

City of Littleton

Downtown Neighborhood Plan

An Element of COMPLAN, the City's Comprehensive Plan



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Downtown is the center of the community and the setting for events throughout the year.



The Western Welcome Week parade includes local participants such as these impressive horses sponsored by a local restaurant.



The Old Downtown Neighborhood is within easy walking distance of Main Street and the light rail station.



Downtown's light rail station connects downtown to the metropolitan area.



executive summary

The *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* establishes a forward-looking program that strives to understand and respond to changes that may impact the area in the next 20 years. These changes may include:

- demographic shifts that could affect the supply of, and demand for, property;
- variations in the market that could affect the types and health of businesses;
- an evolution in transportation that may impact streets and infrastructure; and
- modifications of land use patterns in response to the needs and desires of the community.

The *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* was developed, with community input, to:

- anticipate and address change;
- preserve and enhance what is valuable to the community;
- reduce uncertainty and improve the stability of the Downtown Neighborhood; and
- encourage the level and type of growth appropriate for supporting the physical, social, and economic well-being of the neighborhood.

The recommendations in this plan reflect both the planning commission's analysis of the comments it received during an extensive public outreach program and its discussion of how to respond. The outreach program included a citywide survey; a public open house; focus group meetings with downtown property owners, retailers, and residents; and interviews with representative stakeholders. To help both evaluate the comments and develop the best responses, the commission sought expert advice, reviewed professional reports, analyzed and discussed data, reviewed applicable case studies, and visited comparable sites.

The plan progresses from general concepts to specific recommendations. First, the Vision provides a concise verbal picture of what downtown can be in the future. Next, the Framework describes the geography of downtown – the character, arrangement, and inter-relationships of its form and land uses, both today and in the future. Third, the Downtown Planning Principles summarize the characteristics that underlie all elements of the plan and against which all proposed actions should be evaluated. Fourth, Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies provide detailed direction for achieving the Vision while reflecting the Framework and the Principles. The Appendices provide additional background material.

The planning commission distributed more than 27,000 questionnaires.

Consistent with the results of the public outreach program, the primary Principle, and a key element of the Vision, is to retain the small town character of Downtown Littleton while fostering healthy growth that is consistent with that character. The Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies expand upon this and the other Principles to reflect downtown's complex and sometimes competing desires and needs. Together, these elements recommend:

- Recognizing distinct sub-areas, each with its own character and mix of desired land uses. These sub-areas include the Main Street District, Old Downtown Neighborhood, and Residential Mixed-Use District, each of which is described in the Framework.
- Protecting and supporting the viable use of historic properties.
- Setting height criteria that vary according to the character of each sub-area and the proximity to Main Street, to the Old Downtown Neighborhood, and to the identified iconic structures.
- Developing a parking management program that includes an implementation element which, at a minimum, addresses zoning requirements and funding. The program must recognize the diverse needs of businesses, residents, and visitors and not compromise downtown's character.
- Retaining the existing character of the area referred to as the Old Downtown Neighborhood, which is generally the area currently zoned R-5.
- Balancing mobility on the streets for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit.
- Enhancing connections between downtown and the neighborhoods to the east and west, across the railroad and Santa Fe Drive.

- Encouraging sustainable development and practices that conserve resources.
- Encouraging public/private cooperation in programs that result in business attraction, retention, and expansion.

This document is a guideline; it is not a regulation. The recommendations in this plan do not automatically change the city's zoning, sign code, parking requirements, or any other regulation. Regulations must be adopted by city council and prior to adoption are subject to a separate public review and hearing process. Nonetheless, the recommendations in this plan will be used to initiate and evaluate possible changes to the city's land use regulations and processes and to help evaluate compliance with the intent of those regulations and processes.



Because Little's Creek is a channel that is deep and narrow, the creek and sidewalk are not readily visible from street level. The Columbine Mill, one of downtown's iconic structures, is adjacent to the creek.



introduction

A. PURPOSE

The *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* represents one step in the City of Littleton’s update of *COMPLAN*, its comprehensive plan. This update focuses on the neighborhood that was called the “Central Area” in the 1981 plan and is now referred to as downtown. As the plans for this and other neighborhoods and corridors are updated, *COMPLAN* will evolve to reflect changing conditions and issues.

The planning commission is responsible for developing, adopting, and updating the comprehensive plan and forwarding the adopted plan and subsequent amendments to city council for approval. The comprehensive plan and the recommendations within it are guidelines for future actions. All land use regulations, including zoning, are designed to help implement the adopted plan and are reviewed through separate public review processes. The planning commission reviews proposed regulations, including zoning, holds a public hearing, and then forwards its recommendations to city council. City council holds a second public hearing and considers adoption of the proposed regulations.

To ensure that the plan reflects the desires of the community, the planning commission completed an extensive public outreach program. The outreach program included a citywide survey, a public open house, focus groups, and interviews. With the information it received and with additional professional input, the planning commission held in-depth discussions. Topics ranged

A comprehensive plan is the long-range master planning document for city planning. It is broad-based and contains policy level directives to guide the community’s future. With a planning horizon of 20 years, the comprehensive plan provides the basis for more detailed and more immediate implementation plans, such as parks, parking, or bicycle master plans.

Copies of the public comments received from interviews, an open house, and focus groups are available from the Community Development Department.

from land use to transportation to economic development. These discussions focused on taking the varying public viewpoints and using them as a basis for establishing issues, goals, policies, and implementation strategies. Planning commission then crafted the *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* as an updated chapter of *COMPLAN*.

B. HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The plan will guide decision-making as downtown grows and redevelops, so that the cumulative impacts of individual actions combine to achieve the community's Vision for downtown. City council, planning commission, citizens, and city staff will use this plan when creating and reviewing development proposals, land-use related ordinances, public works projects, parks, and other plan components. Property owners, developers, and citizens should refer to the *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* to help guide their initiatives.

Comprehensive plans are used primarily as reference documents. Therefore, this plan is organized to assist with its use as a reference document. Together, the Executive Summary, Vision, and Framework provide a concise text and graphic overview of the key recommendations in the plan.

C. BOUNDARIES AND MAPS

The downtown neighborhood is located in the northern end of the City of Littleton, which is in the southwestern area of metropolitan Denver. Downtown is bordered on the west by South Santa Fe Drive, on the east by the railroad, on the north by West Belleview Avenue, and on the south by the southern boundary of Arapahoe Community College. With two long curving sides on the east and west, two short sides on the north and south, and a wide middle, downtown has a shape that leads to it sometimes being referred to as "the football." *Refer to the Orientation Maps on the next page.*



Main Street is lined with one and two-story buildings, wide sidewalks, trees, pedestrian lights, retail stores, and restaurants. At the west end of Main Street, snow-capped mountains are visible over the historic Carnegie Library.

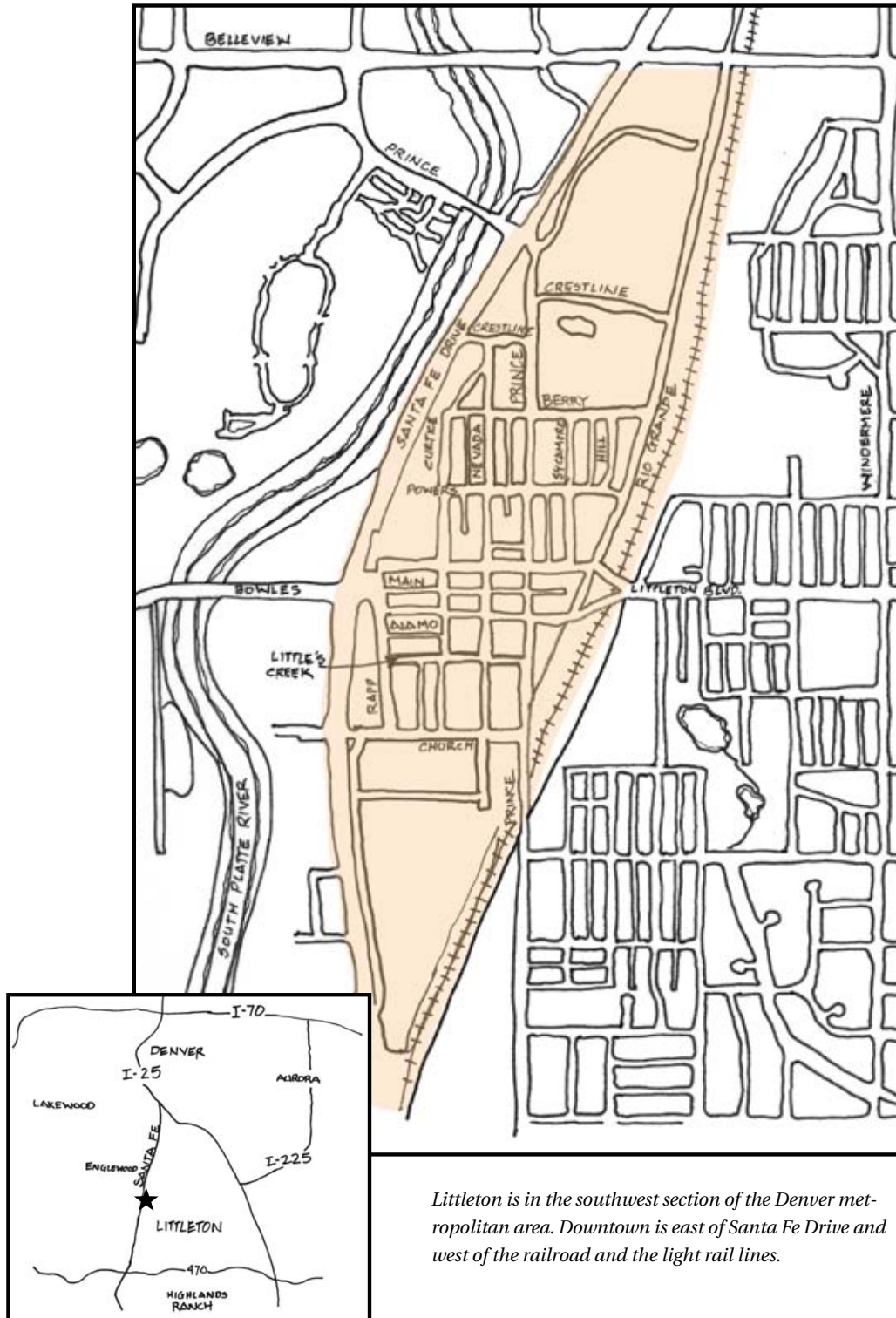
D. IMPLEMENTATION

The *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* is pragmatic and designed to be logically implemented over time. The city should evaluate, monitor, and adjust the *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* regularly and as needed when unanticipated situations arise. The staff will review the Comprehensive Plan as part of its development review and regular activities and advise the planning commission and city council when revisions should be considered. The planning commission will evaluate the plan as part of its annual work program. Elements of the Downtown Plan that are more applicable in a city-wide context will be extracted and included in the citywide comprehensive plan as that plan is updated. Every ten years, the plan should be revised in total to ensure that it is current.

Implementation is always influenced by business cycles, competing needs, unanticipated opportunities, and available resources.

The initial implementation schedule is included in the Appendix. As the schedule is updated over time, it will be available in the Community Development Department.

ORIENTATION MAPS



Littleton is in the southwest section of the Denver metropolitan area. Downtown is east of Santa Fe Drive and west of the railroad and the light rail lines.



vision

Downtown will inevitably grow and change over time, but will retain its historic, small town character, which is central to Littleton's identity. Land uses will continue to be a mix of retail, residential, commercial, educational, and governmental. The Main Street District will be a local and regional attraction and the center for community celebrations.

Downtown will make the most of its assets, which include:

- Main Street
- Little's Creek
- historic structures
- mountain views
- pedestrian scale
- a light rail station and railroad grade separation
- access to major streets and highways
- Arapahoe Community College
- adjoining neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces
- a climate with moderate temperatures and 300 days of sunshine each year
- being an important regional center of commerce

Careful management of these assets will ensure that downtown will remain healthy, vibrant, welcoming, and economically strong over time.

It is the intent of this plan to build on the breadth of Downtown Littleton's assets to guide its future development and, in doing so, provide a rich business and retail environment, a diversity of housing, and a center for government and education.



Arapahoe Community College is located at the southern end of the Downtown Neighborhood and has 18,000 students and 700 faculty and staff.



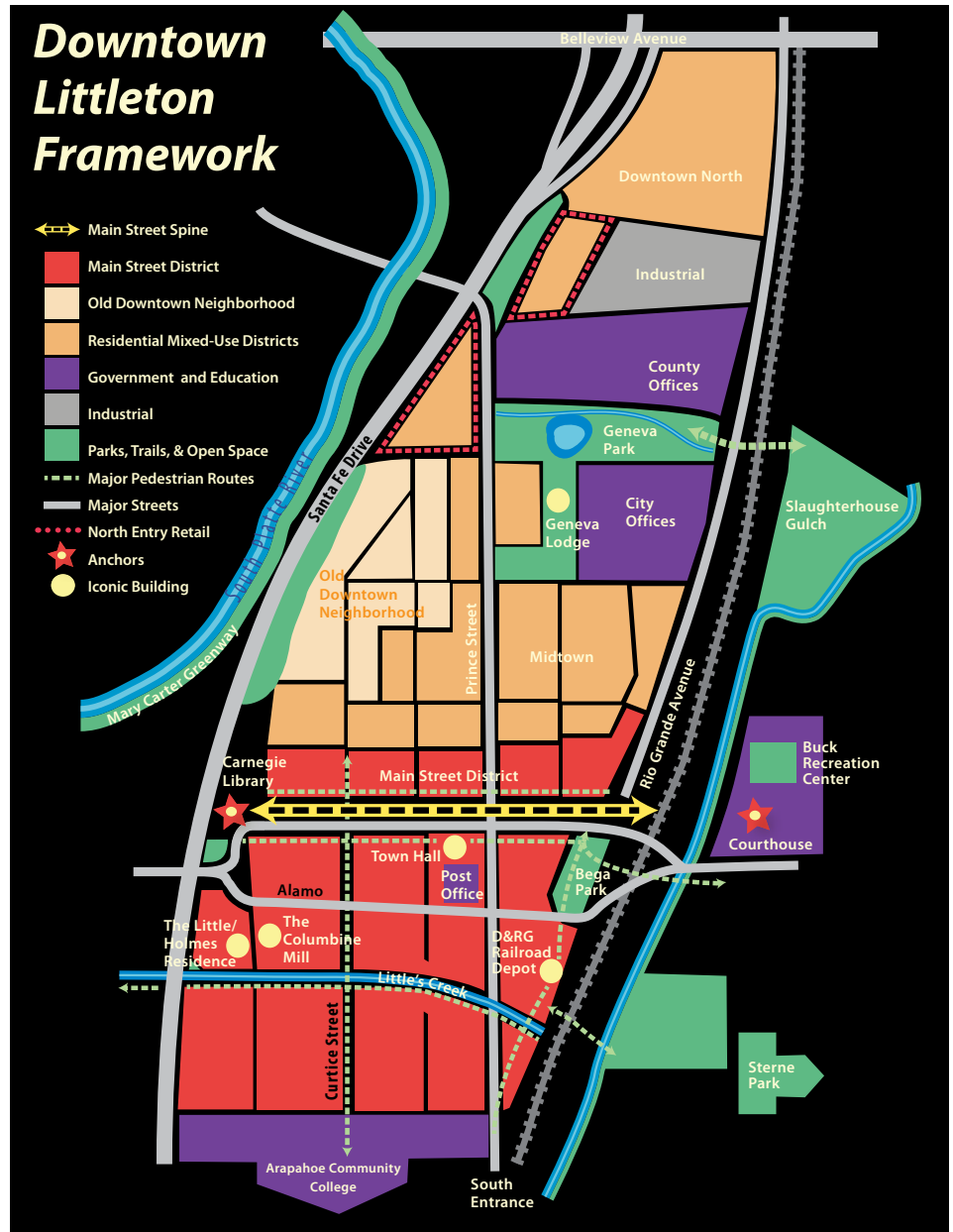
The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Depot has returned to its use as a passenger station for those utilizing the Southwest Corridor light rail line.

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

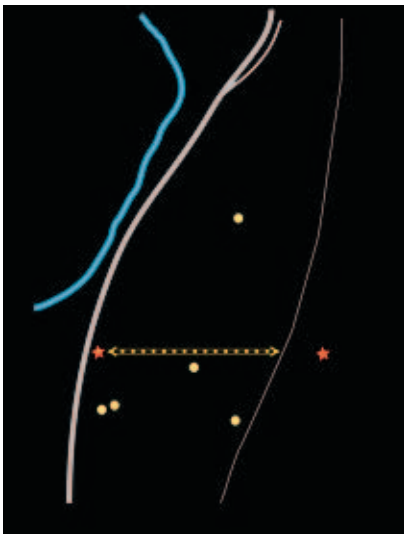
An Element of COMPLAN, the City's Comprehensive Plan FRAMEWORK

The Framework diagram describes the geography of Downtown Littleton—the character, arrangement, and inter-relationships of its form and land uses. It builds through a series of nine diagrams, beginning with Downtown's Main Street, boundaries, and iconic structures. The Framework promotes a shared understanding of how downtown works so that citizens can more easily discuss how their community should evolve. Composed of a diagram and a description, the Framework demonstrates, from a land use point of view, how this neighborhood is structured and functions. It is both a snapshot of today and a vision for the future.

The Downtown Littleton Framework will be used as a tool for initiating and evaluating proposals for change and development. It will aid decision makers in understanding the context within which new buildings, improved parks, connections, entrances and new uses will be situated and how each element fits into an overall vision. The Framework provides a common language to discuss new ideas, to adjust proposed projects so that they are a better fit, and to coordinate new development so that each addition or change is an improvement to the whole.



1. Boundaries, Main Street Spine, and Iconic Structures



Downtown is bounded by the railroad and South Santa Fe Drive. Main Street runs east/west between two iconic structures, the Carnegie Library and the Courthouse. Other iconic structures include Geneva Lodge, Town Hall, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot, the Columbine Mill, and the Little/

Holmes residence, home of Littleton's founder, Richard Little. The iconic structures are familiar to Littleton's residents and representative of Downtown Littleton.

2. Main Street District



Main Street is vibrant. It is the most lively and pedestrian-friendly street in Littleton. Historic Main Street is the image that comes to mind when people think about Downtown Littleton. Along Main Street, the character of the district will not change substantially. The blocks to the south of Main Street contain

shops, restaurants, offices, housing, and supporting uses. Scattered older homes influence the character of the district. These blocks are not very cohesive and include a few industrial uses. South of Main Street, there will likely be selective redevelopment over time.

3. Old Downtown Neighborhood



North of the Main Street District and west of Prince Street is the Old Downtown Neighborhood. Most of the houses here were built either in the early 1900's or shortly after World War II. There are small cottages, late Victorian houses, and ranch-style houses along tree-lined streets. Most have shallow front and back yards.

It is rare to have a cohesive older neighborhood like this so close to a thriving Main Street. This neighborhood is stable and will retain its character.

4. Residential Mixed-Use Districts



The Residential Mixed-Use District has evolved over time and has a variety of architectural styles. There are residential, office, and retail uses with many businesses operated out of former houses. The feel of this district is predominantly residential. There are two distinct sub-areas within the district, Downtown

North and Midtown. Downtown North has apartments, restaurants, and a motel located at downtown's north entry at Santa Fe and Prince Street. Midtown continues to evolve as new growth and development occur.

5. Government and Education



Government and education uses include city and county government offices, the U.S. Post Office, and Arapahoe Community College (ACC). These facilities infuse the neighborhood with more than 20,000 workers and students. The concentration of activity, services, and people enlivens downtown,

is convenient for businesses and patrons, and contributes a large potential market for downtown retail shops and restaurants.

6. Industrial



At the north end of downtown is an industrial area that has a successful light manufacturing business and several similar businesses. However, as downtown evolves, these industrial uses are likely to change. If industrial uses are not continued, this area will become part of the Residential Mixed-Use District

and contain multi-family housing and neighborhood serving commercial uses.

7. Parks, Trails, and Open Space



Downtown has two parks, Bega and Geneva, as well as Bowles Plaza, a landscaped area south of the Carnegie Library. These are important respites for residents and visitors alike. Little's Creek trail connects to the regional park and trail system. Sidewalks across the Main Street and Alamo bridges lead to the City Ditch

Trail, the Buck Community Recreation Center, Slaughterhouse Gulch, and Sterne Park, all of which are outside downtown but provide parks nearby. Since there are limited opportunities for additional park space, connections to existing parks at the edges of downtown are critical.

8. Circulation Network



The hub of the circulation network is the one-way pair of east/west streets, Alamo and Main. Prince Street connects to South Santa Fe Drive and provides access to Belleview on the north and ACC to the south. From the light rail station, there are two primary pedestrian routes. One connects south to ACC, and

the other goes north to Main Street. The pedestrian connections across the railroad to the east need improvement including crossings at Geneva Park and Slaughterhouse Gulch. Curtice Street presents the best opportunity for an inviting north/south pedestrian connection between ACC and Main Street.



downtown planning principles

The following seven Principles summarize the characteristics that drive the Vision, Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies. Proposed actions should be evaluated for their ability to address and implement the fundamental concepts contained within these Principles.

- **SMALL TOWN CHARACTER** – Downtown will retain its small town character, as defined by its pedestrian scale, absence of tall buildings, intact neighborhoods, historic structures, diverse land uses, and enjoyable pedestrian environment.
- **QUALITY DESIGN** – All new development, architecture, and urban design will consist of enduring materials and a design that fits with downtown and that is timeless, appropriately scaled, and reflective of downtown's character and livability.
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – The city, working with the business community, will maintain a business environment that retains and attracts business, is diverse, and adds to economic stability in Littleton. Since the health of the business community and the vitality of the residential community are interdependent, both will be fostered to the benefit of each.
- **PUBLIC REALM** – The public spaces – parks, sidewalks, and streets – will be maintained and improved. Downtown will be pedestrian-friendly and encourage walking. Similarly, sidewalks in commercial areas should provide places for people to enjoy downtown. Sidewalk cafes and clusters of benches

will be used to ensure that the outdoor public spaces remain welcoming, interesting, and attractive.

- **SUSTAINABILITY** – In order to preserve resources for future generations while meeting present needs, downtown will incorporate sustainability practices.
- **CONNECTIVITY and ACCESS** – Downtown will be well-connected to the surrounding neighborhoods and the region. Internally, the downtown street grid will consist of complete streets that equitably serve drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Routes to destinations will be both intuitive and well signed. Surface parking lots and parking structures will be integrated into the building pattern and easily accessible to visitors.
- **PROCESS** – All review processes will be simplified, coordinated, predictable, and adaptable to varying conditions.



Business/Industry Affairs Director Chris Gibbons visits a local business in Downtown Littleton. The city's Economic Gardening program supports a strong economic environment.



OVERVIEW

The Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies work together to achieve the Vision for downtown. When combined with the Vision and Framework, they are the fundamentals of this plan. They define the city's overall direction for downtown and reflect the elements contained in the Principles and Framework.

The plan, including the Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies, is organized into six broad planning topics, each of which has an important role in achieving the Vision for Downtown Littleton:

- A. Land Use and Urban Design
- B. Circulation Network
- C. Economic Development
- D. Historic Preservation
- E. Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces
- F. Sustainability

Goals are based on the Vision. They are broad in scope and define the desired outcome of the Policies and Implementation Strategies. Goals set the direction for actions, resource allocation, and planning decisions. They are written as “will” statements. There is one Goal provided for each planning topic.

Policies provide more detailed direction for the plan and present tasks that will achieve the Vision and Goals. Policies are written as “should” statements and are noted below the Goals with designated numbers. For example, LU-1 is the first Policy under the Goal for Land Use and Urban Design (LU).

Implementation Strategies are actions the city will take to complete the Vision, Goals, and Policies. They are written as imperative statements. Implementation Strategies are noted below the Policies with designated letters and are italicized. For example, LU-1 is a Policy and LU-1a is an Implementation Strategy.

A. LU - LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

GOAL

Downtown will continue to have a mixture of land uses that promote:

- a vibrant Main Street District
- a strong sense of community
- the desirability of downtown as a place to live
- a diversity of residents
- a healthy and stable business environment

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

LU-1 Processes and development-related regulations should be designed to reinforce the existing character and to facilitate and achieve the desired scale and land uses downtown. All development tools and processes should be consistent and coordinated.

LU-1a. Review the existing zoning language and map to ensure their compatibility with the Vision, Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies of this plan.

LU-1b. Review the CA Zone District, Transit Impact Zone (TIZ), the PDO process, and the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines. Consolidate and amend these and the other downtown-related regulations and processes to result in a coordinated zoning and development regulation package.

LU-1c. Take the necessary steps to apply for DRCOG designation of Downtown Littleton as an “urban center.”

LU-2 The land uses in the Main Street District should be predominantly commercial and residential.

LU-2a. Proactively engage RTD to ensure the future use of its property positively impacts downtown.

LU-2b. Along Main Street, encourage retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor and offices and residences above.



Cultural amenities, such as the Town Hall Arts Center, should be promoted in order to strengthen downtown as a cultural center.

LU-3 The existing character of the Old Downtown Neighborhood should be preserved.

LU-3a Direct any rezoning effort (see LU-1b) to retain small-scale residential as the primary use in the Old Downtown Neighborhood, with medical and dental offices as secondary land uses. No other land uses will be allowed.

LU-3b. Revise the zoning and Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines (see LU-1b) to ensure that development in the Old Downtown Neighborhood will conform to the existing scale, mass, and feel of the neighborhood.

LU-3c . Delete as a conditional use in the R-5 Zone District (see LU-1b) off-site commercial employee and/or customer parking on residentially zoned lots that are located adjacent to the CA Zone District.

LU-4 The Residential Mixed-Use District should have both residential and commercial uses while maintaining a diverse residential character.

-
- LU-4a. Enhance amenities in the Residential Mixed-Use District. Amenity enhancements could be made to the district's sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, landscaping, lighting, parks, connections to parks, and connections to nearby neighborhoods.*
- LU-5 If commercial activity in the industrial area declines and rezoning is considered, the redevelopment should provide predominately multi-family residential uses, with office and neighborhood-serving businesses as supporting uses.
- LU-5a. Add the industrial property, if it is rezoned, to the Residential Mixed-Use District.*
- LU-5b. Add the industrial area as a subarea in the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines (see LU-1b).*
- LU-6 Downtown should support a diverse mix of housing options for residents of all ages, incomes, abilities, and family structures.
- LU-6a. Review the relevant city rules and regulations for their possible effect on achieving a mix of housing options. Revise the rules and regulations to eliminate barriers to achieving this and to include provisions that would encourage it (see LU-1b).*
- LU-6b. Encourage a mix and balance of housing by improving amenities such as parks, views, trees, sidewalks, and street furnishings.*
- LU-7 The land uses and building forms along Main, Prince, Alamo, and Curtice streets should reinforce these multi-modal streets as the principal circulation routes for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles.
- LU-7a. Develop site and streetscape design templates for Main, Alamo, Prince and Curtice streets. Incorporate these templates into the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines (see LU-1b).*
- LU-7b. Improve the pedestrian environment along Curtice Street with continuous wide sidewalks, street trees, and other pedestrian amenities to reinforce Curtice as downtown's primary north/south pedestrian connection between ACC and Main Street.*
- LU-7c. As the city evolves, the street hierarchy will be reevaluated, realizing that Rapp, Nevada, and Sycamore are currently secondary routes.*
- LU-8 Major entries and routes into downtown should be highlighted.
- LU-8a. Improve major entries and entry sequences. Improvements could include gateway features, buildings that frame the entry, sculpture, landscaping, and signage.*
- LU-8b. Initiate a way-finding program that could include interactive signage and media, maps, brochures, advertising on the light rail, sidewalk plaques, and other sidewalk enhancements.*

LU-9 The height of future buildings in downtown should respect its historic scale and character.

LU-9a. Retain the current maximum height restrictions in downtown's underlying zone districts. When the underlying zone district does not have a maximum height or when the development review process permits the consideration of additional height, employ the following criteria:

i. The desired character of the district in which the proposed structure is located.

ii. Acknowledgement that the Columbine Mill and Courthouse will be the dominant structures downtown.

iii. Compatibility with pedestrian scale of Main Street. Generally, maximum height should increase with additional distance from Main Street.

iv. Preservation of the view of mountains as seen from Main Street east of Curtice Street.

LU-10 Development adjacent to the identified iconic structures should respect and not detract from their prominence. (See the Framework for the location of Iconic Structures).

LU-10a. Require that the height, scale, building placement, and other design elements of new construction, expansion, or other property changes respect and do not overwhelm iconic structures. Employ techniques such as building setbacks and step-backs for upper stories, and further detail that direction in the Downtown Design

LU-11 Standards and Guidelines. Downtown street and pedestrian lighting should create a coordinated theme, be appropriate for adjacent land uses, help maintain the historic character, and be energy efficient.

LU-11a. Create a downtown street and pedestrian lighting plan that addresses safety and identifies energy-saving provisions and a hierarchy of the types, spacing, levels, direction, and quality of light.

LU-12 Development in areas that are outside of downtown but immediately adjacent to downtown gateways should be planned with consideration of their proximity to downtown and their potential role and impact on downtown. The four gateways are located at Main Street/Littleton Boulevard, Main Street/Alamo Street/Santa Fe Drive, Prince Street/Santa Fe Drive, and the Downtown Littleton light rail station.

LU-12a. Plan new developments immediately adjacent to downtown gateways so that they improve connections to downtown, function as part of a gateway to downtown, follow the same design standards, and are consistent with the Downtown Neighborhood Plan.

B. CN-CIRCULATION NETWORK

GOAL

All parts of downtown will be simple to navigate and easily accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and those who use public transportation. As an important element of the public realm, the circulation network will provide for the mobility of people of all ages and abilities and will be compatible with downtown's small town character.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CN-1 Streets should be designed to provide for the multi-modal needs of vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit.

CN-1a. Adopt a Complete Streets policy that is tailored to Downtown Littleton, is context-sensitive; and includes improvements to sidewalks, landscaped areas, bicycle accommodations, on-street parking, public transportation, and vehicle lanes that fit within the existing rights-of-way.

CN-2 Bicycles and pedestrians should be safely accommodated in downtown rights-of-way.

CN-2a. Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

CN-3 Sidewalks should be compliant with ADA (the Americans with Disabilities Act) standards.

CN-3a. Design and construct improvements to the sidewalk network to conform to ADA standards.

CN-4 Pedestrian and bicycle connections should be safe, efficient, and inviting.

CN-4a. Wherever possible, provide sidewalks that are at least five feet wide or are detached from the roadway.

CN-4b. Locate and design sidewalks so that they provide continuous and efficient connections.

CN-4c. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections over the railroad tracks to the east and across Santa Fe Drive to the west.

CN-4d. Upgrade sidewalks along Prince Street and, where they are necessary for completing pedestrian connections, along Santa Fe Drive.

CN-4e. Improve connections from the light rail station to Main Street and ACC.

CN-4f. Where possible, use landscaping or other mechanisms, such as on-street parking, to separate sidewalks from moving cars.

CN-4g. Continue to provide safe and accessible street crossings at all appropriate intersections.

CN-5 While not allowing parking to diminish its overall design quality, downtown should have parking for residents, employees, shoppers, and visitors.

CN-5a. Develop a parking program for downtown that:

1. Evaluates parking options that respond to the needs of residents, property owners, merchants, and visitors.
2. Determines the best options and includes an implementation program for achieving those options.

3. Evaluates both current downtown parking requirements and future parking needs with the intent of revising the regulations so as to mitigate potential negative effects on business development and at the same time avoid creating a parking shortage.
4. Provides an equitable regulatory and/or financing structure, which could include:
 - i. *A hierarchy of parking requirements that help implement the Vision, Goals, and Policies of this plan*
 - ii. *An incentive program, such as reductions for historic designation, transit-related advantages, or fees-in-lieu of required on-site parking.*
5. Includes a plan that incorporates parking into the built environment in such a way that it does not disrupt the quality of downtown.

Since the health of downtown depends on both residents and businesses, downtown must balance the needs of both sectors.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- ED-1 Downtown should be Littleton's civic and cultural center, a regional destination as well as an economic generator.
- ED-1a. Retain existing civic facilities such as government offices and the United States Post Office.*
- ED-1b. Ensure that downtown is considered for any new appropriate government, civic, higher education, or cultural facility.*
- ED-1c. Facilitate and support the use of Main Street and its cross-streets as the setting for community events, subject to standard permitting processes.*
- ED-1d. Cultural amenities, such as the Town Hall Arts Center, should be promoted in order to strengthen downtown as a cultural center.*

C. ED - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

Downtown will be an important economic generator through:

- Public/private cooperation
- Business retention and expansion
- Continuation of being a local and regional tourist attraction
- Being a center of government services and higher education

- ED-2 The city's Economic Gardening program should continue to support new and existing businesses.
- ED-2a. Continue to offer professional-level support services to new and existing businesses.*
- ED-2b. Continue to use available technologies to promote businesses.*

ED-3 Downtown should provide a business environment that attracts and retains businesses.

ED-3a. Continue to collaborate with merchants and property owners to enhance economic activity.

ED-3b. Review the city's regulations and procedures for their impact on providing an attractive business environment. Make necessary revisions (see LU-1b).

D. HP - HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOAL

Downtown's authentic, historic, small-town character will be protected.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

HP-1 Historic properties that define downtown's unique sense of place should be identified and protected.

HP-1a. Support the historical preservation board's effort to identify, designate, and otherwise protect historically significant structures and districts.

HP-2 New construction, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of historic structures should complement downtown's historic character.

HP-2a. Apply the adopted design standards and guidelines to all new construction, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of historic structures.

HP-3 The planning commission and the historical preservation board should work together to create a unified, coordinated, and effective set of review processes and design standards and guidelines.

HP-3a. Maintain board liaisons between the planning commission and the historical preservation board and schedule periodic joint meetings of the two boards.

HP-3b. Periodically revisit the review process and the adopted design standards and guidelines, and revise them as necessary, to ensure that they adequately protect the historic integrity of downtown.

HP-4 The planning and review processes for new development and historic preservation should be coordinated, consistent, and streamlined.

HP-4a. Clarify, simplify, and coordinate the development review and Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) processes (see LU-1b).

HP-5 Downtown's historic resources should be showcased.

HP-5a. Identify programs to highlight the historic character of Downtown Littleton. This could include continuing existing programs such as distributing informative brochures, publicizing the preservation awards, and collaborating with other small historic retail districts. This might also include new programs such as lighting historic landmarks, creating a descriptive historic plaque program, using interactive media, placing advertisements on light rail cars, or expanding existing walking tours.

E. P - PARKS, TRAILS AND PUBLIC SPACES

GOAL

Collectively, the parks will provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation. Public places will provide gathering spaces and an identity for downtown. Trails and connections will link downtown to the surrounding parks, open spaces, and the regional trail system. The city will maintain its commitment to improve and enhance parks, trails, and public spaces.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

P-1 Parks should be enhanced to encourage their use.

P-1a. Identify opportunities for improvements to Bega Park as primarily a passive-use park.

P-1b. Identify opportunities for improvements to Geneva Park as a family-friendly park with a mix of active and passive uses.

P-1c. Explore the installation of artwork or other attractions that could serve as destinations in the parks in order to draw people downtown.

P-2 Development along park edges should encourage public interaction.

P-2a. Encourage new development or redevelopment along park edges to stimulate public interaction through the use of building entries, windows, public outdoor eating areas, or other design elements that open to the park.

P-3 Opportunities to expand the public realm and to add new parks should be explored.

P-3a. Identify available research that defines criteria for parks and open space and apply it to downtown.

P-3b. Establish management criteria for adding or deleting parks or open space downtown.

P-3c. Use available data to respond to current demographic trends and new ideas when updating parks and open space facilities.

P-4 Downtown's park resources should be expanded by connecting to nearby parks and trails.

P-4a. Promote and improve connections to the Little's Creek Trail.

P-4b. Look for opportunities to add park space along Little's Creek Trail.

P-4c. Look for opportunities to enhance connections to South Platte and Sterne parks, and to establish connections to Slaughterhouse Gulch.

F. S - SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL

The city will model and communicate sustainable practices, and will support the public and private sectors' efforts to improve the built environment.

POLICY

Support projects that address the focus areas of sustainability.



appendices

APPENDIX A

DOWNTOWN 2011

A. LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

When downtown was initially settled in the 1870s, there were stores, banks, offices, houses, mills, stables, a school, churches, and many other land uses in close proximity. Today, downtown is still a mixed-use neighborhood. The historic mix of uses, design, and scale remains largely intact and allows downtown to retain and build upon its small town character.

Five of the city's 19 zoning districts have either been specifically designed for areas in downtown or designed to apply citywide, but also applied to areas in downtown. These zoning districts allow various combinations of commercial, retail, housing, office, and limited light manufacturing uses. They have been in place for decades and have not been significantly modified to keep pace with the evolving market and to coordinate with newer regulations and guidelines. As a result, there are issues and inconsistencies that arise during the development review process related to determining the appropriate uses, building height, and parking requirements.

In anticipation of development activity that might occur as a result of the opening of the Southwest Light Rail Line, the city designated a Transit Impact Zone, or



Historic Main Street, showing the courthouse, an iconic structure that provides a focal point for the street.

The City of Littleton uses zoning and land use regulations to shape the downtown and ensure that the location and characteristics of allowed land uses results in harmonious, compatible development that is mutually supportive, orderly, aesthetically pleasing, and logical.

TIZ, for areas within one-half mile around the Downtown Littleton station. Within this zone, development, redevelopment, and additions are subject to a review process that allows more flexibility, but also requires more explicit review and requirements.

1. GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS

The City of Littleton's offices and a portion of Arapahoe County's offices are in the northeast area of downtown. The United States Post Office is on Alamo at Prince Street. The city and county collectively have approximately 700 employees downtown and the post office has another 70 employees. Arapahoe Community College (ACC) is on the south end of downtown. There are approximately 18,000 students and 700 full and part-time employees. Together, these government and institutional uses provide a significant employment base and retail market for downtown.

2. HOUSING

There are approximately 900 housing units throughout downtown. There are a variety of housing types, including rental and owner-occupied, single-family, multi-family apartments and condominiums, and assisted living units.

Adjacent, to the east and south of downtown, there are strong, healthy, primarily single-family, residential neighborhoods. Despite their adjacency, residents in these neighborhoods often drive to downtown rather than walk because of the relative distance and the barrier presented by the railroad grade separation, which has few crossings. Neighborhoods to the west are even more dramatically separated from downtown by Santa Fe Drive, the South Platte River, and the golf course.



The Arapahoe County administration building is one of the government land uses downtown.



The height of the buildings, width of the street and sidewalk, and large windows at the ground level contribute to Main Street's comfortable pedestrian scale.



The Nevada Place Apartments, located one block north of Main Street, have provided an opportunity for more people to live downtown.

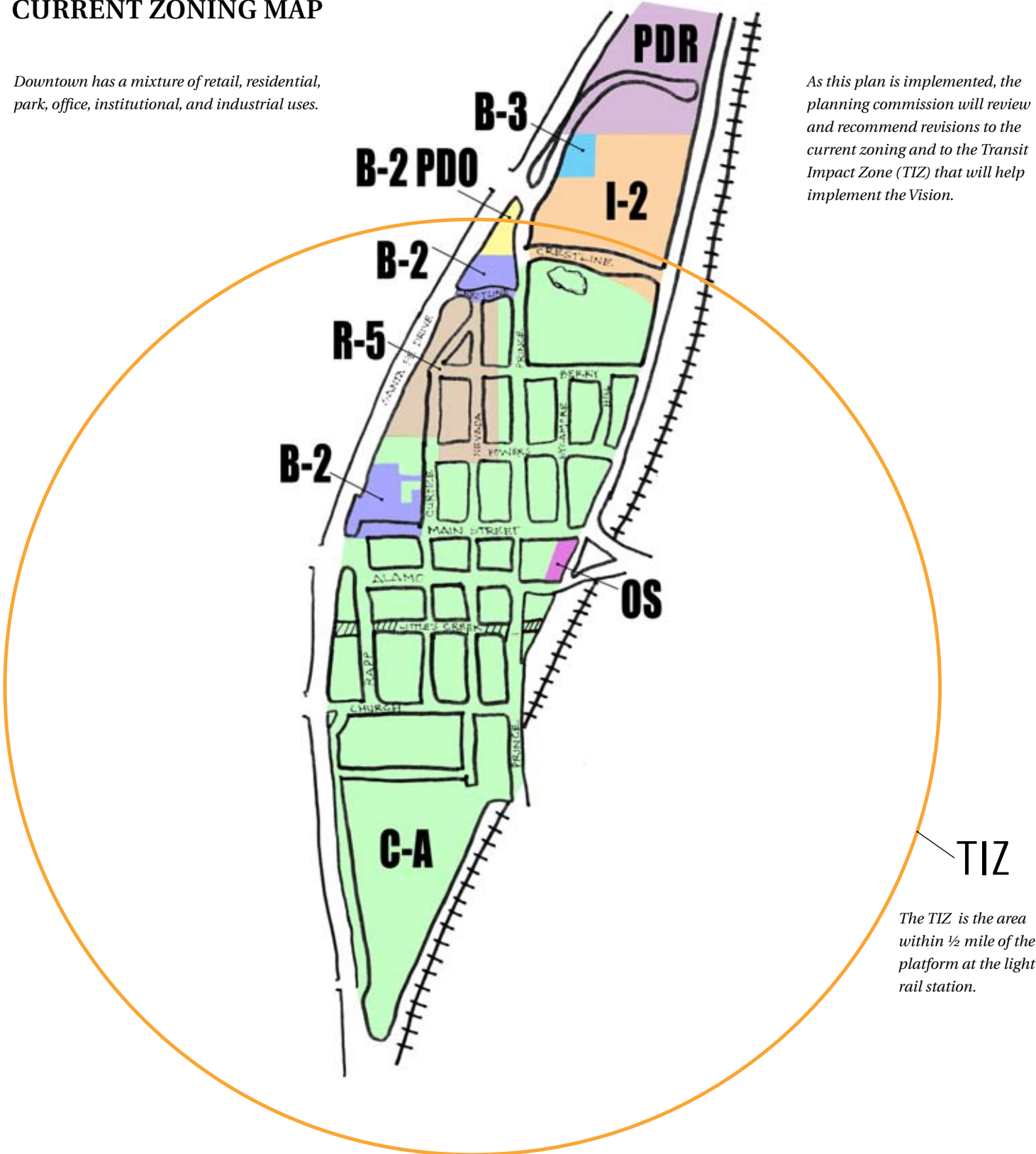
KEY

R-5	Residential Multiple-Family District	I-2	Heavy Industrial District
B-2	Community Business District	PDR	Planned Development – Residential District
B-2 PDO	District with a Planned Development Overlay	OS	Park/Open Space District
B-3	General Business District	TIZ	Transit Impact Zone
CA	Central Area Multiple Use District		

CURRENT ZONING MAP

Downtown has a mixture of retail, residential, park, office, institutional, and industrial uses.

As this plan is implemented, the planning commission will review and recommend revisions to the current zoning and to the Transit Impact Zone (TIZ) that will help implement the Vision.



The TIZ is the area within ½ mile of the platform at the light rail station.

3. OFFICE AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Small-scale offices can be found throughout downtown in mixed-use buildings, free-standing buildings, or in converted houses. In the Old Downtown Neighborhood, the zoning allows only medical and dental offices.

4. RETAIL

The retail shops and restaurants along and near Main Street combine to create one of the most attractive shopping streets in the region. Downtown Littleton offers specialty retail that is one-of-a-kind. It attracts from a regional market area and has a dedicated customer base. Historic Downtown Littleton Merchants Association (HDLM), the local merchants association, sponsors events and coordinates with the city and other downtown-related organizations.

Prince Street, where it intersects with Santa Fe Drive at the north entrance to downtown, has a motel and a variety of restaurants. There is a vacant parcel on the northeast side of the intersection that has the potential for additional restaurant or other retail uses. Together, these constitute the North Entry Retail.

5. SCALE

Downtown Littleton is made up of mostly one to three-story buildings. The scale, character, and design of these buildings are essential ingredients of downtown's small town feel and vibrant pedestrian environment.

B. CIRCULATION NETWORK

The downtown street grid is the foundation of the circulation network, which includes pedestrians, vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and parking. The interaction on the streets—people crossing streets, cars turning, parallel parking, merging lanes, and bicycles riding on the streets—demands a heightened awareness of safety and lower travel speeds.



Offices operating out of converted houses maintain the residential feel of the neighborhoods north of Main Street.



Specialty retail relies on a regional market as its customer base.



The downtown street grid is the foundation of the circulation network which includes pedestrians, vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and parking.

1. BICYCLES

Bicycles are currently treated as vehicles and share the road in downtown. There are no off-road trails except at Little's Creek, which is shared with pedestrians. There are some bicycle parking racks, including those at ACC, the light rail station, and along Main Street. Bicycles are accommodated on light rail vehicles and buses, making the combination of biking and transit an inviting option.

2. PARKING

There are 1,173 free, public-parking spaces within three blocks of Main Street. Of those, 330 are restricted to two-hour parking, 343 are unrestricted, and 500 are restricted during business hours but available for free evenings and weekends. There are no parking structures in downtown. The land uses that create the greatest individual parking demands – ACC, RTD, the county, and the city - provide large surface parking lots to address most of their parking needs. *Refer to parking map on page 28.*

3. PEDESTRIANS

Sidewalks throughout downtown and connecting to the adjacent neighborhoods serve as pedestrian connection routes. While many of the sidewalks are in good shape, there are gaps in the system and, other than those along Main Street, many of the sidewalks are narrow. The gaps in the network and the narrow sidewalks will be identified and addressed in the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan*. Perhaps the more difficult issue to resolve is the need for improved pedestrian connections between downtown and the surrounding areas, ACC and Main Street, and the light rail station and Main Street.

4. TRANSIT

One of the great assets of downtown is its access to light rail, which connects to the Denver metro area. There is also a network of buses including: RTD's bus system, Omnibus, a scheduled and dispatched demand-response transporta-



Bicycles are accommodated on light rail vehicles and buses, making the combination of biking and transit an inviting option.



The Downtown Littleton light rail station connects downtown to the region.



The City of Littleton presented its Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan at an open house Monday, June 27, 2011. The plan is focused on developing short term, implementable changes to the on-street system that can help improve walking and biking in Littleton.

tion service for older and disabled residents; and the Shopping Cart, a fixed-route service for older residents.

5. VEHICLES

The principal vehicular streets in downtown are Main Street and Alamo Avenue, a one-way pair. Prince Street runs north/south through downtown and connects across Santa Fe Drive to Belleview Avenue to the northwest and to Ridge Road and Mineral Avenue to the south. Other streets in the downtown network generally serve as internal circulation routes. This network operates well; however, directional signage needs improvement.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Littleton has the resources and conditions necessary for achieving and maintaining an economically vigorous downtown. A key factor in the economic health of the city and of downtown is the strong and supportive economic climate that the city has created for both new and existing businesses. The City of Littleton's Business/ Industry Affairs (BIA) Department's acclaimed Economic Gardening program has proven extremely successful in terms of increasing the city's employment base, economic diversity, and business growth. Since the inception of the program, the number of employees in the city has almost doubled from 15,000 in 1990 to 30,000 in 2009. Sales tax revenue has tripled from approximately \$6.8 million in 1990 to \$20 million in 2009. BIA provides customized research and training for businesses at no charge. This city-wide economic growth has supported and resulted in an economically healthy downtown.

Given the nature and scale of its businesses, downtown is not the largest generator of revenue for the city. Nonetheless, downtown is important to the economic health of the city. In addition to providing employment, services, and tax revenue, downtown helps attract a diversity of top-quality employers, highly-educated and well-trained employees, and residents who see Littleton as a desirable, long-term home.



Omnibus is a scheduled and dispatched demand response transportation service, operating five days per week and one Saturday per month. The service is for the disabled or residents over 55.



The Lilley Building on Main Street, which was renovated in 2006, provides an example of a successful re-use of a historic building.



More than one million holiday lights provide one of the most visible examples of the city's ongoing support of downtown.

DOWNTOWN PARKING MAP



**Total free public parking spaces
within three blocks of Main Street..... 1,173**

Two-hour parking spaces..... 330

Unrestricted parking spaces..... 343

Evening and weekend parking spaces..... 500

City of Littleton

D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Downtown Littleton is an authentic place, with iconic buildings and historic properties setting the tone. Littleton has a long-established commitment to honoring its history and has been proactive in the preservation and reuse of its historic landmarks and properties. The city has an historic preservation program that identifies individual landmarks and a designated Main Street Historic District. *Refer to the Main Street Historic District map on the next page.*

E. PARKS, TRAILS AND PUBLIC SPACE

Adjacent to the east and west boundaries of downtown are a wealth of parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities. On the other hand, there are relatively limited parks and public space within the boundaries of downtown.

There are two parks in downtown, Bega and Geneva, as well as Bowles Plaza, a landscaped area south of the Carnegie Library. Geneva Park, adjacent to the city offices, is the larger of the two downtown parks, but lacks visibility and has limited access. Bega Park, on the east end of the neighborhood between Main Street and Alamo, is dedicated to Littleton's Sister City, Bega, Australia. It is the most heavily used connection between the light rail station and Main Street, but also provides a quiet respite.

Little's Creek, south of Main Street, runs east/west in a narrow channel below the adjacent streets and buildings. The sidewalk along the creek goes under Santa Fe Drive and serves as a direct off-street connection between downtown and the west side of Santa Fe Drive, including access to the Mary Carter Greenway.

Because the channel is deep and narrow, the creek and the sidewalk and pedestrian lights along it are not readily visible from above. The concrete walls and limited space make landscaping difficult.

The city regularly allows the use of streets and public sidewalks in the Main Street District for community events, such as Western Welcome Week. These events draw thousands of people to downtown and their success is an important part of creating Littleton's sense of community and showcasing Main Street.

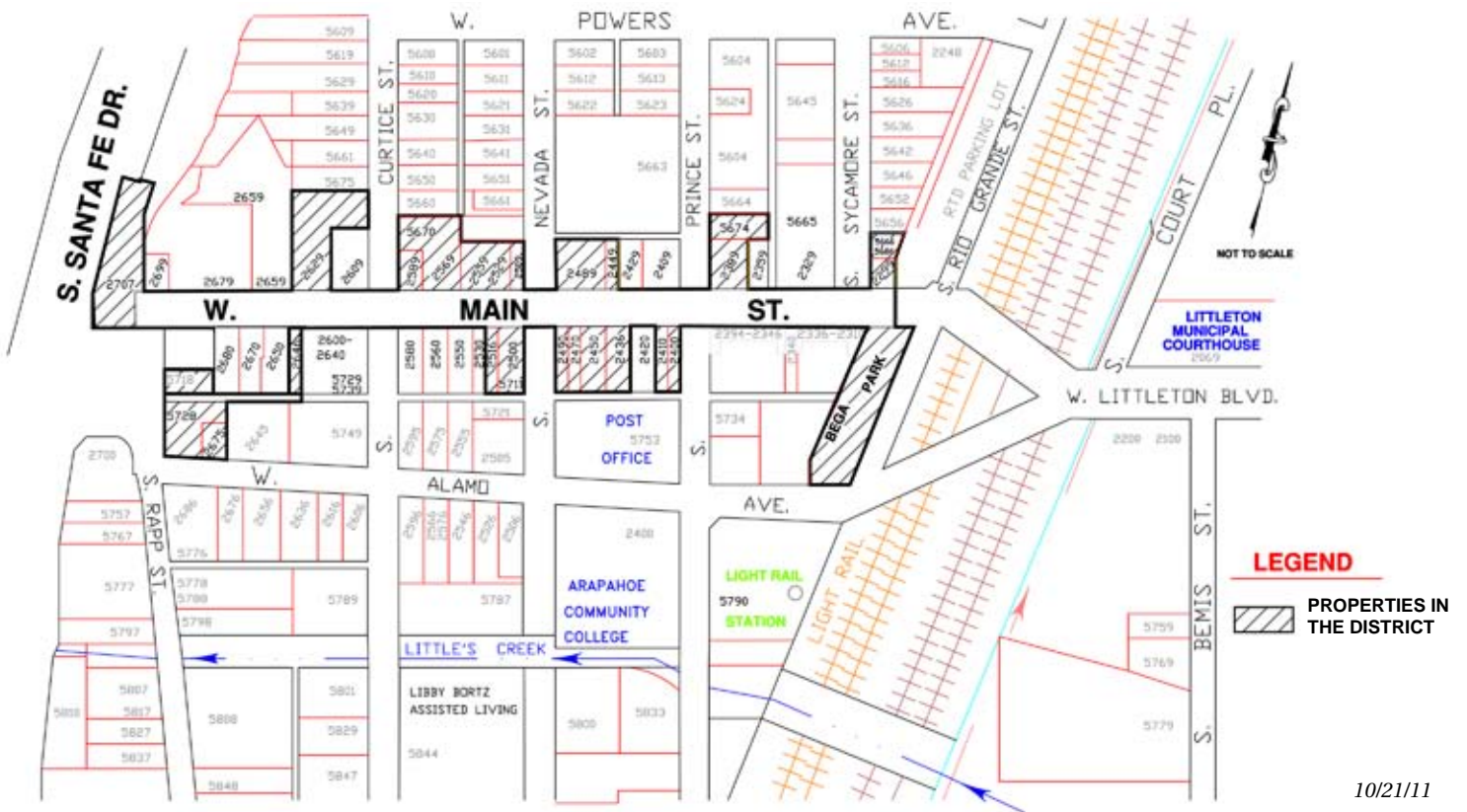


Bega Park provides a pleasant respite at the east end of Main Street.



The lake in Geneva Park provides an attractive setting for one of downtown's iconic structures, Geneva Lodge.

MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP



APPENDIX B

KEY

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

NOTE: Below are possible actions to be considered for implementation each year as adopted in the community development department's work plan.

#	The designation for a specific implementation strategy
LU	Land Use and Urban Design
CN	Circulation Network
ED	Economic Development
HP	Historic Preservation
P	Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces

#	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	PRIORITY
LU-1a	Review zoning	High
LU-1b	Coordinate zoning and development regulations and processes	High
LU-1c	Pursue Urban Center designation	High
LU-2a	Work with RTD on future use and parking at sites	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-2b	On Main St, retail and restaurant on ground floor	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-3a	Direct zoning to retain small-scale res as the primary use in the Old Downtown Neighborhood	High
LU-3b	Revise zoning, standards, and guidelines to conform with existing scale, mass and feel of the Old Downtown Neighborhood	High
LU-3c	Delete off-site commercial parking in R-5 zone	High
LU-4a	Enhance amenities in Residential Mixed-Use District	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-5a	If it is rezoned, change Industrial area to Residential MU Dist	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-5b	Address Industrial in Downtown Standards / Guidelines	High
LU-6a	Revise rules and regulations to achieve housing options	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-6b	Improve amenities to encourage mix of housing	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-7a	Design templates for Main, Alamo, and Prince	High
LU-7b	Improve pedestrian environment along Curtice	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-8a	Improve major entries	Ongoing and Long Range
LU-8b	Initiate a way-finding program	High
LU-9a	Considerations for height decisions	High
LU-10a	Employ techniques to not overwhelm iconic structures	High
LU-11a	Create a Downtown lighting plan	Medium
LU-12a	Coordinate development adjacent to gateways	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-1a	Tailor Complete Streets Program to downtown	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-2a	Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-3a	Improve sidewalks to conform to ADA	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4a	Design sidewalks to be at least 5' wide or are detached	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4b	Locate and design sidewalks as connections	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4c	Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to the east and west	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4d	Upgrade sidewalks along Prince and Santa Fe	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4e	Improve connections from station to Main and ACC	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4f	Separate pedestrians from moving cars	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-4g	Provide safe & comfortable street crossings	Ongoing and Long Range
CN-5a	Develop a parking program for downtown	High
ED-1a	Retain existing civic facilities	Ongoing and Long Range
ED-1b	Ensure downtown is considered for facilities	Ongoing and Long Range
ED-1c	Use Main St and cross-streets for events	Ongoing and Long Range
ED-1d	Promote cultural amenities	Ongoing and Long Range
ED-2a	Offer support services to businesses	Ongoing and Long Range

ED-2b	Use available techniques to promote businesses	Ongoing and Long Range
ED-3a	Collaborate to enhance economic activity	Ongoing and Long Range
ED-3b	Revise rules and processes to provide an attractive business environment	High
HP-1a	Support efforts to identify and designate significant structures	Ongoing and Long Range
HP-2a	Apply design standards to historic structures	Ongoing and Long Range
HP-3a	Maintain board liaisons and schedule joint meetings	Ongoing and Long Range
HP-3b	Review standards to ensure they protect integrity	High
HP-4a	Clarify, simplify, and coordinate development review / COA	High
HP-5a	Identify programs to highlight historic character	Ongoing and Long Range
P-1a	Improve Bega as a passive- use park	Ongoing and Long Range
P-1b	Improve Geneva as a family-friendly park with a mix of active and passive uses	Ongoing and Long Range
P-1c	Explore the installation of attractions that serve as destination to draw people downtown	Ongoing and Long Range
P-2a	Encourage development along park edges to stimulate public interaction	Ongoing and Long Range
P-3a	Identify and apply criteria for parks and open space	Ongoing and Long Range
P-3b	Establish criteria for adding or deleting park or open space downtown	Ongoing and Long Range
P-3c	Use available data when updating facilities	Ongoing and Long Range
P-4a	Improve connections to Little's Creek Trail	Ongoing and Long Range
P-4b	Add park space along Little's Creek Trail	Ongoing and Long Range
P-4c	Enhance connections to South Platte and Sterne Parks and establish connections to Slaughterhouse Gulch	Ongoing and Long Range

APPENDIX C–TIMELINE OF DEVELOPING THE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

APPOINTMENTS: New planning commissioners appointed	April 2008
WORKSHOP: Annual planning commission workshop, including a downtown walking tour and analysis of the downtown area	May 2008
PRIORITIES: Development of a Mission and Vision and setting of priorities for the Comprehensive Plan	June-August 2008
FORMAT: Development and review of a template and format	June 2008
FOCUS: Identification of “hot spots” that should be a focus of the plan	July 2008
COUNCIL: Joint workshop with city council	August 2008
COMPLAN: Evaluation of the current Comprehensive Plan, per direction from city council	October-November 2008
SWOT: Review of issues identified in SWOT (issues) analyses in which planning commission and city council participated	October 2008
HOUSING: Meeting with Littleton Housing Authority	November 2008
PARKING: Parking discussion with Charlie Blosten	November 2008
GOALS AND POLICIES: Review of draft goals and policies	November 2008
2030: Review of the goals and policies in the draft Littleton 2030 Plan	December 2008
COUNCIL: Joint meeting with city council	January 2009
VISION: Revision of the draft Vision Statement	February 2009
BOUNDARIES: Discussion of boundaries of the study area	February 2009
SURVEY: Development, distribution, and analysis of a community-wide survey	March-May 2009
GUIDELINES: Review of the existing Downtown Design Guidelines taking into consideration the Downtown Plan and the work to date	March 2009
ZONING: Review of the current zoning in light of the Downtown Plan taking into consideration the work to date	April 2009
CASE STUDIES: Review of case studies and the issues they raised, including issues of height and density	April 2009
OPEN HOUSE: Open house at Hudson Gardens to present the results of the citywide survey and gather additional input and thoughts	May 2009
INTERVIEWS: Personal interviews with key stakeholders	May-June 2009
FOCUS GROUP: Downtown residents focus group	June 2009
FOCUS GROUP: Downtown property owners focus group	July 2009
FOCUS GROUP: Downtown retailers focus group	July 2009
ANALYSIS: Analysis of public outreach	July-September 2009
REVIEW: Review of a revised draft Downtown Area Plan	October-December 2009
WORKSHOP: Workshop to complete a draft plan	November 2009
R-5 AND HEIGHT: Review of the area zoned R-5 and existing and desired height throughout downtown	January 2010
FACILITATOR: Introduction of a facilitator to help refocus the process	March 2010
CITY COUNCIL: Joint meeting with city council	March 2010

SMALL GROUPS: Creation of small groups to draft the plan. Groups were charged with developing: 1). Vision and Overview 2). Format 3). Historic Preservation 4). Land Use & Urban Design 5). Circulation & Parking 6). Parks & Open Space	April 2010
COMMITTEE REPORTS: Committee reports and draft text	May-July 2010
FRAMEWORK AND GOALS: Review of the Framework and revised Goals	August 2010
BICYCLES: Presentation from Dan Grunig of Bicycle Colorado	September 2010
CHARACTER: Analysis of character in the downtown area	September 2010
SUSTAINABILITY: Addition of sustainability to the downtown plan	September 2010
R-5 CASE STUDY: Review of a case study and discussion of the R-5 neighborhood	October 2010
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Review of Chris Gibbons' answers to questions posed by the commission	October-November 2010
REVIEW: Review of the revised draft plan, including the Framework	November-December 2010
RESIDENTS: R-5 resident's meeting (Old Downtown Neighborhood)	December 2010
REVIEW: Review of questions raised by the plan	January-February 2011
FINALIZATION: Finalization of a draft plan	March-July 2011
PUBLIC HEARING: Planning commission public hearing on the draft plan	July-August 2011
REVIEW AND ADOPTION: Review of comments from the public hearing. Adoption of the plan, including any desired revisions based on the comments and discussion	August-September 2011
PUBLIC HEARING: City council public hearing on the adopted plan	August-September 2011
REVIEW AND RATIFICATION: Review of the comments from the public hearing. Ratification of the plan, including any desired revisions based on the comments and discussion.	September 2011-January 2012

APPENDIX D THE PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

A. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

The planning commission conducted extensive outreach to the community, including developing and conducting a citywide survey; holding a public open house; and holding focus group meetings with downtown residents, retailers, business and property owners, key stakeholders, and residents from the R-5 district. Additionally, the planning commission and staff identified and interviewed individual downtown stakeholders. These stakeholders included architects, business owners, property owners, and representatives from major employers and regional attractions.

B. SURVEY RESULTS

In the spring of 2009, the planning commission and staff worked with Bob Tonsing of The Public Information Corporation to design and distribute more than 27,000 questionnaires as an insert in the *Littleton Report*. Copies were also available at the Bemis Library, the Littleton Museum, and at the Littleton Center. Planning commissioners and staff personally delivered copies to key stakeholders. More than 1,400 questionnaires were returned, which is an extremely good response rate and one that is considered statistically significant. The answers were analyzed with the following results:

1. SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE

The first question was opened-ended and asked, “What one thing do you like most about the Downtown Littleton area?” Fifty six percent (56%) of the respondents said they liked the “small town atmosphere” of downtown and 15% said they liked “the stores.”

The second question, which was also open-ended, asked what was least liked about downtown. The largest response was “parking” (30% of respondents), with “the condition and adequacy of the streets” (15%) coming in

second. Concerns about “the variety and prices of stores” garnered 13%.

2. REASONS TO GO DOWNTOWN

The main reason survey respondents said they go downtown was “to go to restaurants” (32%). Sixteen percent (16%) went downtown “to shop” and others went “for entertainment/special events” (14%) or “to use light rail” (14%). Most trips downtown were in the “evening” (22%) or on a “weekend” (28%).

3. COMMUNITY VALUES

The questionnaire asked respondents to rank the importance of community values, with possible scores ranging from “not very important” to “very important.” Questions were asked regarding the look and feel of downtown, the size and scale of buildings relative to those on Main Street, the importance of community gathering spots, the desired mix of historic and historically compatible architecture, the attraction of small and independently owned businesses, the importance of pedestrian-friendly improvements, and the significance of a feeling of personal safety. More than 70% of survey respondents ranked each of these community values as either “important” or “very important.” Very few respondents designated the values as “not important.”

Of these community values, the “feeling of personal safety” ranked highest, with 67% of respondents designating it as “very important.” “Pedestrian-friendly amenities” was the second most important, with 64% of respondents designating it as “very important.” The “mix of historic and compatible architecture” ranked third, as indicated by 58% of respondents.

The lowest ranked community value was “providing community gathering spots,” but even that was determined to be “very important” by 44% of the respondents. Less important, but still capturing a 51% “very important” vote, was “the size and scale of buildings.” “A look and feel unlike other communities” captured a 49% “very important” vote.

4. PARKING

Fifty five percent (55%) of the respondents said there was not enough parking downtown, while 41% said there was adequate parking. Residents 65 years or older felt that there was not enough parking downtown. Residents of Littleton for five years or less felt parking downtown was adequate. Residents of Littleton for more than 20 years felt that parking downtown was inadequate. The survey respondents suggested ways to address the parking situation downtown including building a parking structure at the light rail station, building a parking garage along Santa Fe Drive next to the Carnegie Library, and disallowing employee parking along Main Street.

5. TRANSPORTATION

Eighty seven percent (87%) of the respondents felt downtown was friendly to pedestrians. Forty one percent (41%) felt downtown was friendly to bicyclists, while 37% felt it was not friendly.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

More women and older citizens filled out the surveys. Sixty five percent (65%) of the respondents were female. Fifty six percent (56%) of the survey respondents were over 55 years of age and those over 65 years of age comprised 34% of the total respondents. Only 8% of the survey respondents were under 35 years of age.

Thirty six percent (36%) of the respondents identified themselves as living in the central area of Littleton, but not downtown, and only 3% of respondents identified themselves as living downtown. Survey results showed 28% of the participants identified themselves as living in Southwest Littleton and 19% as living in Southeast Littleton.

Survey respondents were vested in Littleton's community. Forty two percent (42%) of the survey respondents have lived in Littleton for more than 20 years. Thirty percent (30%) have lived in Littleton less than 10 years.



Residents of Littleton for five years or less felt parking downtown was adequate. Residents of Littleton for more than 20 years felt that parking downtown was inadequate.



Some respondents suggested building a parking structure at the light rail station or building a parking garage along Santa Fe Drive next to the Melting Pot



C. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

Survey results were tabulated and presented at a well-attended open house on May 11, 2009, held at the Inn at Hudson Gardens. A short presentation provided an overview of the planning process and survey results. Planning commissioners facilitated discussions on transportation, retail, historic and compatible architecture, housing, light rail, transit oriented development, zoning/development review, and design guidelines. A seventh commissioner facilitated an open discussion that addressed topics not covered by one of the other groups. Participants were also asked to identify what they perceive to be the boundaries of Downtown Littleton. Participants submitted comment cards in order to provide additional thoughts or to reiterate what they had discussed at the discussion tables.

D. FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

1. DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS FOCUS GROUP MEETING

On June 29, 2009, the planning commission held a meeting with downtown residents to solicit their unique perspectives. Residents contributed to the Vision and also visited stations to discuss their views on circulation, economic development, historic character/historic preservation, housing, land use, parks and open space, and urban design. Residents identified the need for additional resident-friendly retail and service uses and park improvements.

2. DOWNTOWN RETAILERS FOCUS GROUP MEETING

A similar meeting was held with downtown retailers on July 6, 2009. Retailers visited topic tables and provided their views on circulation, economic development, historic character/historic preservation, housing, land use, parks and open space, and urban design. An open microphone encouraged participation in the process. As anticipated, parking was an issue. The merchants questioned whether the parking requirement for development is unattainable and whether the two-hour limit is too much or not enough.

3. DOWNTOWN PROPERTY OWNERS FOCUS GROUP MEETING

On July 20, 2009, a focus group was held with downtown property owners to look at the Vision and to provide their perspective on circulation, economic development, historic preservation, housing, land use/zoning/development, parks and open space, and urban design. The open microphone generated many suggestions.

E. R-5 DISTRICT RESIDENTIAL ANALYSIS AND MEETING

The planning commission reviewed a lot-by-lot study of the area in downtown that is currently zoned R-5. The study included an analysis of the parameters of the existing zoning and compared that to the actual density, land use, lot size, and set backs of the properties in the area. The commission discussed the redevelopment potential of a sampling of the lots, given the current zoning. It also discussed the potential assemblage of lots within this area and the implications of any potential assemblages. The commission reviewed a case study of the Nevada Place development, including an analysis of the development review process and the design alternatives and decisions. The commission determined that another development of the scale of Nevada Place would be inappropriate for the R-5 area. It discussed possible changes to the zoning and the design guidelines to help retain the existing character and the potential implications of those changes. Because the changes discussed could be substantial, the planning commission felt strongly that additional input should be solicited from the residents and property owners in the area. Notices of a subsequent meeting were mailed to every property owner and delivered to each address in the R-5 area. Residents at that meeting agreed that they wanted to maintain the residential feel, but said existing medical and dental uses were acceptable as secondary uses. They also expressed concern about a potential increase in the demand for on-street parking and support for widened sidewalks and pedestrian lights in order to better accommodate pedestrian traffic.

F. INTERVIEWS

Planning commissioners and staff used the survey as the starting point for a series of interviews with representatives of key downtown stakeholders. These interviews provided valuable insight into the variety of roles and perspectives that this plan reflects. Specific comments from the interviews are included below along with those from other elements of the outreach program.

G. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM PUBLIC OUTREACH

The following are a sampling of comments received during the public outreach program, either with the surveys, at the public open house, in the focus group meetings, or in interviews.

1. RETAIL

- a. Downtown needs more coffee shops, bakeries, a drug store, ice cream shops, a butcher shop, a natural grocer, and more restaurants
- b. There are “cute” shops downtown
- c. Nothing is open on nights and on Sundays
- d. Shops are vacant in the downtown area
- e. Rents are high
- f. There are too many boutiques and not enough practical retail
- g. No place to buy milk
- h. Attract national retailers such as coffee shops

2. HOUSING

- a. Don't tear down historic buildings for parking lots
- b. Encourage redevelopment southwest of Curtice Street along Main Street
- c. Need affordable housing in downtown
- d. Need owner-occupied housing
- e. Three to four story structures should not be placed next to single-family residences without transitions

- f. Consider development downtown to complement the existing single-family houses
- g. Development should be mixed-use
- h. Components of the design guidelines are too restrictive
- i. Don't be like Cherry Creek North
- j. Don't provide age-restricted housing in the downtown area
- k. Other comments say age restrictions are valuable
- l. More Transit Oriented Development
- m. Less Transit Oriented Development
- n. More development is needed
- o. Less development is needed
- p. Residential should focus on duplexes
- q. Pay attention to scale in relationship to adjacent development

3. CIRCULATION

- a. Divert traffic around downtown
- b. Provide more bike racks
- c. Parallel parking is difficult
- d. Designate parking spaces for merchants
- e. RTD has a parking problem
- f. Two hours to park is not enough time; others say it is too much time
- g. Mix two and three-hour parking
- h. Have signs to indicate downtown parking and distinguish between public and private
- i. Don't tax to solve the parking problems
- j. Consider paid parking
- k. Better connection to Santa Fe Drive was consistently an issue. Suggestions included putting Santa Fe below grade.
- l. Inventory all parking

4. HEIGHT

- a. Limit heights to three stories – don't build too high
- b. Limit heights on the perimeter of the Central Area
- c. Height limits are arbitrary

5. CONNECTIVITY

- a. Connect light rail, EchoStar, Bemis Library, Ketring Park, and ACC to downtown
- b. Connect South Platte Park and downtown

6. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

- a. Activate Bega Park
- b. Provide a public plaza for events and music/entertainment
- c. Connect light rail and the Mary Carter Greenway

7. WAYFINDING

- a. Improve signage and way finding

8. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- a. Development should complement historic buildings
- b. Maintain historic character
- c. Don't be overzealous about preservation

9. OTHER

- a. Move smoking areas on Main Street to the back of the buildings
- b. EchoStar property is an opportunity – could have a grocery store
- c. Get rid of one-way streets
- d. Focus development on Alamo Avenue
- e. Streamline the land-use process
- f. Consistently enforce city code
- g. Embrace special events
- h. City design decisions are subjective rather than objective



The façade restoration work on the Batschelet Building on Main Street was completed in 1995 and contributes to downtown's historic small town character.



Ketring Park, just east of the railroad, is an example of the ample parks and open spaces adjacent to downtown.



The Mary Carter Greenway trail, just west of downtown, provides bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown and the region.

APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE PLAN

Note: The definitions of terms that are not included here are generally those that can be found by looking in a standard dictionary or by searching online.

1. **Adoption:** The act of accepting formally and putting into effect.
2. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1990 and later amended with changes effective in 2009, the ADA is a wide-ranging law that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. Disability is defined by the ADA as, “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.” The “Public Accommodations” section of the law impacts the design of public sidewalks and public street intersections, generally providing for enhanced standards of accessibility.
3. **CA Zone District:** A mixed-use zone district that was developed for Littleton’s downtown business district; is generally applied to it; and promotes a mix of residential, retail, service, office, amusement, and associated commercial and business uses.
4. **Character:** The aggregate of features and traits that form the individual nature of a thing or place.
5. **Circulation Network:** The system of facilities that accommodate drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and those who use public transportation.
6. **Commercial:** Of, connected with, or otherwise engaged in commerce; generally refers to both retail and office uses.
7. **Connection:** A link between different locations. In the context of this plan, a connection can be physical and can be traversed by pedestrians, bicycles, cars, or transit; or it can be a visual connection that allows a view between locations.
8. **COMPLAN:** The name given to the City of Littleton’s comprehensive plan.
9. **Complete Streets:** Streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists are able to safely move along and across a Complete Street.
10. **Comprehensive Plan:** The primary long-range master planning document for city planning. Comprehensive plans are broad-based and contain policy-level directives to guide the community’s future.
11. **Corridor:** A strip of land along a street or highway.
12. **Design Template:** A pattern for the design of spaces and structures.
13. **Designated Structures:** Buildings that have been approved for official city recognition as historic structures.
14. **Development:** Broadly applied to refer to a range of construction activities.
15. **District:** A region or locality defined by geographical attributes.
16. **Framework:** Composed of a diagram and a description, the Framework demonstrates, from a land use point of view, how the neighborhood is structured. It is both a snapshot of today and a plan for the future.
17. **Goals:** Define the desired outcome of implementing the Policies and Implementation Strategies. Goals set the direction for actions, resource allocation, and planning decisions. They are structured as passive “will” statements.

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18. **Guideline:** Recommended practice that allows some discretion or leeway in its interpretation, implementation, or use.
19. **Height Limit:** A restriction on the maximum height of structures.
20. **Iconic Structures:** Buildings that, although they are not necessarily significant because of their history or architecture, function as landmarks and play a key role in identifying Downtown Littleton. The structures that this plan identifies as iconic are:
- Carnegie Library, currently occupied by a restaurant
 - Courthouse, originally the Arapahoe County Courthouse, now the City of Littleton's Municipal Courthouse
 - Geneva Lodge, owned by the city and leased to and renovated by a private architectural firm for its office
 - Town Hall, a performing arts center
 - Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot, relocated and used as a coffee shop at the light rail station
 - Columbine Mill, now a restaurant
 - Little/Holmes Residence, currently used as offices
21. **Implementation Strategies:** Actions the city will take to complete the Policies, Goals, and Vision of the plan and are structured as imperative statements.
22. **Land Use:** The human use of land, property, or a structure. Land use categories typical to Littleton are referenced in the zoning code.
23. **Mixed-Use Area:** An area in which the use of a building, set of buildings, or neighborhood is used for more than one purpose.
24. **Neighborhood Plan:** An element of a citywide comprehensive plan that is consistent with and helps implement the goals of the citywide plan, but is more specifically directed to one particular neighborhood. A neighborhood plan is one type of small area plan; other types of small area plans include corridor plans and district plans.
25. **Policies:** Statements that provide more detailed direction for the plan and present tasks that will achieve the Goals. Because the plan is a guideline, policies are structured as active “should” statements.
26. **Principle:** A fundamental, primary, or general truth from which others are derived; an essential quality.
27. **Public Realm:** Streets and other spaces that are designed and managed for public use and to which the public has regular access.
28. **R-5 Zone District:** The sub-area of downtown located to the north of Main Street and generally west of the Prince Street/Nevada Place alley, but not including the Nevada Place development.
29. **Railroad Grade Separation:** The area along and on either side of the main heavy rail and light rail lines that run north/south on the east side of downtown. The city worked with the railroads to create a grade separation between the rail lines and Prince Street, Alamo Avenue, and Main Street in order to reduce safety hazards, improve traffic flow, and minimize the visual and sound impacts of the trains.
30. **Ratification:** The act of formally approving and sanctioning.
31. **Review Processes:** Processes used by the city to consider approving or adopting a variety of actions. There are review processes, for example, for adopting the comprehensive plan, for approving a rezoning, or approving a development application.

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32. **Scale:** Relative size, based on height, volume, width, and other measurements.
33. **Setbacks:** Imaginary lines some distance to the rear of the property line that generally determine the allowed locations of structures; also, the area produced by a setback.
34. **Site Assemblage:** A collection of individual parcels that are associated to facilitate development or redevelopment.
35. **Step-backs:** Upper stories of a structure that are set farther back from the front of that structure than are the lower stories.
36. **Sustainability:** A sustainable Littleton community meets the needs of the present while enhancing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* builds on the City of Littleton *Environmental Action Plan* by focusing on energy use, waste management, water use, and air quality.
37. **Transit:** Generally refers to local public transportation, such as the RTD buses and light rail.
38. **Transit Impact Zone (TIZ):** An area one-half mile in radius from a transit station platform, in which development is subject to additional design review.
39. **Urban Design:** The arrangement, appearance and functionality of towns and cities, and in particular the shaping and uses of urban public space.
40. **Vision:** A description of the future of downtown as imagined if the Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies are followed.



acknowledgements

Littleton City Council

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Special thanks to:

Charlie Blosten, Public Services Director
Dan Burnham, Littleton Housing Authority Director
Phil Cortese, Former Deputy City Manager
Kirsten Crawford, Acting City Attorney
Chris Gibbons, Business/Industry Affairs Director
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Rachal Metz, Printer
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Survey Design and Analysis