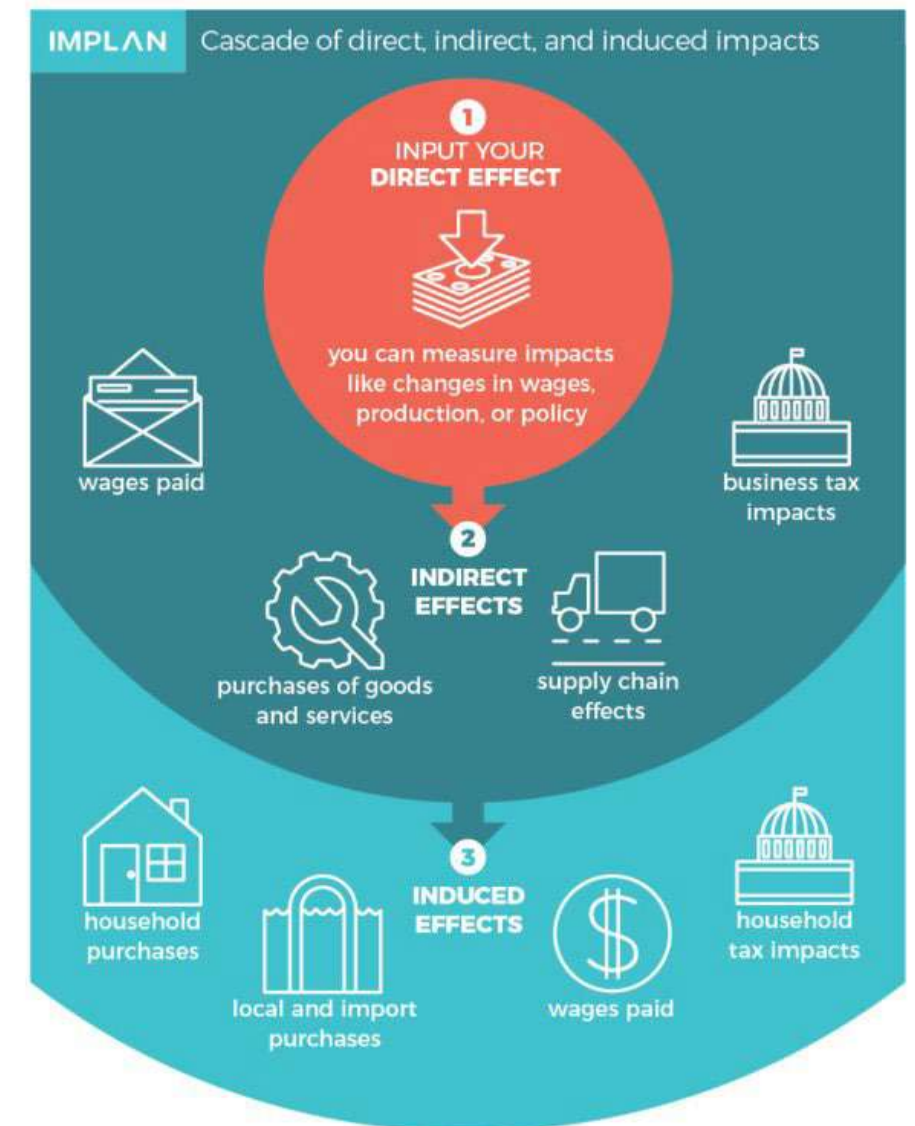
*"impact analysis for planning"*

Using IMPLAN to estimate employment, labor income, and output for just the City of Littleton.



- Created in **1972** by the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Minnesota
- In 1992, transferred to the private Minnesota IMPLAN Group, which is run by former researchers from the University of Minnesota
- **IMPLAN users:**
  - Academics
  - Governments including State of Colorado
  - Economic Developers
  - Corporations and Nonprofits
- Based on Leontief Input-Output economic model which was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1973
- Used here to estimate **employment, labor income, output for the City of Littleton**

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# ECONOMIC IMPACT

## Fiscal Impact

Development produces upfront and long-term tax revenues that fund essential city services.



### 1. ONE-TIME Impacts

These revenues occur **only once**, during construction or project approval.

Public improvements + private development generate:

- Sales & Use Tax on construction materials
- Plan Review Fees
- Building Permit Fees
- Capital Facility Impact Fees (infrastructure-related fees)
- Inclusionary Housing Ordinance Fees
- Property Taxes during construction (as the property increases in value)

→ These are **front-loaded revenues** that happen in the early years of a project.

### 2. ONGOING Impacts

These revenues continue **year after year**, once the project is built and occupied.

They include:

- Real and Personal Property Taxes
- Sales Taxes (from new shops, restaurants, and visitor spending)
- Indirect Sales Taxes (business-to-business transactions)
- Lodging Taxes (if hotels are included)

→ These are **long-term, recurring revenues** that help fund city services over time.



# METHODOLOGY

## One Time Impacts

Construction of Public Improvements  
& Private Development

- Hard Costs
- Labor
- Taxes, Fees Permits



Indirect and  
Induced Impacts  
Multiplier Effect



## Net Ongoing Impacts

- Office
- Retail
- Residential
- Hotels

- Jobs
- Households
- Visitors

- Values of Operations  
Spending
- Taxes: Spending  
and Property  
Values



Indirect and  
Induced Impacts  
Multiplier Effect



Net Present Value  
over 30 years  
5% Discount Rate



Total Economic  
and  
Fiscal Impact

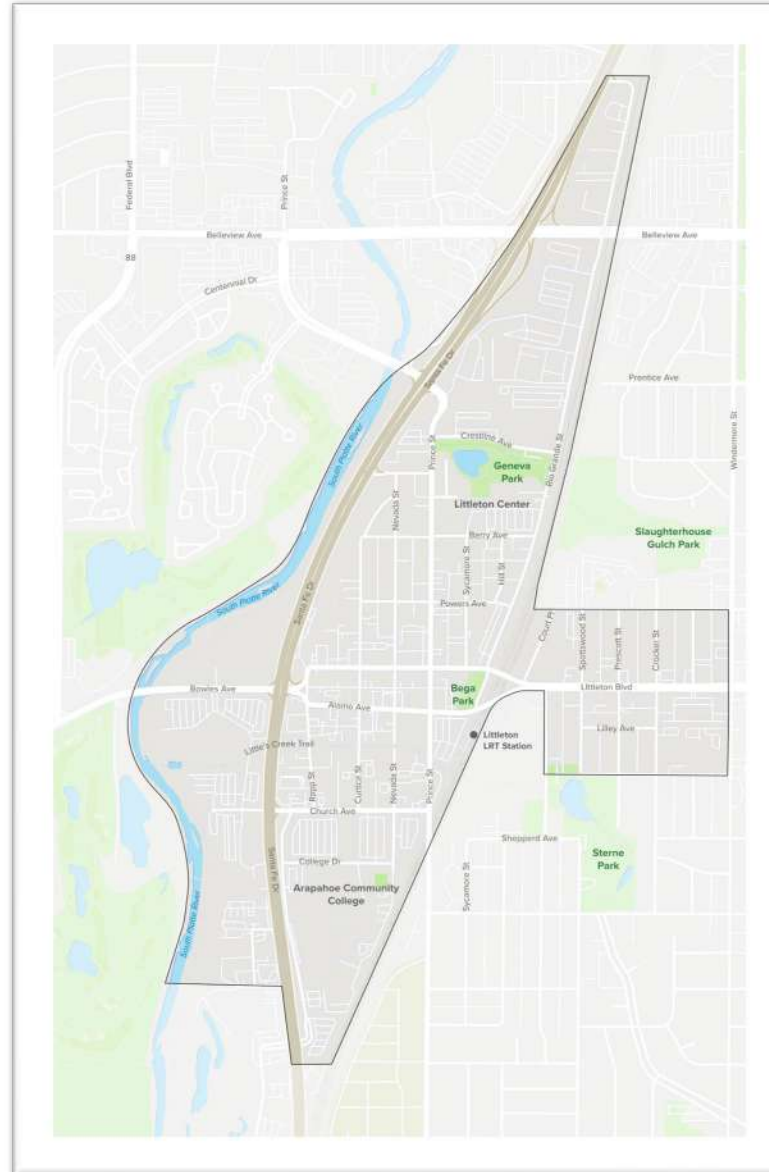
IMPLAN





# ECONOMIC IMPACT MODEL

## Ad hoc Investment Scenario

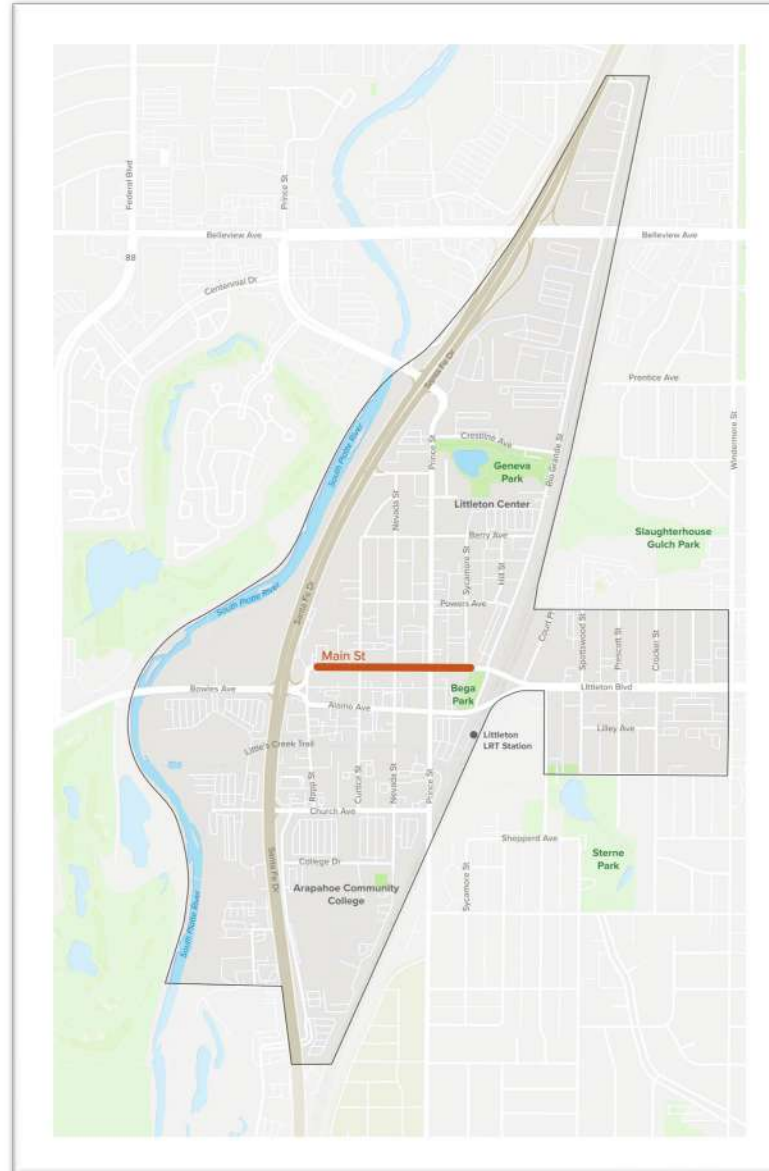


- Downtown Littleton's fortunes tied to **city, regional, and state fortunes**.
- Only ad hoc public investment
  - No new economic and fiscal benefits
  - Danger of disinvestment
  - No private investment following public investment
  - Lose competitive regional edge
  - Visitor dollars go elsewhere
  - Danger of long-term underperformance (*Leinburger, 2023*)
  - Harder recovery from economic downturns (*Leinburger, 2023*)



# ECONOMIC IMPACT MODEL

## Medium Investment Scenario



- **Main Street Improvement Budget – \$36.5 Mil**
  - Could spur private investment in
  - Underutilized and vacant parcels along Main Street and Prince Street (close to Main)
  - RTD Station Area Parking Redevelopment
- **Addition of 18% to Littleton's GDP**
- **Leverage \$201 Mil of New Private Investment (6:1)**
- **Economic & Fiscal Impact – \$905 Million (30 years)**
  - One Time – \$240 Mil
  - Ongoing – \$665 Mil
- **1,214 Jobs**
  - One Time – 994 Jobs (\$85 Mil in Labor Income)
  - Ongoing – 220 Jobs (\$250 Mil in Labor Income over 30 years)

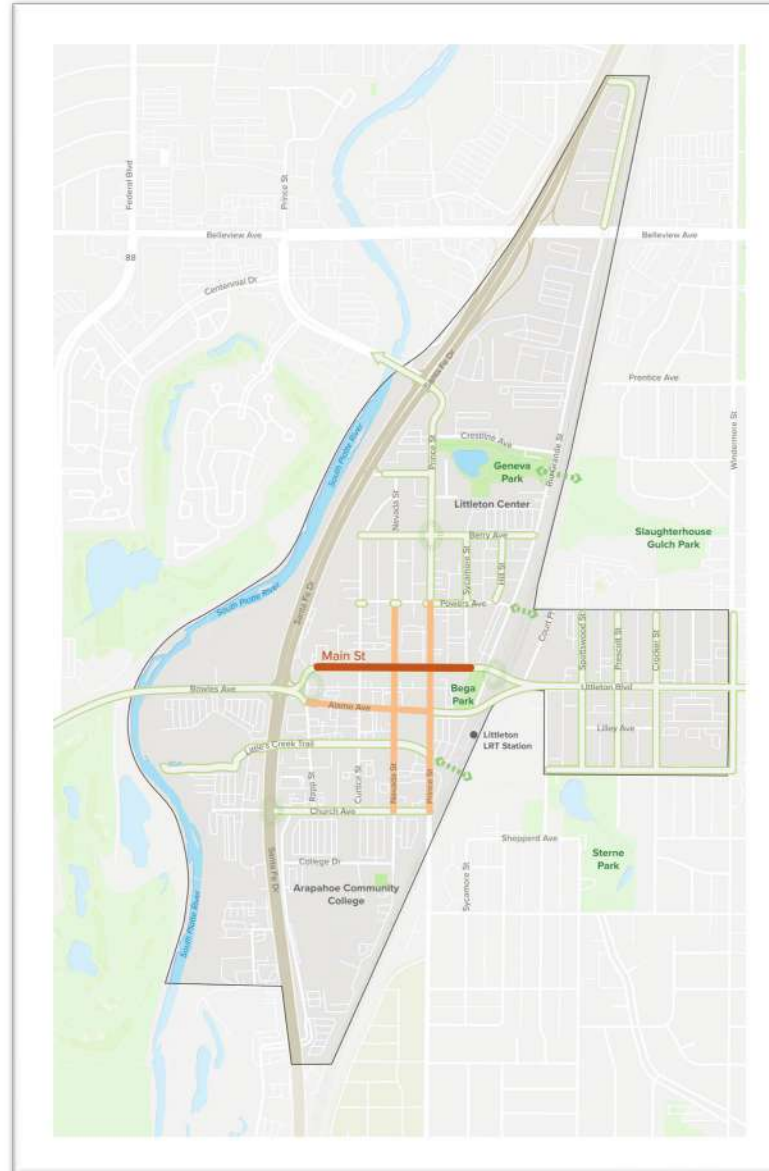
Medium Investment Scenario

One Time Construction (\$000s)				Ongoing (Stabilization) (\$000s)			
Impact Type	Employment	Labor	Output	Employment	Labor	Output	TOTAL
Public Improvements							
Direct	84	\$7,383	\$18,250				
Indirect / Induced	1	\$125	\$475				
Total	86	\$7,508	\$18,725				
City of Littleton / DDA Taxes			\$484				
Private Investment (assumed at \$275-\$325 psf)							
Direct	882	\$75,658	\$200,886	215	\$15,906	\$41,682	
Indirect and Induced	26	\$1,878	\$6,540	5	\$406	\$1,326	
Total	908	\$77,536	\$207,425	220	\$16,313	\$43,008	
NPV at 5% over 30 years					\$250,764	\$661,140	
City of Littleton / DDA Taxes			\$13,958			\$270,142	
NPV at 5% over 30 years						\$4,153	
TOTAL	994	\$85,044	\$240,592	220	\$250,764	\$665,293	\$905,885



# ECONOMIC IMPACT MODEL

## Maximum Investment Scenario



[ 43]

- Main, Alamo, Prince, and Nevada Streets Improvement Budget – **\$93.5 Million**
- Could spur private investment in:
  - Underutilized and vacant parcels
  - RTD Station Area Parking Redevelopment
  - City Hall, ACC North Parking Lots, NWC of Bowles and Santa Fe
- Addition of **89%** to Littleton's GDP
- Leverage **\$980 Million** of New Private Investment (10:1)
- Economic & Fiscal Impact – \$4.4 Billion (30 Years)
- One Time – \$1.1 Billion Ongoing – \$3.3 Billion
- Total Jobs – 5,800 Jobs
  - One Time – 4,624 Jobs (\$394 Million in Labor Income)
  - Ongoing – 1,190 Jobs (\$1.1 Billion in Labor Income over 30 years)

Maximum Investment Scenario

Impact Type	One Time Construction (\$000s)			Ongoing (Stabilization) (\$000s)			TOTAL
	Employment	Labor	Output	Employment	Labor	Output	
Public Improvements							
Direct	216	\$18,913	\$46,750				
Indirect / Induced	4	\$319	\$1,216				
Total	220	\$19,232	\$47,966				
City of Littleton / DDA Taxes			\$1,234				
Private Investment (assumed at \$275-\$325 psf)							
Direct	4,275	\$366,311	\$984,409	1,164	\$73,942	\$205,210	
Indirect and Induced	129	\$9,323	\$32,322	25	\$2,083	\$6,656	
Total	4,404	\$375,634	\$1,016,730	1,189	\$76,025	\$211,866	
NPV at 5% over 30 years					\$1,168,692	\$3,256,895	
City of Littleton / DDA Taxes			\$62,252			\$3,608	
NPV at 5% over 30 years						\$55,461	
TOTAL	4,624	\$394,867	\$1,128,183	1,189	\$1,168,692	\$3,312,356	\$4,440,539



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

## Summary

Using IMPLAN to estimate employment, labor income, and output for just the City of Littleton.



### Ad hoc Investment

No significant investment

- Continued costs of maintenance and one-off improvements with little return on investment
- Growth dictated by regional/national factors
- Risk of losing ground to peers/neighbors



### Medium Investment

A minimum of **\$905 Mil** impact within a 30-year trajectory

- Capture new benefits
- Some synergistic effects across downtown
- Adds to **GDP by 18%**

*Money that can be  
reinvested back into  
the City!*



### Maximum Investment

A minimum of **\$4.4 BIL** impact within a 30-year trajectory

- Leverage multiple aspects of Downtown's special character
- Maximum potential for private development and ROI.
- Adds to **GDP by 89%**



## KEY TAKEAWAYS



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### Why Invest in Littleton's Downtown?

This analysis applies  
only to Project  
Downtown, not to the  
city as a whole.



Protect and strengthen  
Littleton's historic  
character and small-  
town identity.

1

Preservation-focused  
investment ensures the charm  
residents value is maintained  
long-term.



Support the local  
economy by sustaining  
small businesses and  
attracting the right kinds  
of activity.

3

Vibrancy today ensures stability  
tomorrow.



Provide City Council  
with clearer tools to  
guide, shape, and  
control development.

2

Investment creates guardrails,  
not growth for growth's sake.



Generate resources  
to maintain  
infrastructure, parks,  
public spaces, and  
fiscal stability.

4

Without strategic reinvestment,  
long-term maintenance becomes  
more costly.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## How to Invest in Littleton’s Downtown?

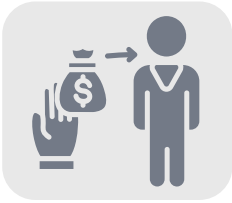
This analysis applies only to Project Downtown, not to the city as a whole.



Use **public improvements** to direct growth where the City wants it.

1

Targeted infrastructure improvements can manage traffic, stormwater, parking, and multimodal needs.



Leverage **incentives that support small businesses** while requiring new development to contribute to needed infrastructure.

3

Balanced incentives **keep downtown local** while funding improvements fairly.



Pair **preservation with policy tools** that protect scale, height, and character.

2

Clear expectations guide private investment toward **community-aligned outcomes**.



Apply **zoning, design standards, and planning frameworks** that reinforce Council’s parameters.

4

A predictable framework **reduces risk** and improves public outcomes.



APPENDIX



## Assumptions

1. Working off a **30-year analysis** Littleton
2. GDP estimated at \$5 Billion (Per-capita adjusted Federal Reserve Estimates for Denver Metro Area)
3. **5% Discount Rate** (OMB discount rates for public infrastructure range from 3% to 7%)
4. **~9% percent** of DRCOG forecast growth (25 years) for City of Littleton for **Medium Scenario** and **~50% for Maximum Scenario**
5. Littleton is forecast to continue to grow