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EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN COLORADO SPRINGS

*Prepared under the direction of:
Downtown Development Authority of Colorado Springs
and the City of Colorado Springs*

*Prepared by MIG, Inc. in association with:
Progressive Urban Management Associates,
Starboard Realty Group,
Alta Planning + Design,
and Walker Parking Associates*



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Introduction

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The Introduction explains the setting, provides context and background, reviews the planning process and describes the organization of the Plan of Development and Master Plan.

Overview

Vibrant, livable downtowns are now understood to be an economic imperative for cities.

Millennials and boomers are driving a resurgence in Downtown living. Skilled talent is in high demand, prompting both start-ups and established businesses to locate in the compact urban centers that their employees prefer. Transit and infrastructure improvements are helping revitalize historic districts, create more walkable and bikeable destinations, and foster more engaging and healthy Downtown environments.

Downtown Colorado Springs has embraced many steps in line with these broader trends. **Now is the time to align all business, government and community forces to create the greatest Downtown of any midsize city in the country.**

The long-envisioned renaissance of Downtown Colorado Springs has taken hold in recent years, as new market interest and development have bolstered the city center in myriad ways. Tejon Street hums as a retail and dining destination. The Legacy Loop and other biking and walking connections are becoming a reality. Several major projects – including the U.S. Olympic Museum in Southwest Downtown, new business investment, and hundreds of new residential units in the pipeline – are poised to further accelerate growth and change in the coming years.

But much work remains. Colorado Springs vies for jobs, workers and tourists against comparable markets with already revitalized city centers, bustling with amenities, residents and workers. Building from the foundation of recent successes, Colorado Springs must outline a **strategic, actionable, consensus-built roadmap to elevate Downtown to the next level.**

These plans illustrate that path forward. They serve as **tactical updates to the 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan**, both of which were approved by City Council after a four-year strategic visioning process involving hundreds of stakeholders.

The updated Plan of Development also incorporates and **supports more than a dozen recent, complementary city and regional plans.** The Plan of Development works in alignment with the updated Master Plan, and also advances the vision, objectives, policies and strategies of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The updated Master Plan provides specific tactics to move forward unfulfilled goals of the 2009 plan as well as providing new chapters addressing transportation and mobility, and parks, trails and public spaces.

One conviction has emerged from the process to update the Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and Imagine Downtown Master Plan: **We are no longer “imagining” a great downtown – we are creating it and experiencing it daily,** and must move swiftly to seize opportunities in the near-term to propel Downtown Colorado Springs forward. For this reason, the updated plans are now called the **Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan of Development** and the **Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Master Plan.**

Setting

For the purposes of these plans, **Downtown is viewed in the context of the Legacy Loop** trail system and the **land use study area defined by the boundary of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**.

Generally speaking, the study area is bounded on the north by Colorado College (Cache la Poudre Street); on the east by the Shooks Run section of the Legacy Loop; on the south by Fountain Boulevard and the freight rail tracks; and on the west by the Monument Creek Trail section of the Legacy Loop and Interstate 25 (Figure 1.1).

Downtown Colorado Springs' geographic location and spectacular physical setting have played a major role in shaping its history. **Location and setting also serve as important drivers of its future development.**

Although many towns and cities in Colorado were settled by miners and ranchers, Colorado Springs' appeal was climate and culture. Looming over the city is Pikes Peak, where Katharine Lee Bates penned "America the Beautiful." By 1918 Colorado Springs was renowned as a destination, with both the Antlers and Broadmoor hotels serving tourists from around the world. At an elevation of 6,035 feet, the area also became a health-oriented destination where thousands of people came to relieve their tuberculosis in the dry mountain air.

Colorado Springs is still known as a tourist destination due to its **natural beauty, proximity to outdoor recreation, and a culture of adventure** that attracts visitors from around the world. The city features 14,287 acres of dedicated parkland and experiences an average of 247 days of sunshine per year, adding not only to its tourist charm, but also to its status as a great place to live.



Postcards of the Antlers Hotel from the early 1900s showcased Colorado Springs' natural and architectural beauty.

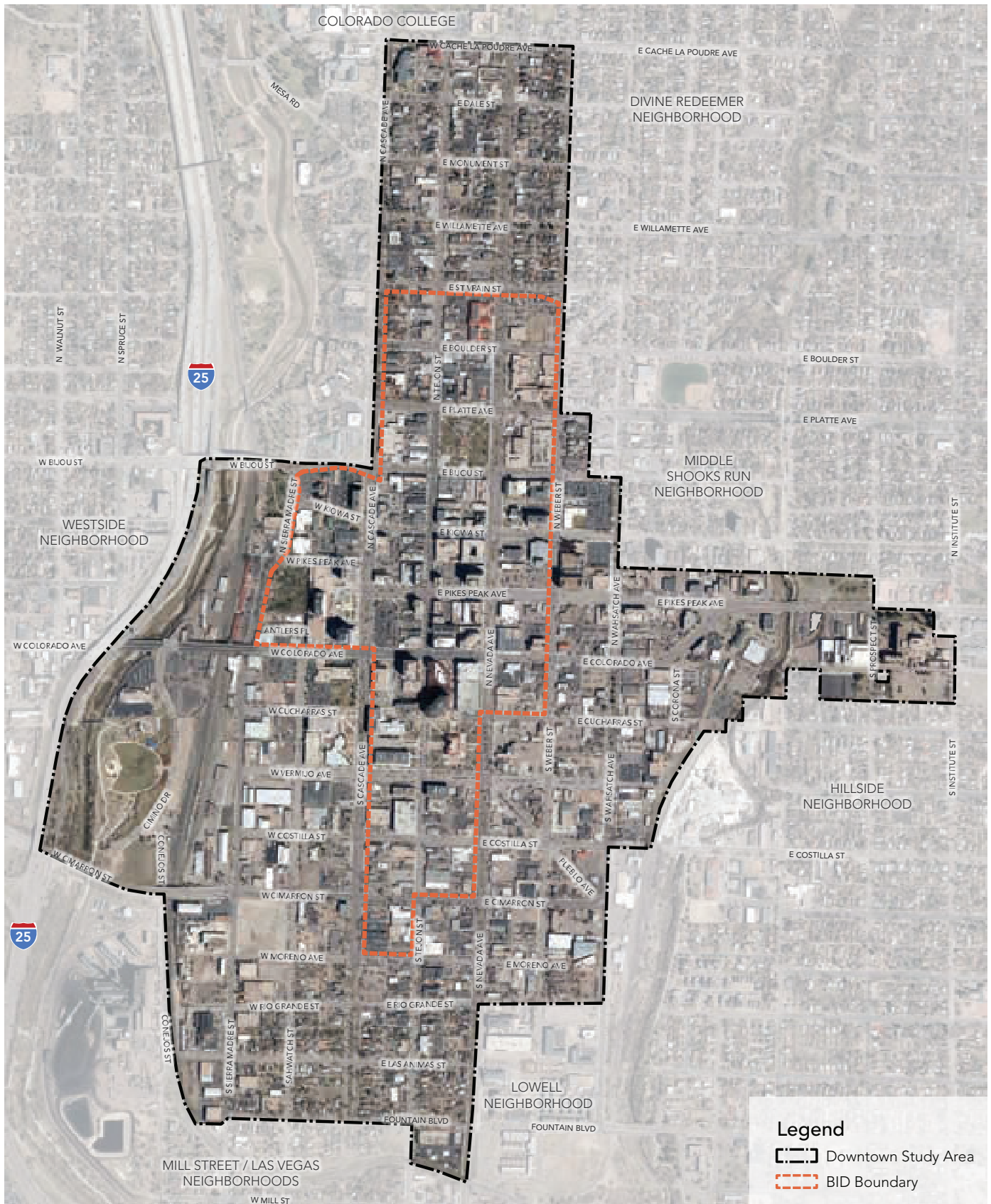
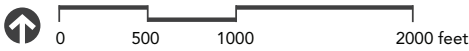


Figure 1.1 | Downtown Study Area



COLORADO'S FRONT RANGE AND THE COLORADO SPRINGS AREA

Situated 70 miles south of Denver and a two-hour drive from the skiing and outdoor recreation found in Summit and Chaffee counties, and easily accessible by air and car travel, Colorado Springs sits in a **strategic position at the center of Colorado's Front Range** (Figure 1.2). Despite its proximity and similarities to other Front Range area communities, the city has been shaped by distinct demographic, cultural, and economic conditions that continue to define its development and market opportunities.

Colorado Springs is the seat of El Paso County, the state's second most populous county. With a land area of approximately 195 square miles and a 2014 population of 445,830, it is also **the state's largest city in land mass and is the second largest city in population** (Figure 1.3). The city's population density of approximately 2,300 people per square mile is significantly lower than Denver's (4,000 per square mile), but similar to other Front Range cities such as Fort Collins (2,653) or Pueblo (2,265). Colorado Springs' density pattern is partially due to the city's significant infill opportunities, with almost 30% of its total land mass (36,000 acres) being vacant. This trend is similarly reflected in the downtown and surrounding central areas.

As home to the U.S. Air Force Academy, Fort Carson, Peterson Air Force Base and other installations, **Colorado Springs' demographics and economy are strongly influenced by the military and defense industries.** Military installations represent four of the top five public sector employers locally, although the bases lie outside city limits. Fort Carson boasts just over 26,000 active duty employees, plus nearly 100,000 civilian employees, family members and retirees with ties to the post (70 percent living off post). Peterson has nearly 18,000 employees and the Air Force Academy attracts 4,000 elite students each year.

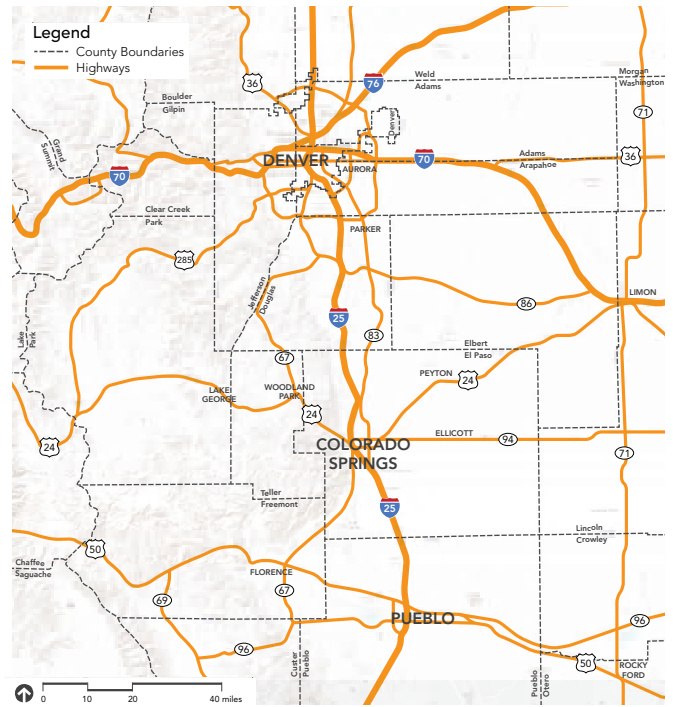


Figure 1.2 | Front Range Context

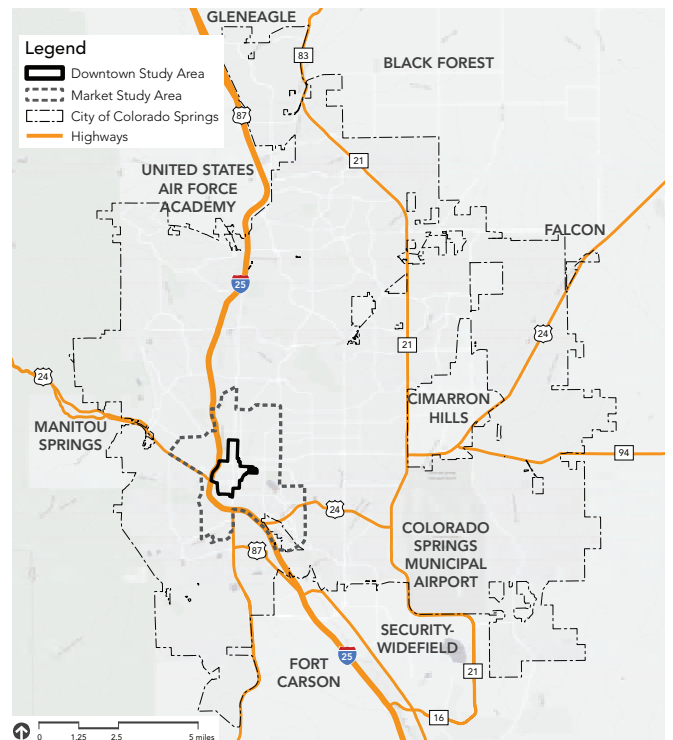


Figure 1.3 | Colorado Springs Area

Education is a significant influence in Colorado Springs, and it is regularly **ranked among the top 10 most educated cities in America**. The city has seven school districts and more than 190 elementary, middle, junior and senior high schools. Downtown sits within Colorado Springs School District 11, which has 31 elementary schools, nine middle schools, and four high schools, of which one is located in the Downtown core, William J. Palmer High School. Higher education is particularly important in the city; Colorado Springs has 12 colleges and universities with an estimated student population of nearly 35,000 students. Colorado College, which is located on the northern edge of Downtown, enrolls approximately 2,000 students per year, and Pikes Peak Community College enrolls approximately 6,000 students annually at its Downtown campus.

Finally, **tourism is a major driver of Colorado Springs' economy, attracting an average of more than 5 million visitors per year**. The industry is the third largest in Colorado Springs, supporting 17,000 jobs and generating over \$56 million in tax revenue for the City. Downtown Colorado Springs boasts numerous attractions for visitors and is home to the historic Antlers Hotel and the Mining Exchange Hotel, opened in 2012.



The U.S. military and defense industries are major employers in the Colorado Springs area.

DOWNTOWN COLORADO SPRINGS

At just over one square mile in size, Downtown serves not only the citizens of Colorado Springs but also functions as a **regional employment, retail and entertainment center** catering to nearby towns and cities. While Downtown is still not a primary destination for some residents of the city, it is bordered by numerous established and emerging neighborhoods such as the Old North End, Middle Shooks Run, Lowell, Mill Street, Hillside, Ivywild, and the Westside (Figure 1.4). These neighborhoods, as well as nearby neighborhoods such as Gold Hill Mesa and the Broadmoor area, turn frequently to Downtown for employment, dining, shopping and cultural experiences. The Legacy Loop, a nearly 10-mile ring of trails and parks, encircles the Downtown study area and serves as a unifying feature that links many adjacent neighborhoods to the city center. Several portions of the Legacy Loop also connect to regional trails that tie Downtown to the rest of the city and support its role as an important organizing element surrounding the core.

In recent years, the city center has struggled at times to attract new residents and investment. According to the 2016 Market Assessment conducted as part of the update process, while the city's overall population increased significantly (15%) from 2000 to 2010, Downtown experienced a population decline, losing 8% of its population. **Downtown is slowly regaining its residential population (growing 3% from 2010 to 2015) and could grow by more than one-third as new residential units meet pent-up demand.**

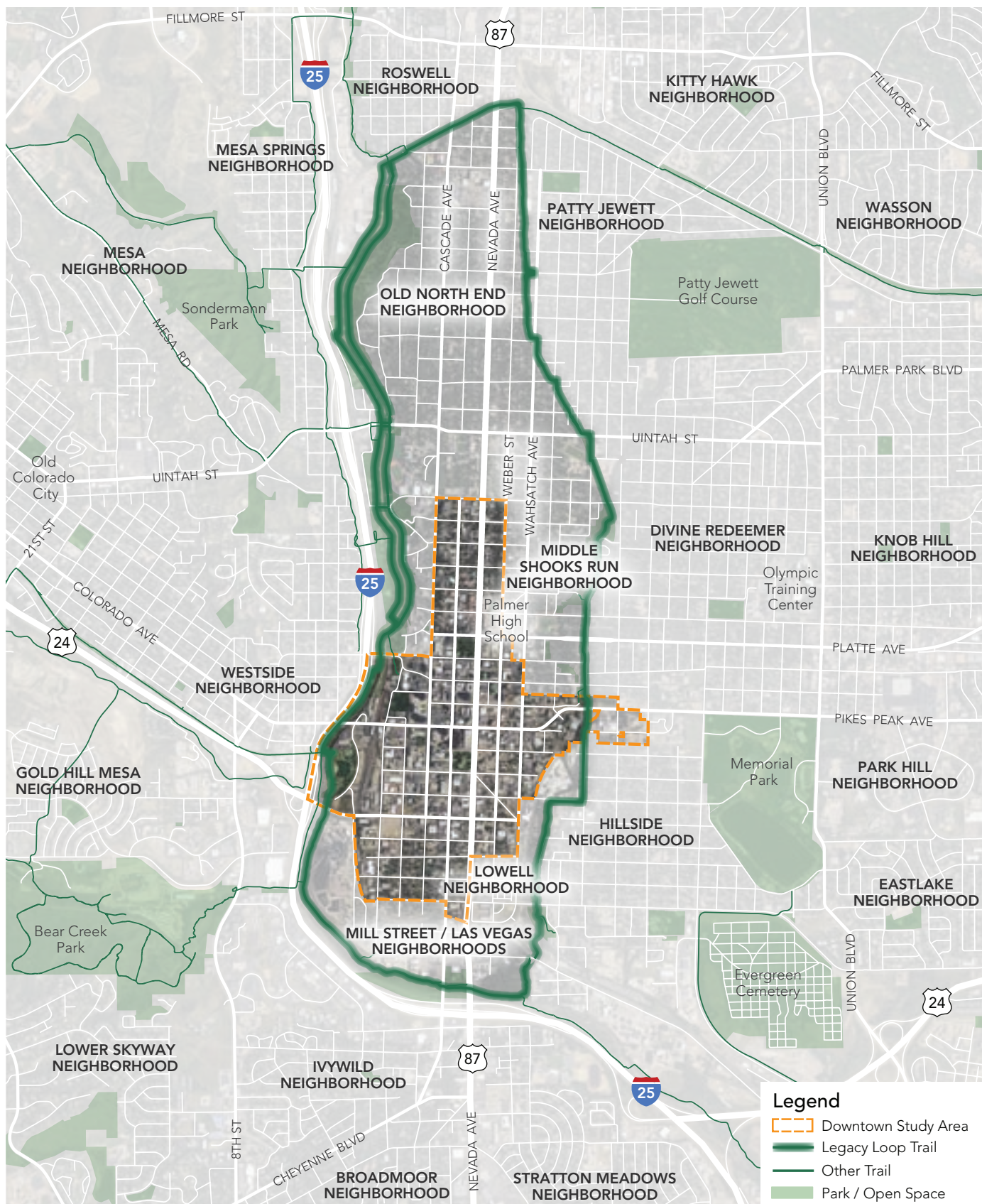


Figure 1.4 | Downtown Neighborhoods



The Evolution of Downtown Colorado Springs

General Palmer's crew drives the first stake at the intersection of Pikes Peak and Cascade avenues
1871



Acacia Place and Alamo Square (now Pioneers Square), are deeded to the public through the plat filing of the original town site
1871

Colorado College founded by the Colorado Council of Congregational Churches on land donated by the Colorado Springs Company
1874

The first Antlers Hotel, "The Finest Resort Hotel in the Mountain West" opens
1883

Katharine Lee Bates, staying at the Antlers Hotel, writes "America the Beautiful" after descending from Pikes Peak
1893

The Payne Chapel A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) Church is built on Weber Street and Pueblo Avenue to serve the African American community
1897

The Great Fire levels the business area, including the first Antlers Hotel
1898

Antlers Park is formally deeded to the public
1899

Winfield Scott Stratton purchases a street car company and creates a 41-mile transit system, costing five cents per ride
1901



The second Antlers Hotel opens
1901

The El Paso County Courthouse opens its new building in Alamo Square
1903



Monument Valley Park, donated by Gen. Palmer opens
1907

Electric traffic lights are installed at major Downtown intersections
1923

City Auditorium is constructed
1923

The last electric trolley car is removed from city streets
1932

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center opens
1936



I-25 opens along Downtown's western boundary
1960

The second Antlers Hotel is demolished
1965

The Chase Stone Center, a complex including the third Antlers Hotel, the Holly Sugar Building, and retail shops, is finished
1967



1870 - 1899

1900 - 1929

1930 - 1969

1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970

Figure 1.5 | The Evolution of Downtown Colorado Springs

The first Downtown Plan is issued
1971

The Olympic Training Center moves its headquarters to Colorado Springs
1978

The Pioneers Museum opens in the renovated El Paso County Courthouse after the Pikes Peak Landmarks Council lobbies for the building's preservation
1979

The 2,000-seat Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts opens
1982



The Downtown Action Plan is completed
1992

Downtown Partnership and Community Ventures, successors of Downtown Inc., are founded
1997

Founding of Art on the Streets
1998



1970 - 1999

Lowell, a 58-acre mixed-use urban renewal project in the southeast corner of Downtown, is under way
2000

Uncle Wilber Fountain opens in Acacia Park
2001

The Pikes Peak Greenway, a 35-mile trail from Palmer Lake to Fountain, is completed
2002

America the Beautiful Park opens
2004

Imagine Downtown planning begins
2006

The Fine Arts Center unveils its \$28.4 million, 48,000-square-foot renovation and expansion
2007

The Julie Penrose Fountain is completed at America the Beautiful Park
2007



Founding of Downtown Development Authority
2007

Tejon Street is converted from one-way to two-way traffic
2008

Colorado College opens the Edith Kinney Gaylord Cornerstone Center for the Arts
2008

Adoption of the Downtown Form-Based Code and Imagine Downtown Master Plan
2009

2000 - 2009

The United States Olympic Committee moves its headquarters to Downtown Colorado Springs in a new building at the corner of Tejon and Colorado
2010

Through the State of Colorado Regional Tourism Act (RTA), an estimated \$120 million in tax increment financing is approved to help finance and develop four projects coined 'City for Champions,' including the U.S. Olympic Museum and a Sports and Events Center in Downtown
2013



Site preparation begins for the U.S. Olympic Museum
2015

Blue Dot Place, the first for-rent apartment project built in the core since 1960, is completed and leased
2016



2010 - 2016

1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020

Figure 1.5 | The Evolution of Downtown Colorado Springs

Context

AREA HISTORY

In 1871, General William Jackson Palmer laid out the City of Colorado Springs at the confluence of Monument and Fountain creeks, driving the first stake for Pikes Peak Avenue directly in line with the summit of Pikes Peak. He set in motion the **aspirations, perseverance, and civic pride that created the unique place that is now Downtown Colorado Springs.**

The community has since grown far beyond its original boundaries into nearly 200 sprawling square miles, but **Downtown remains the urban center and true heart of Colorado Springs.** Since Palmer's day, there have been many private and public efforts to carry on and add to his legacy, each responding to the challenges and demands of a particular time. Many have begun with the recognition of Downtown's importance to the city's image, identity and sense of place. In our own time, the citizens of Colorado Springs have come to realize that the **vitality and future prosperity of a modern city requires a Downtown that enlivens the entire community and fosters civic pride.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In November 2010, the citizens of Colorado Springs voted to change the form of city government from a council-manager form to a council-mayor ("strong mayor") structure. Today, the Mayor serves as the executive branch and City Council serves as the legislative body for the City, overseeing land use and serving as board of directors of the Colorado Springs Utilities. The City Council has nine members, six of whom each represent one of six equally populated districts; the remaining three members are elected "at-large." The Downtown Study area is located entirely within District 3.

The City is also the county seat for El Paso County. The Board of County Commissioners is made up of five men and women representing defined districts.



Colorado Springs' history and heritage are an important part of its tourist appeal.

DISTRICTS AND FINANCIAL TOOLS

Downtown is served by a number of special districts, urban renewal areas, and other public tools to support the task of catalyzing redevelopment in the urban core and leveling the playing field due to higher costs associated with urban infill.

- The DDA has the authority through its plan of development to engage in various activities and financing to support economic and physical development within the district. These activities include facilitating grants, technical support, business recruitment, improvements to the public realm, marketing, guidance through city process, property purchase, and direct support of development within the district, among other tasks. The work of the DDA is funded through a mill levy and the ability to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) on properties within the district.
- The Greater Downtown Colorado Springs Business Improvement District (BID) ensures that Downtown provides an urban environment that is clean, engaging, friendly and walkable through a mill levy assessed on downtown properties within the district.
- The Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority (CSURA) has authorized several Urban Renewal sites within the downtown core, including Southwest Downtown, Citygate and City Auditorium Block. The CSURA supports projects that supply public benefit, provide quality sustainable places, create jobs, promote public art, offer affordable housing and raise the standard of development in Colorado Springs through tax increment financing tools.

This plan, in addition to serving as a land use plan to guide the decisions of City leaders and staff, also serves as an update to the DDA's plan of development.

MARKET CONDITIONS

Area Employment

Downtown is an important employment center, with **20 times the number of businesses and more than 10 times the number of jobs per square mile than the city as a whole**, according to the 2016 State of Downtown Report and Market Assessment. In addition, 22 percent of Downtown businesses are in the professional, scientific, and technical industries, more than double citywide figures. The top employers in the Pikes Peak Region include **military and defense, technology, finance, tourism and health care industries**. Other large employers contributing to the area economy include software, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, information processing companies, sports, and national nonprofit associations.

Employment contributes significantly to Downtown's occupied square footage and daytime population. However, the area's employee to resident ratio of 12 to 1 indicates **a jobs-housing imbalance** (comparative cities with a healthy residential mix range from roughly 3:1 to 7:1).

Residential

Downtown residents are typical of those in other cities, predominantly millennials and boomers without children. With fewer than 2,000 people living in the DDA boundary, the residential market lags behind the robust housing market seen in urban centers along the Front Range. However, **waiting lists at new developments and the speed with which residential units are renting indicate pent-up demand** for increased housing options. As of late 2015, there are approximately 1,100 housing units Downtown, with 4 percent of Downtown workers living in the city core.



Tejon Street is Downtown's strong retail spine.



The Garden of the Gods is one of Colorado Springs' outdoor recreation assets, located 5 miles from Downtown.



Nearly one-quarter of Colorado Springs' workforce is located within one square mile of Downtown.

Office

Downtown maintains the strongest office market in the region with **over with 3.5 million square feet**, representing over 21% of the city's base of Class A office space, and 12% of the office square footage overall. Downtown averages **lower vacancy rates and higher asking rates per square foot than the rest of the city**. According to brokers, office tenants like the "vibe" of Downtown. However, most new leases in recent years have been the result of lateral movements and not new companies locating in the center city.

Retail

Downtown's retail market is unique in the region, **with over 90 percent of shops being locally owned**, and boasting the largest concentration of locally owned restaurants in the Pikes Peak region. This depth of local ownership has helped Downtown weather national contraction in retail markets, as many chains have merged, declared bankruptcy or shuttered hundreds of locations nationwide in recent years. Shoppers are attracted to Tejon Street, which offers an experience many want: quaint businesses along an attractive, walkable street. Downtown on average has lower vacancy and higher lease rates than the rest of the city, but lease rates are still significantly behind those of newer lifestyle centers in the region, particularly in the north and east sections of the city. The Market Assessment notes that the **current lack of critical mass Downtown makes it a challenge to attract national retailers**. However, there is an opportunity to attract regional retailers and restaurants, and for independent businesses to provide their own spin on known brands. In addition, based on mid- to long-term development projections, Downtown may eventually attract larger, national chains that fit within the city center context.

Background

HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN PLANS

Planning for a vibrant Downtown is a continual process. Colorado Springs has engaged in such efforts for at least 40 years, yielding many notable changes and achievements.

1970s

The first Downtown Plan, issued in 1971, reflected the community's desire to sustain the area's prominence while suburban sprawl took the city center farther away from the original town site. The plan did not, however, serve as a rallying point for community decisions on important public improvements in the Downtown, despite the completion of several of the urban renewal projects outlined in its pages. Further, the 1971 plan did not provide a context within which individual development decisions could be evaluated.



Final Plan of Development

Imagine Downtown Colorado Springs



In 2007, the official Plan of Development for the DDA established the initial framework for the Imagine Downtown Master Plan, adopted in 2009.

1980s and 1990s

During the 1980s, the need for a more coordinated, dynamic approach to developing and improving Downtown Colorado Springs was raised repeatedly by citizens and elected officials in the community. This public concern sprang from several sources, and worries included economic vitality, the physical quality of both public and private realms, and the need for new tools for public policy and community participation to aid in achieving Downtown goals. The result of this realization was the Downtown Action Plan (DAP), formally adopted as the master plan for Downtown in 1992. The DAP organized the Downtown into distinct districts and set forth specific economic and land use recommendations for each of those areas.

2000s

In 2005-2006, Downtown Partnership, in conjunction with the City, undertook a planning process called Imagine Downtown. This process served to create a fresh vision for the future of Downtown Colorado Springs. Imagine Downtown engaged more than 400 stakeholders in informational sessions, work groups and focus groups, eventually determining a vision for Downtown and a broad set of numerous goals.

In 2006, a primary goal of the Imagine Downtown Plan was accomplished: approval from taxpayers in the district for the creation and funding of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). In 2007, City Council approved the Imagine Downtown Plan as the official Plan of Development for the DDA as required by Colorado law. That same year, work began on a land use master plan that established clear land use objectives and a framework for physical development to take shape, while aligning with the vision of the Imagine Downtown Plan. In 2009, the resulting Imagine Downtown Master Plan and Form-Based Code were adopted by City Council.

Planning Process

THE NEED FOR UPDATED PLANS

While many significant individual projects have come to fruition since adoption of the Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and Imagine Downtown Master Plan, development in Downtown Colorado Springs has lagged behind that of comparable markets. Yet, **in the past five years a variety of demographic and economic trends that support vibrant, compact, walkable urban centers have begun to take hold in the city center.** Recent investments in important projects such as the U.S. Olympic Museum, Catalyst Campus, and new multifamily housing developments all reflect and support this Downtown resurgence.

Downtown is an important driver for the city as a whole, contributing 14 times its geographic weight in sales tax. **The success and attractiveness of the city center brings value to all of Colorado Springs and the wider region.** As the City begins its Comprehensive Plan process in 2016, these updated tactical plans for Downtown are an important guide for the rest of the city.

In the spring of 2015, the Board of Directors of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) authorized a tactical update to the Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and Imagine Downtown Master Plan to further its vision by:

- Updating specific tactics and more deeply addressing public spaces, access and mobility;
- Developing market-based actions and tools;
- Integrating findings of numerous community plans; and
- Producing compelling materials that highlight investment opportunities in Downtown Colorado Springs.

PLAN OUTREACH AND INPUTS

The 2007 and 2009 Imagine Downtown plans put forth a vision supported by a process that included more than 400 stakeholders. This tactical update builds upon and refines that vision, based on a robust program of research and public input from hundreds of stakeholders including:

- Review of more than a dozen recent city, regional and state plans;
- 2014 and 2015 Downtown Perceptions online surveys with more than 1,200 respondents;
- Targeted focus groups including over 60 stakeholders;
- Numerous one-on-one stakeholder interviews;
- Public community workshop with 150 attendees;
- Regular review and input by a Technical Advisory Committee made up of 14 regional leaders with diverse areas of technical expertise;
- Area tour by bike;
- Regional and market area data analysis;
- Three stakeholder charrettes with 75 participants;
- Community surveys; and
- Consultant expertise.



More than 150 people braved the first blizzard of 2015 to share ideas for Downtown at the Community Workshop.

Implementation: Who and How

Downtown Colorado Springs is poised to enter an exciting new era. **Established and emerging local retail and dining spots, vibrant nearby neighborhoods, and close ties to outdoor recreation opportunities** all bolster Downtown's traditional role as the city's business and cultural center.

The Experience Downtown Plan of Development and Master Plan position the city center to **build upon this strong base and leverage new projects, trends and emerging preferences** including the forthcoming U.S. Olympic Museum, a nascent Downtown housing renaissance, major infrastructure projects, and new business investments and accelerator programs.

In response to the leadership from the Downtown family of organizations and the City's Urban Planning Division, **the following organizations and divisions are called to work collaboratively in support of this plan**, and incorporate the strategies into their annual work plans and long-range planning efforts:

- City of Colorado Springs and its departments;
- El Paso County;
- Downtown Partnership and its family of organizations;
- Colorado Springs Utilities;
- Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority;
- Private businesses, developers, and investors;
- Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance (CSRBA);
- Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD);
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG);
- State of Colorado and its departments;
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT);
- Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO);
- Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region (COPPeR);
- Neighborhood groups and associations within and adjacent to Downtown;
- Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).
- Advocacy groups and associations; and
- Citizens.

The Experience Downtown Plan of Development serves as the official development plan for the Downtown Development Authority. The Board and staff of the DDA, working alongside staff of the City's Urban Planning Division, shall annually review the plan goals and action steps and determine near- and mid-term tactics that further their implementation.

The Experience Downtown Master Plan serves as the land use plan for Downtown. It guides City staff and Downtown stakeholders in the improvements of streets, parks, trails, gateways, mobility, parking and public space.

Progress on meeting priorities and tactics shall be publicly posted and measured through the Downtown website or other means. New

opportunities and challenges will undoubtedly arise over the next decade, which will necessitate that specific actions be reviewed, reconsidered and augmented.

Implementing the Experience Downtown plans will require **sustained participation and coordination among public and private stakeholders**. Fortunately, the planning process involved many stakeholders who already are engaged, committed and ready to move on key action items. The successful outcome of these initial actions will be instrumental in demonstrating early progress toward the overall vision, and will be important to maintaining momentum as implementation continues over the next decade.

INTEGRATED PLANS

This plan integrates the findings and recommendations of numerous completed and ongoing community plans and initiatives. Our thanks go to the hundreds of community stakeholders lending voice to these plans:

- City of Colorado Springs Infill Comprehensive Plan Supplement, 2016
- Downtown Colorado Springs Market Assessment, 2016
- State of Downtown Report, 2016
- City Council and Mayoral Strategic Plans, 2015
- 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, 2015
- Bike Share Feasibility Study, 2015
- Utilities Policy Advisory Committee, 2015
- City of Colorado Springs Parks Master Plan, 2014
- Regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, 2014
- Statewide Transit Plan, 2012
- Urban Land Institute Panel Study of Downtown, 2012
- Downtown Transit Center Relocation Study (in process)
- Envision Shooks Run (in process)
- Bike Master Plan (in process)
- Cimarron / I-25 Task Force (in process)

Plan on a Page

The plan on a page diagram on the following page illustrates how the vision and goals inform the action steps and recommendations in the Plan of Development and Master Plan. The vision and goals were derived from the previous Imagine Downtown Master Plan, but also reflect a synthesis of the community input received during the update process for both plans. Chapter 2 of the Plan of Development discusses the plan goals in more detail and provides action steps that articulate specific priorities for achieving each of the goals. The Master Plan discusses existing conditions and recommended improvements, concepts and strategies for Downtown land use; parks, trails and waterways; gateways and districts; transportation, mobility and parking; and urban design and public space. **Together, the goals, action steps, and recommended Master Plan strategies plot the course for growth, prosperity and a higher quality of life in Downtown Colorado Springs.**

Downtown Colorado Springs Vision

Welcoming | Vibrant | Connected | Walkable | Anchored | Innovative | Entrepreneurial | Valued

Goals



Action Steps

volume 1 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

The Development Plan serves as the official plan of development for the Downtown Development Authority, outlining the goals and actions that will move Downtown toward achieving its vision.

- Chapter 1** Assets, Opportunities, and Challenges
- Chapter 2** Vision Framework
- Chapter 3** Boundary Description
- Chapter 4** Tax Increment Financing

volume 2 MASTER PLAN

The Experience Downtown Master Plan is designed to fulfill Downtown's long-term Vision and Goals through key physical elements that define its desired character and function.

- Land Use **Chapter 1**
- Parks, Trails and Waterways **Chapter 2**
- Gateways and Districts **Chapter 3**
- Transportation, Mobility and Parking **Chapter 4**
- Urban Design and Public Space **Chapter 5**

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Assets, Opportunities and Challenges

Overview

Assets and Opportunities

Challenges

An assessment
of Downtown's
assets, opportunities
and challenges was
conducted, prioritizing the
previous Imagine Downtown
Plan's goals and objectives.

1
chapter

Overview

The 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development presented five themes, 23 goals and 20 strategic areas focused on the **growth of residential, employment, retail, restaurant, cultural institutions and the arts**. The plan also put forth a set of numerous objectives.

Though well intended, the sheer number of recommendations was challenging at best. **The plan was further hampered due to its launch during a historic recession**. Nevertheless, many successes were achieved, in particular the creation of the Downtown Development Authority. With this in mind, a reassessment of Downtown's assets, opportunities and challenges was conducted for this tactical update.

This plan is a supplement and update to that certain plan of development known as the Imagine Downtown Plan, adopted and approved by the Colorado Springs City Council on February 2 2007. It provides updated guidance as to the goals to be achieved within the plan area boundaries, and strategies that the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority will use to implement them.

This plan does not update, change or modify the boundaries of the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Area, or the authorization for tax increment financing contained in the original Imagine Downtown Plan. The base year certified for the original Imagine Downtown Plan shall remain the base year for the purposes of calculating incremental tax revenues.



The U.S. Olympic Museum will draw thousands of visitors to the city and help revitalize the southwest part of Downtown.

Assets and Opportunities

Recent achievements, along with the area's inherent natural beauty and historic assets, together combine to create a strong foundation for increased activity and investment in the city center. Renewed housing activity, vibrant local neighborhoods, new types of business environments, and the impending world-class U.S. Olympic Museum are just a few of the **key ingredients to make Downtown a magnet for local investment, for external investment and for talent.** Specific assets and opportunities include:



source: CityROCK Climbing Center

CityROCK Climbing Center exemplifies the city's active lifestyle.



Colorado Springs has a wealth of recreational resources accessible to the core of Downtown.

Urban lifestyle within the great outdoors

With five parks and the Legacy Loop trail system, **Downtown Colorado Springs is positioned to become unique nationwide as a thriving, compact urban area integrated with world-class outdoor experiences.**

Part of General Palmer's vision over 100 years ago, the Legacy Loop is a premier amenity for visitors and residents alike. The nearly 10-mile loop trail around the city center – while not yet fully connected – provides opportunities to enjoy walking, running, and biking in a natural setting just steps from Downtown and adjacent waterways. The loop also connects key regional trails – Midland Trail, Pikes Peak Greenway Trail, Shooks Run Trail, and Fountain Creek Regional Trail – which provide access to many of the city's natural attractions and serve as a means for daily commuting. Completion of the Legacy Loop – to include seamless connections into the Downtown core, wayfinding signage, programmatic activities, user amenities and areas of access to the water – is an essential and high priority of this plan.

Downtown also is enhanced by its urban parks. America the Beautiful, Monument Valley, Acacia, Antlers and Alamo parks provide a range of activities, programming, and amenities. And, it should be noted that Downtown provides myriad incredible views of Pikes Peak, the defining natural feature of the city.

Housing renaissance

To truly thrive, city centers must have people living in them 24/7, enjoying shopping, dining, and cultural and recreational opportunities just outside their doorstep. **Essential to Downtown Colorado Springs' forward momentum is production of a minimum of 2,000 new-build residential units.** Downtown has long prioritized the development of housing as an essential strategy, yet lacked the market demand to move forward with gusto. However, the tide is turning. Average rents are rising rapidly citywide, and vacancy rates have decreased. In early 2016 the first for-rent apartment project was completed in the Downtown core since 1960. Blue Dot Place, a 33-unit project, has served as a catalyst, as it has been able to **demonstrate the marketability of new, urban-style rental product.** Nearly 400 additional units are in the near-term pipeline.



Downtown will have a strong mix of new and established housing options.

Destination for employment

A key focus of the 2007 plan was to attract and retain new primary employment, yet that goal was hampered due to timing with the recession. But a turnaround is occurring, and **recent office occupancy rates around 90% show that office space is now being leased after several years of negative absorption.**

While Downtown always has been a historic center for business, it has consistently commanded higher lease rates, which for a time led companies to consider other areas of the city. Today, however, companies are choosing to locate Downtown, seeing value in the higher rent structure with the goal of attracting highly-skilled employees who prefer an urban, walkable environment.

The 2016 grand opening of Catalyst Campus – combining cyber and defense firms, co-working space, training programs, and specific technology and support service needs – perfectly aligns with the jobs recommendations of the original plan and will aid in the achievement of new primary employment, as well as spin-off firms that have the potential to multiply this growth. Relocation and attraction of employers such as BombBomb, The Gazette, American Vein and Vascular, and Elevated Insights bring age-diverse, well-paid and sought-after talent into Downtown. A burgeoning entrepreneurial scene fostered by Epicentral Coworking and recent additions of places such as The Machine Shop, Welcome Fellow and Pikes Peak Makerspace bode well for more business spin-offs.

Local retailers and the Downtown experience

A strong core of locally owned shops and restaurants has long been a strength of Downtown Colorado Springs, and it has been an especially strong asset since 2010. The Market Assessment notes that retail vacancy has been lower in Downtown compared to citywide over the last five years, and sales tax returns have increased year over year since 2012 in the Business Improvement District (BID), with a 17% increase from 2013 to 2014. **Focusing on unique independent retail further strengthens Downtown's brand and differentiation from other retail areas of the city.**

Another important factor has been Downtown's ability to enhance the overall experience for patrons. **Today, people visit destinations not just to shop, or just to visit one restaurant, but rather for the experience of doing a little bit of everything.** New programming such as Skate in the Park, the Downtown Sunday Market, Holiday Pop-Up Shops, Pints & Plates craft beer event, First Friday art walks, shopping strolls, Small Business Saturday and much more have done more to improve the success of existing retailers than could have been imagined.



Programming such as Skate in the Park seasonally transform Downtown's image and use.

Olympic City USA

Colorado Springs now celebrates its brand as Olympic City USA, home to the U.S. Olympic Committee headquarters, the largest of three Olympic training centers in the country, and more than 20 national governing bodies of sport. **Downtown is especially poised to leverage and embody this new and exciting brand.** The opening of the U.S. Olympic Museum will further solidify the city's reputation as a center of Olympic and athletic activity and will serve as a new draw for hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the country. This world-class facility is an enormous win and opportunity for Downtown, and creates valuable momentum for new investment and development, particularly in the southwest part of Downtown. Plans to improve streetscapes, adjacent development, and connections to other parts of the city center are crucial to leveraging this important asset.

Welcoming public spaces

Safe, comfortable, and welcoming public spaces are a crucial ingredient of vibrant downtowns. While Colorado Springs still has work to do on this front, there is great opportunity for continued improvement based on recent efforts. The re-zoning of Downtown in 2009 to the **Form-Based Zone and establishment of the Downtown Review Board as its governing entity sets the stage for future development that is more oriented to the street** and more focused on the creation of pedestrian-friendly environments and inviting public spaces. Downtown leads the city as the most pedestrian-friendly environment with a Walkscore of 71, compared with a citywide Walkscore score of 33. The recent installation of many pedestrian-protecting streetscape improvements, new landscaped medians, and sidewalk improvements further enhance that distinction.

Arts and culture

The city center has seen strong success in the growth and development of arts and culture over the past several years. **One of the greatest accomplishments was the establishment of Downtown as a certified Colorado Creative District in 2014**, among the first in the state to receive this recognition. The Downtown Partnership continues to cultivate public arts programming as an important amenity and attraction. The Art on the Streets program will celebrate its 20th year in 2018, and the establishment of the Judy Noyes Memorial Purchase Fund serves as a valuable funding mechanism for public art. The creation of programs such as *INTERSECTION* (artist-designed traffic signal cabinet wraps), Core Culture walking tours and enhanced First Friday gallery walks lure people **Downtown for fresh and fun experiences. Downtown benefits greatly from anchor cultural institutions** – the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Pioneers Museum, Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts, Cottonwood Arts Center and the Colorado Springs Conservatory – that bring hundreds of thousands of people to the city center each year.



Programmed events on Downtown's wide streets showcase Colorado Springs' active culture.

Diverse, active adjacent neighborhoods

Downtown is the city's center of business and entertainment activity, but it has managed to grow and develop in a manner that successfully retained the single-family residential character in surrounding neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. These **urban neighborhoods, each with their own distinct character and relationship to the core, provide a strong foundation for the culture of active Downtown living that is beginning to take hold.**

Home to a wide range of residents – from students and millennials, to young families, to seniors – neighborhoods in the greater city center provide a diverse and active community that supports Downtown and wants to see it grow. Improved walking and biking connections and a wider range of amenities will further enhance this important relationship.

2015 DOWNTOWN MOBILITY RATINGS ¹			
	Bike Score	Walk Score	Transit Score
Downtown Fort Collins	100	87	NA
Downtown Boise	98	80	NA
Downtown Salt Lake City	88	86	64
Downtown Colorado Springs	85	71	39
Downtown Denver	84	91	93
Downtown Albuquerque	80	80	53
Downtown Oklahoma City	72	68	51
Downtown Raleigh	67	70	50
Downtown Omaha	58	83	NA
City of Colorado Springs	46	33	15

¹League of American Bicyclists. ²walkscore.com

Downtown Colorado Springs is considered walkable and bikable when compared to cities of similar size regionally.

Wide streets

Many of Downtown Colorado Springs' streets have extremely wide rights of way, often much more than needed to accommodate automobile traffic. In the short-term, these streets can be viewed as a challenge, as they allow traffic to travel very quickly; oftentimes do not have safe accommodations for cyclists; and create uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe crossing options for pedestrians. **In the long run, however, Downtown's wide streets provide for unique design opportunities.** Some streets in the central core must continue to serve automobile traffic as their primary function, while balancing safety and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists. Many others can be planned and converted to offer a wider range of mobility options and community amenities. Walking, biking, gathering, play, and urban agriculture are just a few of the features to integrate as Downtown's streets are designed for living – not just driving.



Pikes Peak Avenue and other Downtown streets have rights-of-way greater than 100 feet wide.

Consolidated ownership of strategic sites

Given the assets and opportunities described above, it is also important to note the advantage Downtown has with many of its key catalytic areas owned by single entities. Many cities and developers struggle to assemble parcels for meaningful and thoughtful development. Depot Station, CityGate, the Gazette/St. Francis properties and much of the land around the future U.S. Olympic Museum are consolidated under single ownership entities, alleviating one difficult hurdle in the (re)development of these key areas. **These large sites, along with other vacant parcels and surface parking lots, provide many opportunities for both large-scale catalytic development and for more fine-grained revitalization efforts** that will knit together Downtown's assets and amenities.



Catalytic development sites can be leveraged to accomplish many of the Downtown's short- and long-term goals.

Challenges

A combination of persistent concerns and more recent challenges must be overcome if Downtown is going to reach its potential as the best Downtown in a mid-sized city. **The city center has a surplus of vacant and underutilized land, a limited range of housing stock, and a visible street population** that can deter patrons due to real or perceived safety concerns. To realize its full potential, Downtown must work in alignment with the City to confront these challenges with vigor.

Ensuring a clean and safe environment

Ensuring a clean, safe and welcoming environment is essential to economic vitality. This must be viewed as an ongoing and ever-evolving collaborative effort by the City Police Department, the County, the Greater Downtown Business Improvement District, the Continuum of Care, human service agencies and groups such as Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful. **Like many cities on the Front Range and nationwide, Downtown has experienced a surge in street population in recent years**, and the Legacy Loop at times is filled with homeless camps and trash.

The issue is complex and involves a **multi-pronged effort to ensure chronic or temporarily homeless persons are safely sheltered**. This begins with prioritizing an adequate supply of year-round shelter beds, a day center, counseling and outreach services, storage services, mental health services and permanent supportive housing.

Distinct from the condition of being homeless is the behavior of a limited but visible population that seriously impacts Downtown's ability to ensure a welcoming environment for all. **Downtown proudly welcomes all people, but not all behaviors**. A continued, persistent and thoughtful commitment by police, Ambassador volunteers, private security and others is essential to address behavior that is illegal, intimidating and inappropriate.



Downtown's streets frame its setting and represent its perceived safety and cleanliness.

Providing a variety of housing choices

The nascent housing renaissance taking hold in Downtown Colorado Springs was noted earlier as a key opportunity. Yet, the near-term lack of housing inventory and limited array of options for potential residents remains a serious issue. Thin margins on new construction make development of workforce and affordable housing challenging or impossible without deep supportive partnerships and resources. The inability to date of the state legislature to address construction defects reform stymies creation of owner-occupied multifamily housing. **Early signs of a turnaround in Downtown housing are promising, but should not be viewed with complacency.** Supportive policies and incentives are necessary to foster a deep and diverse housing inventory.

Retaining and attracting a young, skilled workforce

The value of Downtown as a workforce development strategy was not articulated in past plans, but has proven in recent years to be a significant piece of the value proposition, and has indeed led to job growth in recent years. Highly skilled workers, particularly those of the millennial generation, are demanding walkable and bikeable urban environments. Downtown, being the most walkable and bikeable area of the city, has demonstrated that **urban amenities provide value to segments of the workforce that are in high demand and able to choose where they want to work and live.** Having a variety of interesting work environments, a healthy jobs market, a supportive entrepreneurial culture, plus a youthful and interesting “vibe” are key to attracting a talented and committed workforce.



Innovative work environments will help Downtown attract new companies and younger skilled workers.

Providing a range of urban amenities

Downtown has many attributes that residents seek (restaurants, craft breweries, shopping, close-in trails, cultural activities) but lacks resident-serving amenities such as a grocery, pharmacy, dog parks, and a wider variety of options for socializing. **Providing most or all of a resident's daily needs within walking or biking distance is central to the effort to attract more residents.** While some commercial amenities likely will not emerge until a more robust residential population creates the marketplace to ensure success, public investment in features such as dog parks, improved public spaces and transit will help.

Enhancing public transportation

The operation of public transportation in Colorado Springs is a challenge due to low density patterns and limited resources. **While Downtown serves as a major employment center, just over half of the city's population lives outside a transit service area, making transit access to Downtown a challenge.** Several initiatives are under way, however, to increase and improve public transit access Downtown. A comprehensive study is in progress to identify a location for a modern new multi-modal transportation facility in or near the core. In addition, Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT) is adding more frequency to key routes passing through Downtown, with a focus on routes that had the strongest ridership pre-recession and that have the best chance of attracting choice riders. Other aspects essential in leveraging transit service for Downtown needs include: redesigning bus operations to provide multiple stops and more frequent service throughout the city center rather than at one fixed transit center; creating a free-fare/frequent-stop zone that would help serve the role of a Downtown circulator; and examining future options for improved regional transit connections.



Amenities like dog parks will help make Downtown more attractive for new residents.



Though the transit center is centrally located on Nevada and Kiowa, accessing routes to Downtown may be challenging to residents throughout the city.

Vision Framework

Overview

Vision and Values

Goals and Action Steps

Private economic efforts must work alongside public sector investments, and every endeavor must operate in concert to bring about a bright and prosperous future.

2 chapter

Overview

The vision framework defines how Downtown Colorado Springs will evolve in the coming years. Though specific tactics of the framework may change from year to year as the plan is implemented, the **vision is a broad, consensus-built direction that endures over time. It is based on a set of values that express community members' beliefs** about the most important and desirable characteristics of Downtown.

Vision and Values

VISION

The vision framework builds on the vision of the 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development, continuing the momentum of past investments and accomplishments while incorporating the aspirations, needs and values of today's community. The vision reaffirms the key role that Downtown plays in the city's overall quality of life. **To achieve the desired vision, this plan must be forward thinking and dynamic to account for future market trends.** The success of the city center depends in part on its ability to **be proactive and capitalize on the increased focus** to revitalize and improve Downtown.

Revitalizing the area will not necessarily proceed in an easily discernible, linear fashion. Rather, it will often be recognizable in **multiple efforts occurring simultaneously and synergistically.** Public efforts must work alongside private efforts, and every endeavor must operate in concert to bring about a bright and prosperous future.



Downtown Colorado Springs already has a strong foundation to build upon in all of the values that City and residents identified.

VALUES

The following values were developed at the Stakeholder and Community Charrettes in response to the 2007 vision statement.

Welcoming

Creating and maintaining a welcoming environment is vital to the success of Downtown. Downtown's backdrop harnesses a positive reception for locals and visitors, allowing the discovery of important places within it.

Vibrant

A vibrant city center is where people can express themselves in ways that are additive to its identity. Providing a variety of choices for living, working and entertainment is essential to an active Downtown.

Connected

Downtown is a unified setting with a logical and balanced street system. A range of mobility options are integrated into Downtown's context with clearly defined routes and trails supporting all modes of transportation.

Walkable

Downtown streets are defined as links to places for all modes of transportation. Trails and other aspects of pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety are prioritized within the auto-centric city grid.

Anchored

Downtown is an economic engine and a regional destination. Influences of culture, commerce, design and history are rooted here and celebrated with expressive and appropriate built environments.

Innovative

Downtown is known as the setting for innovation by being a place where new ideas are welcomed and supported. Its dynamic urban setting fosters innovation, and businesses are attracted here because of a concentration of forward-thinking companies and individuals.

Entrepreneurial

Downtown is where opportunity flourishes, establishing a locale for building, creating and networking. Individuals and companies are attracted here because of the support and organizational skills of an established, thriving business community.

Valued

A valued place requires respect and appreciation from the broader citywide and regional populace, and visitors from out of town. Downtown's allure and economic impact establishes admiration and demands care.



Downtown Colorado Springs has local retail stores that draw visitors and locals, while inciting economic growth .

2009 IMAGINE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN VISION

"Downtown is an image and symbol of the region and has an opportunity to reaffirm its identity as the epicenter and economic engine of the city, a desirable place to live, work, learn and play, and a point of public and private investment."



Goals and Action Steps

The following goals are adapted from the previous plan's goals, providing continuity and a link with the past, while also looking to the future. Building upon the community values, the **goals were developed in collaboration with community and business leaders, Downtown neighbors, and other stakeholders.** The goal statements describe how Downtown will look, feel and function in the near future. Within each goal are tactical, specific action steps to move the goal toward implementation.



Successful implementation of the action steps articulated in this chapter will facilitate new quality development and events Downtown.

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL HEART OF THE REGION



GOAL 1

Downtown's economic, civic and cultural energy expands throughout the region. Downtown is a **magnet for internal and external new investment.** Cultural assets, and unique retail and restaurant offerings are attractive to new talent. New businesses, entrepreneurs and urban professionals integrate themselves into Downtown's economic context. New technologies and innovative ideas transform Downtown while respecting its cultural heritage.

Action Steps:

- Ensure Downtown real estate product is positioned to fill demand by major primary employers in traditional and growing industry sectors and amenities serve to attract, and retain talent.
- Provide tools and technical support to ensure the health and viability of brand-defining businesses, such as street-level retailers, creative and innovation-based industries, and others that will add unique character to a vibrant downtown.
- Position Downtown as the prime location for start-ups, entrepreneurial activity, coworking, temporary pop-up shops, maker spaces, artisan manufacturing and a place where new ideas flourish.
- Form deeper engagement partnerships with Colorado College, Pikes Peak Community College and University of Colorado – Colorado Springs to better connect students with Downtown opportunities for learning, living, shopping, dining, culture, fun and employment.
- Ensure robust technology infrastructure Downtown to meet the needs of entrepreneurs and companies of all sizes.
- Support the growth and viability of one-of-a-kind retail, restaurant and service businesses, with keen attention to first-to-market brands and offerings.
- Ensure Downtown is clean, safe and inviting to a wide range of users.

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PLACE TO LIVE,
INTEGRATED WITH
ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS



GOAL 2

Downtown's neighborhoods are thriving places providing **housing and amenities for people and families of all cultures, ages and incomes**. Efforts are made to preserve existing neighborhood character while encouraging residential growth, focusing on building a greater density of residents within the core and surrounding neighborhoods. New and modified residential development includes workforce and affordable housing. Public transit, employment opportunities, schools, shopping and parks are conveniently located within walking distance.

Action Steps:

- Support and incentivize construction of at least 1,000 new residential units by 2020, and 2,000 total by 2025.
- Support and incentivize the development of publicly accessible resident-serving amenities, to include healthy food, fitness options, a dog park, a pharmacy, garden plots, etc.
- Promote public policies that are supportive of urban living and the development of urban residential product.
- Lead a cohesive strategy to grow workforce and affordable housing opportunities both within and easily accessible to Downtown, while continuing to comprehensively plan in surrounding urban neighborhoods.
- Through partnerships, ensure the city has enough year-round shelter space and permanent supportive housing options so that chronic or temporarily homeless persons are safely sheltered and receiving needed services.



CELEBRATING AND CONNECTING WITH
OUTDOOR RECREATION AND
EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL SETTING



GOAL 3

Downtown Colorado Springs is unique and nationally known as **a thriving urban area integrated with world-class outdoor and recreational opportunities.** The Legacy Loop trail system is a beloved and cared-for asset.

Action Steps:

- Complete the Legacy Loop, to include seamless connections into Downtown, wayfinding signage, programmatic activities, user amenities and areas of access to the creek.
- Create and implement a brand campaign positioning Downtown as a vibrant urban area integrated with world-class outdoor experiences.
- Develop strong biking and walking connections through Downtown, connecting to regional bike and recreation amenities such as Legacy Loop and Memorial Park.



source: Jon Severson

Urban single-track for cyclists is available just outside the core off the Legacy Loop.

A PLACE FOR HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



GOAL 4

Downtown Colorado Springs recognizes the importance of promoting healthy living through its built form and established programs. **An interconnected system of parks, trails, waterways, open space and recreational facilities supports healthy and active lifestyles** throughout Downtown neighborhoods. Organized events and activities devoted to improving people's health and wellness take root in the city center.

Action Steps:

- Reassess Acacia and Antlers Parks with year-round uses in mind, with redesigns to better accommodate existing programming such as Skate in the Park, while activating year-round with additional programming, amenities and safety features.
- Launch and ensure sustainability of a bike share program, with a Phase 1 centered on Downtown.
- Signal and invite an active lifestyle through amenities, events, and offerings.



A WALKABLE AND BIKE-FRIENDLY CENTER
CONNECTED THROUGH SAFE AND
ACCESSIBLE MULTI-MODAL NETWORKS



GOAL 5

Downtown leaders understand the importance of being a hub for city and regional transportation. **Well-designed and maintained streets, pathways, alleys, transit and facilities are concentrated** at the heart of Colorado Springs, providing access and mobility to all destinations.

Action Steps:

- Accelerate the pace of implementation for the Mobility Framework in the Experience Downtown Master Plan, with keen emphasis on urban and neighborhood greenways, signature streets and pedestrian priority streets, as well as conversion of Bijou/Kiowa to two ways.
- Assess parking systems to continue positioning parking as an economic development tool, to include assessment of nighttime and 24-hour usage, demand pricing, new technologies, and holistic approaches among the city parking enterprise, county parking and private facilities.
- Position the new and relocated Downtown Transit Center based on TOD principles as the hub for regional multi-modal transportation and a model of placemaking.
- Launch a frequent-stop or free-fare transit route or circulator within the greater Downtown area.
- Be the leading voice in efforts to ensure Downtown is positioned as the choice location in Southern Colorado for regional rail and other regional transportation connections.

A LEADER IN INNOVATIVE URBAN DESIGN
AND SUSTAINABILITY



GOAL 6

Downtown is a place where people want to be because of its beauty, comfort and sustainable practices. The transition between private development and public space is seamless, providing ample outdoor space to take in the Colorado sunshine. **The once vast amount of underutilized space, including vacant parcels, surface parking lots and wide right-of-ways, now consists of innovative building designs, construction materials and stormwater management.**

Environmental stewardship is garnered by public and private improvements.

Action Steps:

- Embark on a cohesive design and execution process to demarcate nine identified Downtown gateways through signage and other features, while also ensuring highest and best usage of properties at the gateways.
- In partnership with Colorado Springs Utilities, lead the visioning and planning process for highest and best use of the decommissioned Drake Power Plant area.
- Embark on a cohesive design and execution strategy to ensure Downtown alleyways are pedestrian assets, to include aesthetic and safety improvements, lighting, improved paving, and integrated systems for deliveries and trash haul.
- Update the Form Based Code based on the adopted goals and strategies of the updated Master Plan.
- Assess and implement a robust wayfinding system, to include signage from trails into the core, identification of bike amenities and usage of mobile technologies.
- Develop and promote the unique character of Downtown's identified five districts through differentiated yet cohesive streetscape treatments, signage and marketing efforts.
- Encourage and integrate sustainability practices in the built environment, streetscapes and public amenities, landscape treatments and services.

OFFERING AN UNFORGETTABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCE



GOAL 1

Downtown offers **a distinct experience for visitors unlike any other city of its size**. Visitors as well as locals enjoy the U.S. Olympic Museum and other one-of-a-kind anchors as well as the shopping, dining, culture and authentic vibe of the city center.

Action Steps:

- Support and complete construction of the U.S. Olympic Museum, to include the pedestrian bridge from America the Beautiful Park and enhanced streetscape treatments that position the area as a public space for celebrations, festivals and year-round activities.
- Complete feasibility study for a sports event center and determine next steps accordingly.
- Position Downtown as a prime location for tourists to lodge, shop, dine and enjoy daytime and nighttime activities.



A PLACE FOR INSPIRATION,
HONORING HISTORY AND
FACING THE FUTURE



GOAL 8

Incentives to discover Downtown are inspired by enriched relics of the past, including adaptively reusing celebrated architecture and repurposing historic streets to safely support multiple transportation modes. **Arts, culture and a thriving culinary and craft brew scene thrive.**

Action Steps:

- Assess publicly owned assets, including but not limited to the downtown parks, City Auditorium, Acacia Park Band Shell, various rights of ways and public parking, to ensure highest and best usage of such assets to fulfill community goals.
- Build on Downtown's status as a certified creative district through continued creative programming such as First Fridays, live performances and events emphasizing local food and beer/spirits, etc.
- Incorporate public art into planning processes and utilize creative and artist-centered approaches to utilitarian forms such as benches, signage, bike racks and other street and park elements.



source: Stellar Propeller Studio

DDA Boundary Description and Amendments

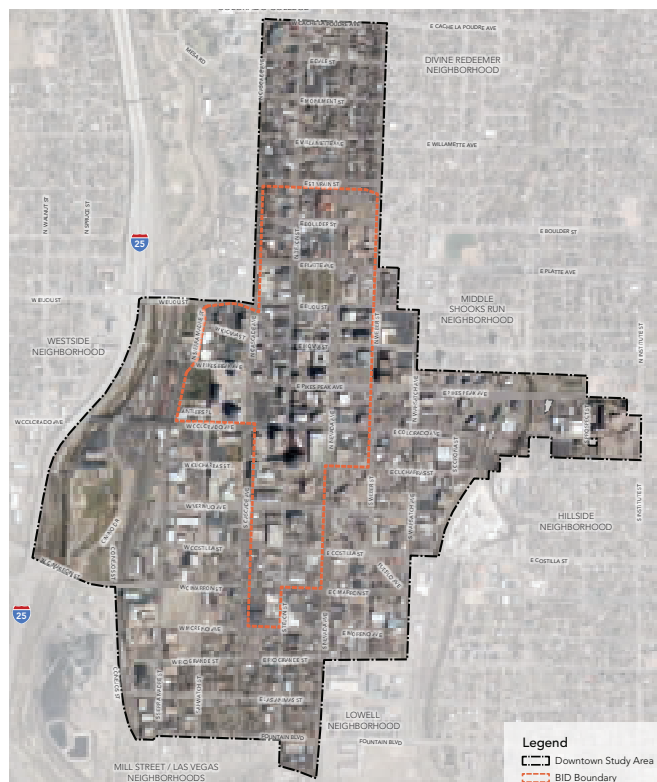
Overview

3
chapter

Overview

This Experience Downtown Plan of Development is an update to that certain plan of development known as the Imagine Downtown Plan, adopted and approved by the Colorado Springs City Council on February 2, 2007. It provides updated guidance as to the goals to be achieved within the plan area boundaries, and strategies that the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority will use to implement them. This plan does not update, change or modify the boundaries of the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Area, or the authorization for tax increment financing contained in the original Imagine Downtown Plan. The base year certified for the original Imagine Downtown Plan shall remain the base year for the purposes of calculating incremental tax revenues.

Boundary Description for the Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and updated and restated Experience Downtown Plan of Development:



DDA Boundary

The Imagine Downtown Final Plan for Downtown Colorado Springs is located within the city limits of the City of Colorado Springs, County of El Paso, Colorado, in an area whose boundaries are described as follows: These boundaries describe the “plan of development and the “plan of development area” under the Downtown Development Authority Statute. All boundary lines are assumed to lie on the centerlines of the identified streets and alleys, with the exception of highway and railroad rights-of-way. All references to reception numbers or to book and page numbers refer to documents recorded with the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder’s Office.

The Point of Beginning is at the intersection of the centerline of Cache La Poudre Street West and Cascade Avenue North thence,

- East on Cache La Poudre West to the intersection with North Weber Street, thence
- South on North Weber Street to the intersection with Platte Avenue East, thence
- East on Platte Avenue East to the intersection with Bijou Court, thence
- South on Bijou Court to the intersection with Bijou Street East, thence
- East on Bijou Street East to the intersection with Wahsatch Avenue North, thence
- South on Wahsatch Avenue North to the intersection with the East/West alley between Kiowa Street East and Pikes Peak Avenue East, thence
- East on said alley South of Kiowa Street East to the intersection with El Paso Street North, thence
- South on El Paso Street North to the intersection with the East/West alley between Colorado Avenue East and Cucharas Street East, thence
- West on said alley to the Northeast corner of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #099014966, thence
- West on the North property line of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #204075634 to the Northwest corner of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #204075634, thence

- South along the West property line of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #204075634 to the Northwest corner of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #099014966, thence
 - South along the West property line of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #099014966 to the intersection of the North property line of the property described in a deed recorded at Book 6335, Page 8, thence
 - West on the North property line of the property described in a deed recorded at Book 6335, Page 8 to the Northwest Corner of the property described in a deed recorded at Book 6335, Page 8, thence
 - Following along the Westerly property line of the property described in a deed recorded at Book 6335, Page 8 to the intersection with Costilla Street East, thence
 - West on Costilla Street East to the intersection with Wahsatch Avenue South, thence
 - South on Wahsatch Avenue South to the intersection with Rio Grande Street East, thence
 - West on Rio Grande Street East to the intersection with Nevada Avenue South, thence
 - South on Nevada Ave South to the intersection with the East boundary of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Right-of-Way, thence
 - Northwesterly on the East line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Right-of-Way to the intersection with Tejon Street South, thence
 - North on Tejon Street South to the intersection of Fountain Blvd. West, thence
 - West on Fountain Blvd. West to the intersection of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #98054628, thence
 - North along the Easterly boundary of said property to the Northeast corner of property described in a deed recorded at Reception #98054628, thence
 - West along the Northerly boundary of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #98054628 to the Northwest corner of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #98054628, thence
 - South along the Westerly boundary of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #98054628 to a point along the Northerly boundary of said property, thence
 - Westerly along the Northerly boundary of the property described in a deed recorded at Reception #98054628 to the intersection of the East Boundary of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Right-of-Way, thence
 - Northwesterly on the East boundary of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Right-of-Way to the intersection with Cimarron Street West, thence
 - West on Cimarron Street West to the East boundary of the Interstate 25 Highway Right-of-Way line, thence
 - North along the East Right-of-Way line of the Interstate 25 Highway Right-of-Way to the intersection of Bijou Street West, thence
 - East on Bijou Street West to the intersection of Cascade Avenue North, thence
 - North along Cascade Avenue North to the Point of Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of Cache La Poudre West and Cascade Avenue North.
- Colorado Springs City Council amended Ordinance No. 07-15 on March 12, 2015, by the adoption of Ordinance No. 15-20 to re-describe the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority so as to include certain additional property as follows: 825 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 0 S. Institute St.; 30 S. Prospect St.; 704-720 E. Colorado Ave.; 731 E. Colorado Ave.; 737 E. Colorado Ave.; 749 E. Colorado Ave.; 727 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 735 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 730 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 745 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 749 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 107 2. Prospect St.; 715 E. Pikes Peak Ave.; 710-750 E. Pikes Peak Ave.
- Such properties are represented by parcel numbers: 64172-21-9022; 64172-19-005; 64172-19-004; 64172-19-003; 64172-19-002; 64172-19-001; 64163-03-036; 64173-03-032; 64173-03-038; 64172-19-017; 64172-18-002; 64172-18-004; 64173-02-035; 64173-02-010; 64172-16-039.



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market

DOWNTOWN

Colorado Grown

New Vendors Week

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Tax Increment Financing

Overview

4
chapter

Overview

As noted in Chapter 3, this Experience Downtown Plan of Development is an update to that certain plan of development known as the Imagine Downtown Plan, adopted and approved by the Colorado Springs City Council on February 2, 2007. It provides updated guidance as to the goals to be achieved within the plan area boundaries, and compels and authorizes the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority to use its tax increment financing authority to implement them. This plan does not update, change or modify the boundaries of the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Area, or the authorization for tax increment financing contained in the original Imagine Downtown Plan. The base year certified for the original Imagine Downtown Plan shall remain the base year for the purposes of calculating incremental tax revenues.

Tax Increment Financing

(1) The Experience Downtown Plan of Development contemplates that a primary method of financing for development projects shall be the use of property tax increment financing as provided in §31-25-807(3), Colorado Revised Statutes.

(2) Certain areas within the boundaries of the Authority are also designated as “urban renewal areas” under Part 1 of Article 25 of Title 31 C.R.S. (the “Urban Renewal Law”). Such areas therefore are also subject to tax increment financing authorization pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law.

Such urban renewal areas which are subject to tax increment financing authorization pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law shall be considered to be excluded from the tax increment financing area of the Authority until the expiration of such tax increment authorization pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law.

(3) Therefore, tax increment financing for property tax for the Authority shall not include

1. The Southwest Downtown Urban Renewal Plan area as recorded on November 19, 2001 at Reception Number 201169596 of the records of the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder;
2. The CityGate Urban Renewal District area as recorded on June 26, 2006 at Reception Number 206093978 of the records of the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder;
3. And the City Auditorium Block Urban Renewal Plan area as recorded on March 23, 2006 at Reception Number 206042290 of the records of the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder

The urban renewal areas shall be eligible for inclusion in a plan or plans of development of the Authority which provide for tax increment financing as authorized by Section 31-25-807 (3) Colorado Revised Statutes for property tax, when such areas are no longer subject to tax increment financing authorization for property tax under the Urban Renewal Law. At such time, no formal action of the City or Authority shall be required in order for the Authority to begin receiving incremental tax revenues from these areas; however, the Authority shall provide notice to the County Assessor upon such an occurrence.

(4) Except as herein noted and as the Authority may legally provide otherwise, all taxes levied after the effective date of approval of the original Imagine Downtown Plan by the City Council of the City of Colorado Springs upon taxable property each year or levied by or for the benefit of any public body each year within the boundaries of the original Imagine Downtown Plan and certain property included by Ordinance No. 07-15 and Ordinance No. 15-20 as set forth in chapter 3 of the Experience Downtown Plan of Development, the “plan of development area,” but excluding “urban renewal areas” described in paragraph number (3), hereinafter called the “taxable

property area” shall be divided for the thirty year period as set forth in the original Imagine Downtown Plan as follows:

(5) That portion of the taxes which are produced by the levy at the rate fixed each year by or for each such public body upon the valuation for assessment of taxable property within the taxable property area last certified prior to the effective date of approval by the Colorado Springs City Council of the original Imagine Downtown Plan, or, as to an area later added to the boundaries of the plan of development area, the effective date of the modification of the Experience Downtown Plan of Development, shall be paid into the funds of each such public body as are all other taxes collected by or for said public body.

(6) That portion of said property taxes within the taxable property area in excess of such amount shall be allocated to and, when collected, paid into a special fund of the City of Colorado Springs, unless otherwise agreed to by the City of Colorado Springs and the Authority, for the payment of the principal of, the interest on, and any premiums due in connection with the bonds of, loans or advances to, or indebtedness incurred by, whether funded, refunded, assumed, or otherwise, by the City of Colorado Springs for financing or refinancing, in whole or in part, a development project within boundaries of the Experience Downtown Plan of Development as set forth in chapter 3. Unless and until the total valuation for assessment of the taxable property within the taxable property area exceeds the base valuation for assessment of the taxable property within the taxable property area, as provided in paragraph (5), all of the taxes levied upon the taxable property within the taxable property area in such boundary area shall be paid into the funds of the respective public bodies unless otherwise agreed to between the Authority,

the City, or other public body. When such bonds, loans, advances, and indebtedness, if any, including interest thereon and any premiums due in connection therewith, and including any refunding securities therefor, have been paid, all taxes upon the taxable property within the taxable property area shall be paid into the funds of the respective public bodies.

(7) As used in this Chapter 4, “taxes” shall include, but not be limited to, all levies authorized to be made on an ad valorem basis upon real and personal property; but nothing in this Chapter 4 shall be construed to require any public body to levy taxes.

(8) Unless and until the total property tax collections in the taxable property area exceed the base year property tax collections in the taxable property area, as provided herein, all such property tax collections shall be paid into the funds of the appropriate public body. The Authority reserves the right to enter into agreements with select taxing jurisdictions relative to allocation of incremental tax revenues.

(9) The Authority and the City or other public body may, by agreement, provide for the method, amounts, and other procedures by which increments shall be allocated and paid to the Authority pursuant to the provisions of the Experience Downtown Plan of Development and as allowed by law.

(10) The adoption of the Experience Downtown Plan shall be deemed the continuation of a provision that taxes, if any, upon taxable property in the taxable property area, shall be divided among the Authority and various taxing entities for the same thirty year period as set forth in section IX of the Imagine Downtown Plan subject to any agreements between the Authority and El Paso County, the City of Colorado Springs School District 11, or other public body.

NOVEMBER
2016

EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN COLORADO SPRINGS MASTER PLAN

*Prepared under the direction of:
Downtown Development Authority of Colorado Springs
and the City of Colorado Springs*

*Prepared by MIG, Inc. in association with:
Progressive Urban Management Associates,
Starboard Realty Group,
Alta Planning + Design,
and Walker Parking Associates*





Land Use

Highlights

Smart land use decisions are key drivers of Downtown's revitalization. A continued emphasis on and promotion of **greater density, mixed-use buildings, and housing opportunities** will enhance the core's ability to attract and retain a critical mass of residents that support a range of amenities.

Planning for key long-term redevelopment opportunities must begin now if Downtown is to truly optimize its transformative power in coming years.

Strategic identification and assessment of the core's near- and mid-term catalytic sites helps city and Downtown stakeholders anticipate key redevelopment opportunities and plan the **public space and multi-modal investments** needed to support and activate them.

Master Plan Guiding Principles

Overview

Historic Context

Existing Land Use

Future Land Use

Catalytic Development Sites

Influence Sites

1

chapter

Master Plan Guiding Principles

Through the planning process, **Guiding Principles emerged that inform the approach to the Master Plan.** In particular, the Plan functions as a land use plan with a unique framework that embraces the Guiding Principles by prioritizing economic development, placemaking, branding and development of Downtown as its own neighborhood. The guiding principles are described below:

- Foster conditions that make Downtown a magnet for local investment, external investment and talent.
- Provide the housing and amenities for Downtown to thrive as a neighborhood.
- Promote healthy lifestyles and connect to world-class outdoor recreation.
- Improve walking, biking and transit within and to Downtown.
- Creatively use rights-of-way and other public assets to stimulate and support private-sector development.
- Use creative placemaking techniques to enhance gathering spaces and showcase local culture.
- Develop the public realm to create an environment attractive to employers and job seekers.



The Guiding Principles in this plan will help “create a city that matches our scenery.”

Overview

Land use traditionally has been the basis of most city and smaller area plans. The location, intensity, and variety of land uses continue to be crucial components of planning cities generally and downtowns in particular. Most cities around the country continue to employ the traditional American model – born of the industrial age of the early 20th century – of regulating and separating residential, commercial, and industrial development with the goal of eliminating or reducing the proximity of incompatible uses.

However, many municipalities – including Colorado Springs – have embraced the idea that **such strict separation of uses is often times no longer necessary** and in fact, that more vibrant, safe, and interesting places are created when a mix of appropriate uses is encouraged. In recent years this new development flexibility, coupled with increased market desirability for density in Downtown environments, has bolstered the fiscal, environmental, mobility and social benefits for many cities, residents and businesses across the country.

This section reviews the historic context of land use in Colorado Springs and summarizes the existing patterns Downtown. Key implications of this current pattern are examined and used to inform a future land use map designed to support more flexible and creative mixed-use development. Finally, key catalytic development sites are identified and discussed with respect to their importance to this evolving land use paradigm.

Historic Context

Planning has been significant in Colorado Springs since its founding. The city was relatively compact – focused largely on Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods – until the 1950s. However, like much of the rest of the country following World War II, the city's urban form changed drastically. The new dominance of automobiles and the development pattern that cars helped to facilitate led to a more sprawling, suburban-oriented America.

These far-reaching changes and patterns, still predominant into the early 21st century, dictated much of the land use and character seen in Colorado Springs today. As master planned developments each built thousands of homes, drawing the population gradually farther away from the city center, employment and retail uses followed. Downtown remained a center of business and government activity, but much of the growth and energy shifted toward new residential populations. National retailers followed the rooftops in suburban markets, while smaller, locally owned businesses continued to form the foundation of Downtown retail and hospitality. This trend has persisted to date; however, national and local trends have shifted in recent years toward acceptance and investment in both urban and suburban markets.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN PLANNING

General Palmer's early plans for Colorado Springs' original town site were carefully laid out so that Pikes Peak Avenue, as the city's "Main Street," would line up with the majestic view of the mountain that dominates the landscape. This central corridor and its commercial and office district were carefully planned to be the center of the community – today's Downtown. Many of the streets were designed with wide rights of way to accommodate the turning of horse and carriage, as well as to maintain the vistas of the Peak.



Birdseye rendering of Colorado Springs' grid system, 1909.

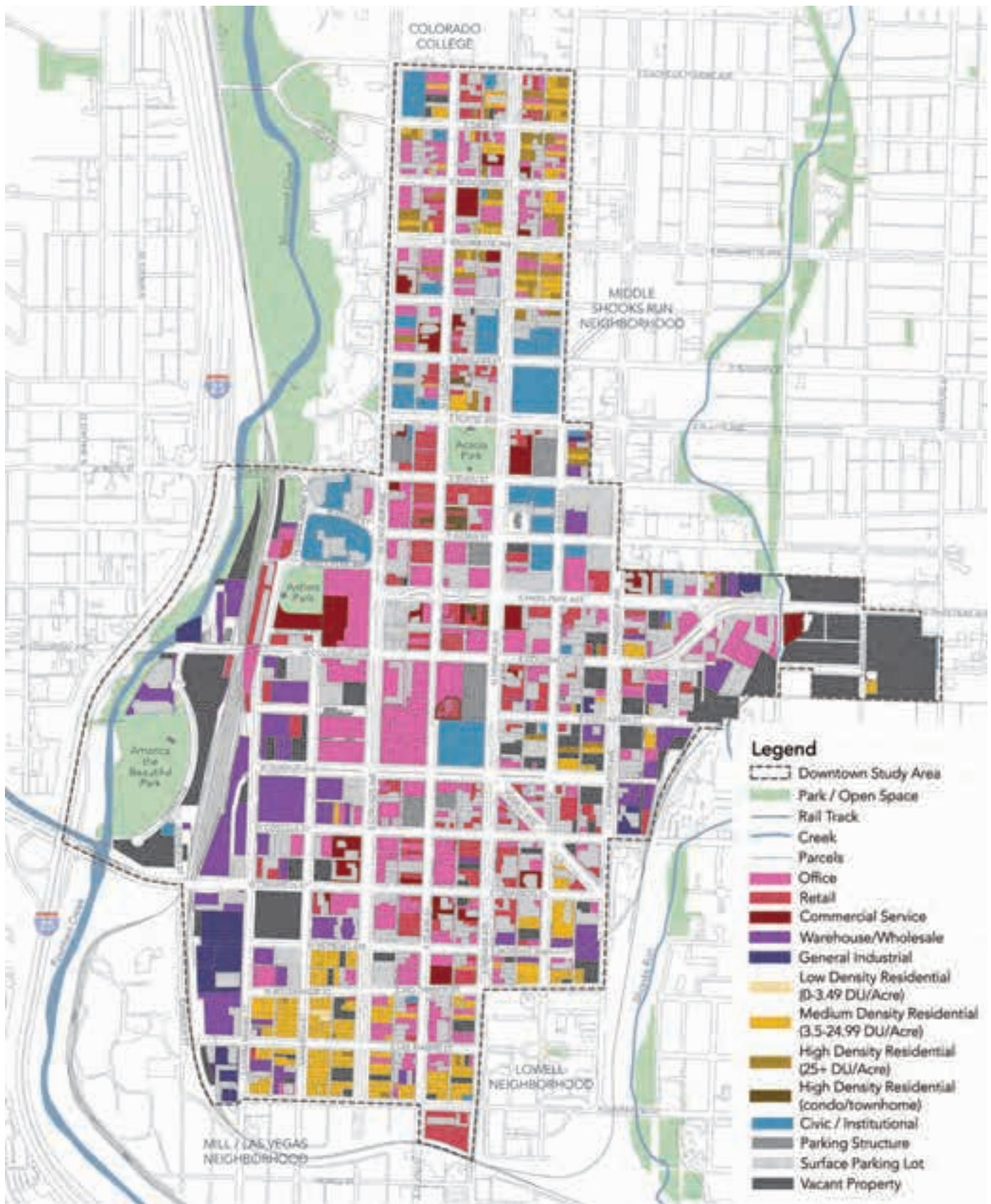
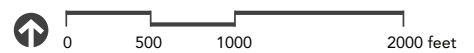


Figure 1.1 | Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

Current land uses in Downtown generally continue to be separated based on the market forces and regulations of earlier eras and are distributed as follows (See Figure 1.1):

Office, retail and service commercial comprise the majority of the land uses and are concentrated in the core.

Residential options are in limited supply Downtown and exist primarily in the northern and southern portions of the study area, abutting several of the Downtown-adjacent neighborhoods noted throughout this plan.

Industrial facilities and warehouses are concentrated in peripheral boundaries of the study area, particularly in the Southwest Downtown Urban Renewal Area and just east of the study area boundary along the rail tracks south of Catalyst Campus.

Government and public safety uses including City and El Paso County buildings are primarily found in the core of Downtown.

Art, cultural, and educational amenities abound and are located throughout much of the core (Figure 1.2), including the Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts and the Pioneers Museum close to the retail core, Cottonwood Center for the Arts on the eastern edge, and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center and other cultural amenities to the north near Colorado College. Twenty-five properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are located in Downtown, as well as dozens of art galleries, creative businesses, and artisan spaces.

Parks and recreation uses are located in multiple parts of Downtown, with the original parks envisioned by General Palmer complemented by the newer America the Beautiful Park, and the Legacy Loop trail system which runs through Monument Valley Park on the west and Shooks Run on the east.

More than 18% of land in the 648-acre DDA is devoted to vacant parcels and surface parking lots, and 39% to street rights-of-way¹ (see Figure 1.3). Thus, over 55% of the study area is underdeveloped and mostly dedicated to the car. Collectively, these underutilized assets pose significant challenges to fostering good urban design and an intimate, walkable core. However, they also represent a significant opportunity for Downtown to transform itself with a **thriving critical mass of residents and employees, an array of public spaces and amenities, and streetscapes that are alive with a range of uses and activities.**



¹ A substantial amount of street right of way must continue to be reserved for automobile traffic; however, a significant portion of many streets can be utilized to introduce a variety of uses, programming, or development incentives that will enhance mobility and livability Downtown.

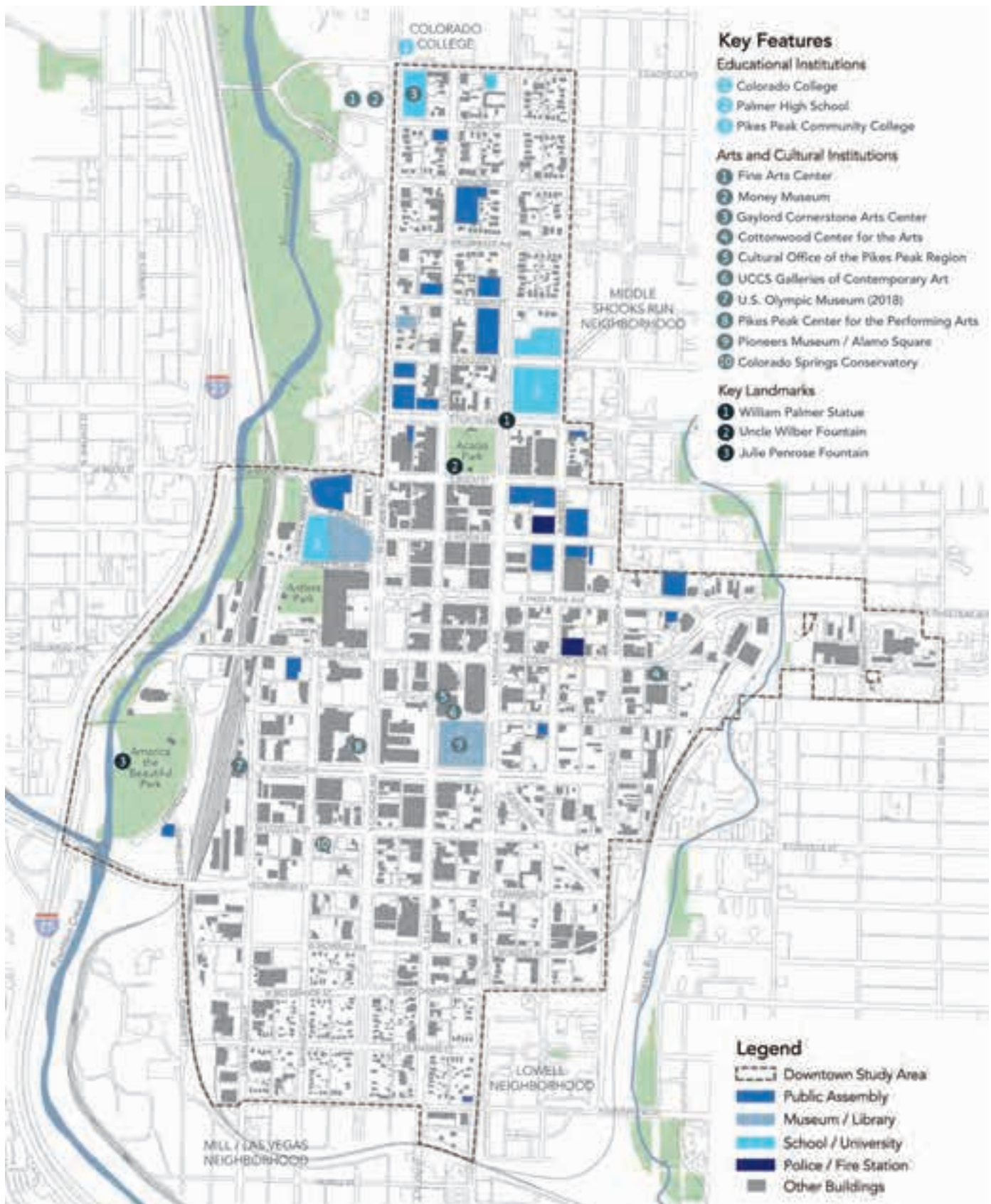


Figure 1.2 | Arts, Cultural and Educational Amenities

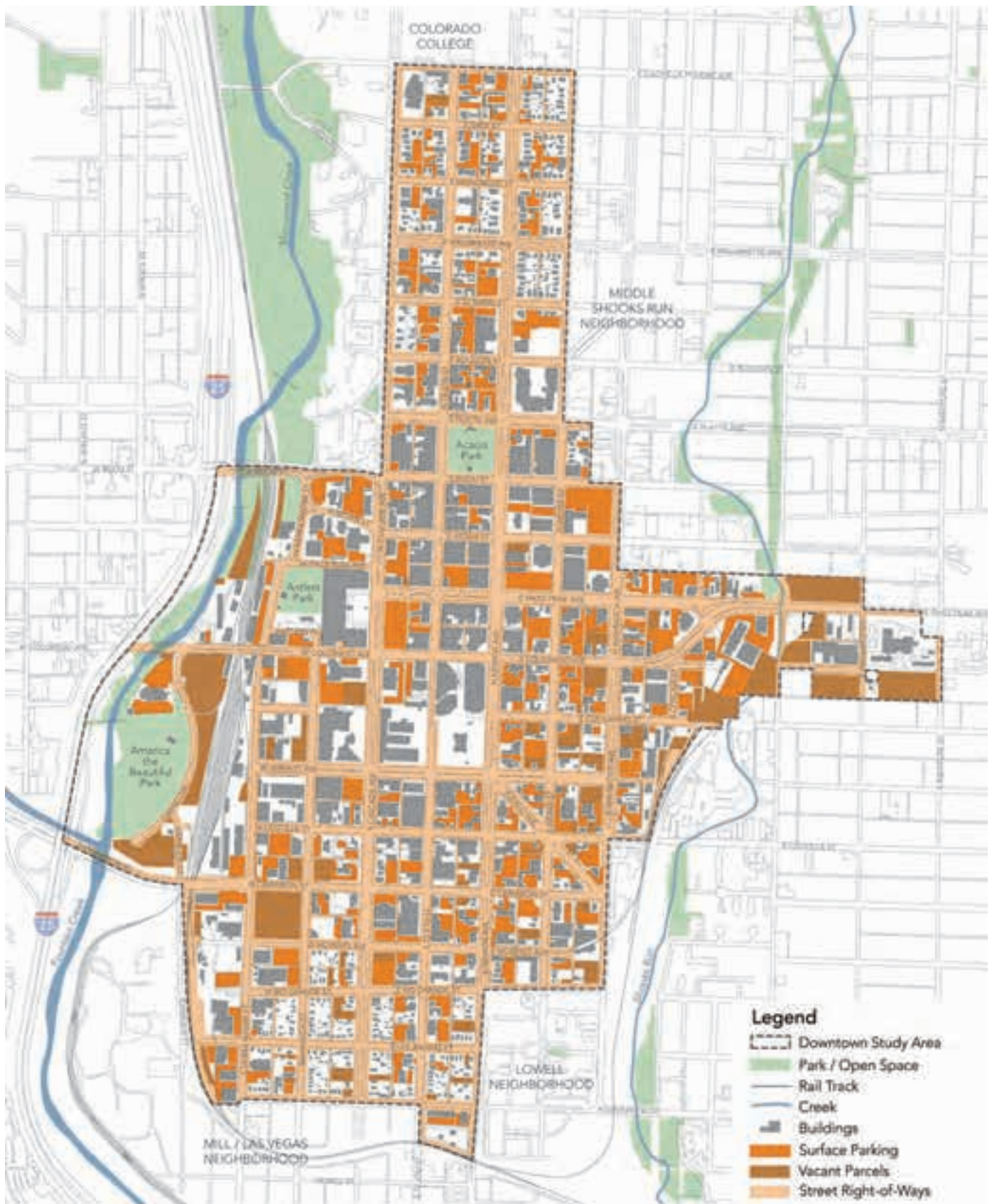
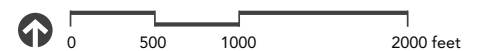


Figure 1.3 | Vacant Parcels, Parking Lots and Rights-of-Way



Future Land Use

Downtown Colorado Springs embraced a more innovative approach to land use in the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan. Building from that strong foundation, this plan update outlines four generalized land use categories, established by City Code and the Comprehensive Plan, and designates most of Downtown as two of those categories: Activity Center Mixed-use or General Mixed-use, as shown in the Future Land Use Map (see Figure 1.4). **Both types allow and encourage a range of complementary uses**, including the development of a range of housing types, densities, and price ranges, which is a key priority for Downtown. Following are descriptions of the four future land use types.

ACTIVITY CENTER MIXED-USE

The City's Comprehensive Plan identifies activity centers as mixed-use centers that integrate a range of complementary and mutually supporting uses and activities. These areas are **pedestrian-oriented** and should include good connections and transitions



Residential lofts, ground floor retail and good pedestrian connections are part of Activity Center Mixed Use areas.

to surrounding neighborhoods and districts. While a wide range of uses is expected, **residential uses are considered a critical element**. This designation encompasses the majority of the Downtown study area and reinforces the objectives of achieving a greater mix of uses, higher densities, and increased residential options.

GENERAL MIXED-USE

Similar to activity centers, but with a slightly decreased intensity and density, these areas are intended to **include a range of uses, stressing the presence of urban residential options**. General mixed-use areas are to be designed as pedestrian friendly and serve as transitions to the surrounding areas.

INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional areas are varied in use types, all different but integral to Downtown's flow of visitors throughout the day. These areas are associated with Colorado College, Palmer High School, City Auditorium, the Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts and the Pioneers Museum. Because the buildings associated with these areas are generally considered prominent public landmarks – many frequented by out-of-area visitors and pedestrian trips – it is important that they are integrated into the urban fabric with high-quality streetscape design, prominence of wayfinding signage, and flanked by welcoming public spaces.

GENERAL RESIDENTIAL

These areas are primarily intended to **serve a range of residential types and densities**. However, some non-residential uses are acceptable in General Residential areas, including: low-impact shops and services, small offices, parks and recreation areas, religious institutions, and schools.

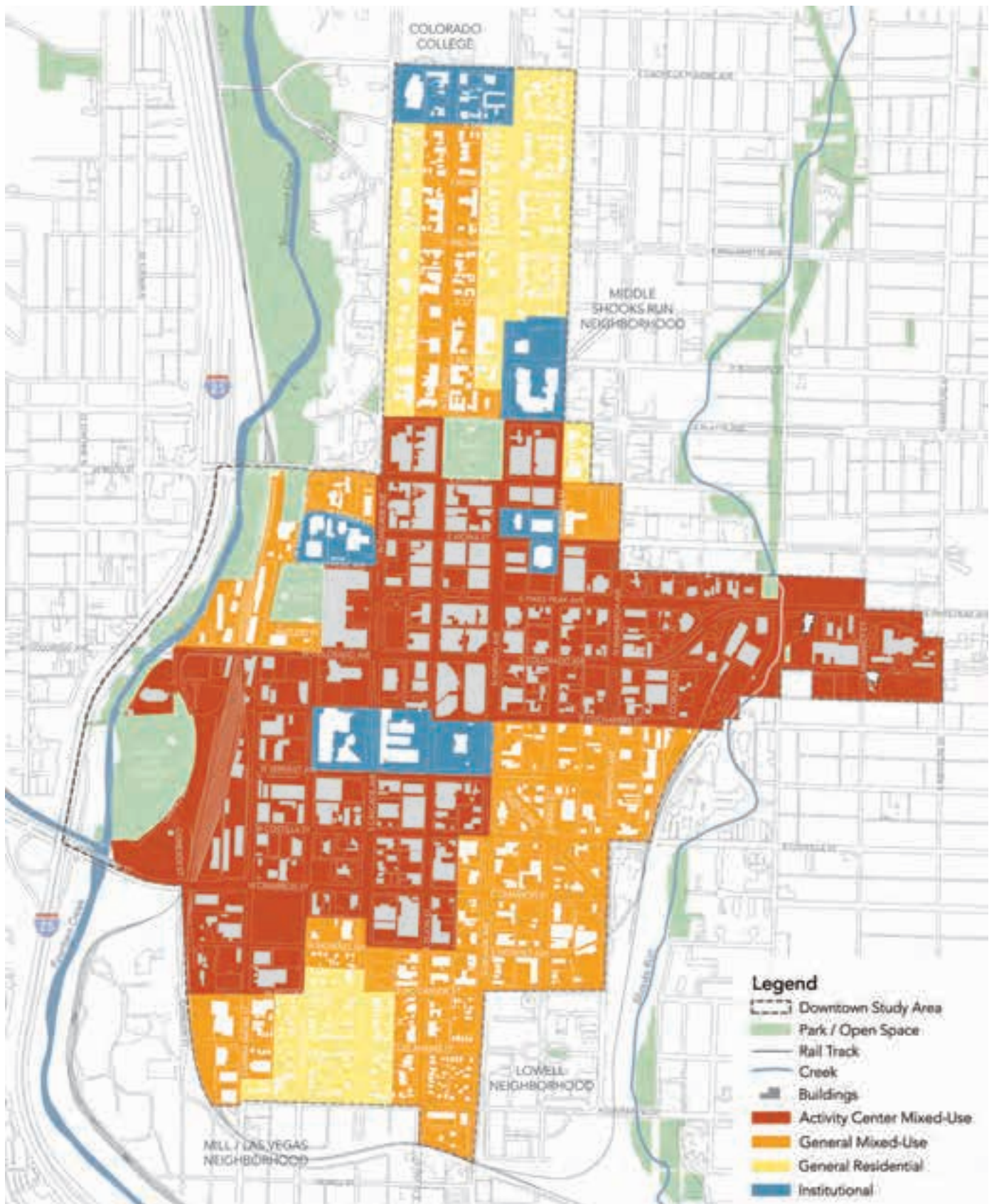
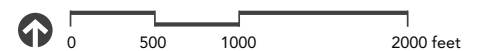


Figure 1.4 | Future Land Use



Catalytic Development Sites

Downtown's future land use is influenced by a number of key catalytic development sites and influence sites (see Figure 1.5). Finite market demand and investment capacity dictate that only a certain number of catalytic projects will be built in the core during each market cycle. However, while these sites capture today's development expectations and desires, there is always a possibility that new sites and priorities will arise in the next development cycle. **This chapter best captures development opportunities at the current point in time.**

Sixteen Catalytic sites are identified based on their near- to mid-term development potential, and their ability to impact the development and capital attraction patterns in the city center. Additionally, **five Influence sites** are generally located outside the study area boundary, but have immense impact on the growth and overall success of the greater Downtown area. Both Catalytic sites and Influence sites will require **strong partnerships and planning** to ensure their integration and ability to move Downtown toward the achievement of its goals.

Several of the sites are located near important Downtown gateways and represent **significant transformative opportunities and the potential to increase synergy between gateway and mobility improvements**. Examples include:

- The primary access point to the U.S. Olympic Museum and Southwest Downtown will be via the Cimarron Street gateway, which will be anchored by the development of the Citygate property (Site C.), and eventually by the redevelopment of Drake Power Plant (Site 1).
- The development of Catalyst Campus, and the Gazette-St. Francis properties (Sites I & H) will be critical in the evolution of the Pikes Peak Avenue gateway from the east. In conjunction with the Cottonwood Center for the Arts and Catalyst Campus, the area currently has momentum that can be captured to create a creatively and economically diverse hub of new businesses and residents.
- The continued growth of the Lowell Neighborhood (Site 3) and other residential developments on the southern edge of Downtown (Sites D & F) should convey a clear shift to a higher density urban neighborhood.
- The northern gateway area near Weber Street will increase in importance as Colorado College (Site 5) executes its plans for expansion and mixed-use development south of Cache la Poudre Avenue.

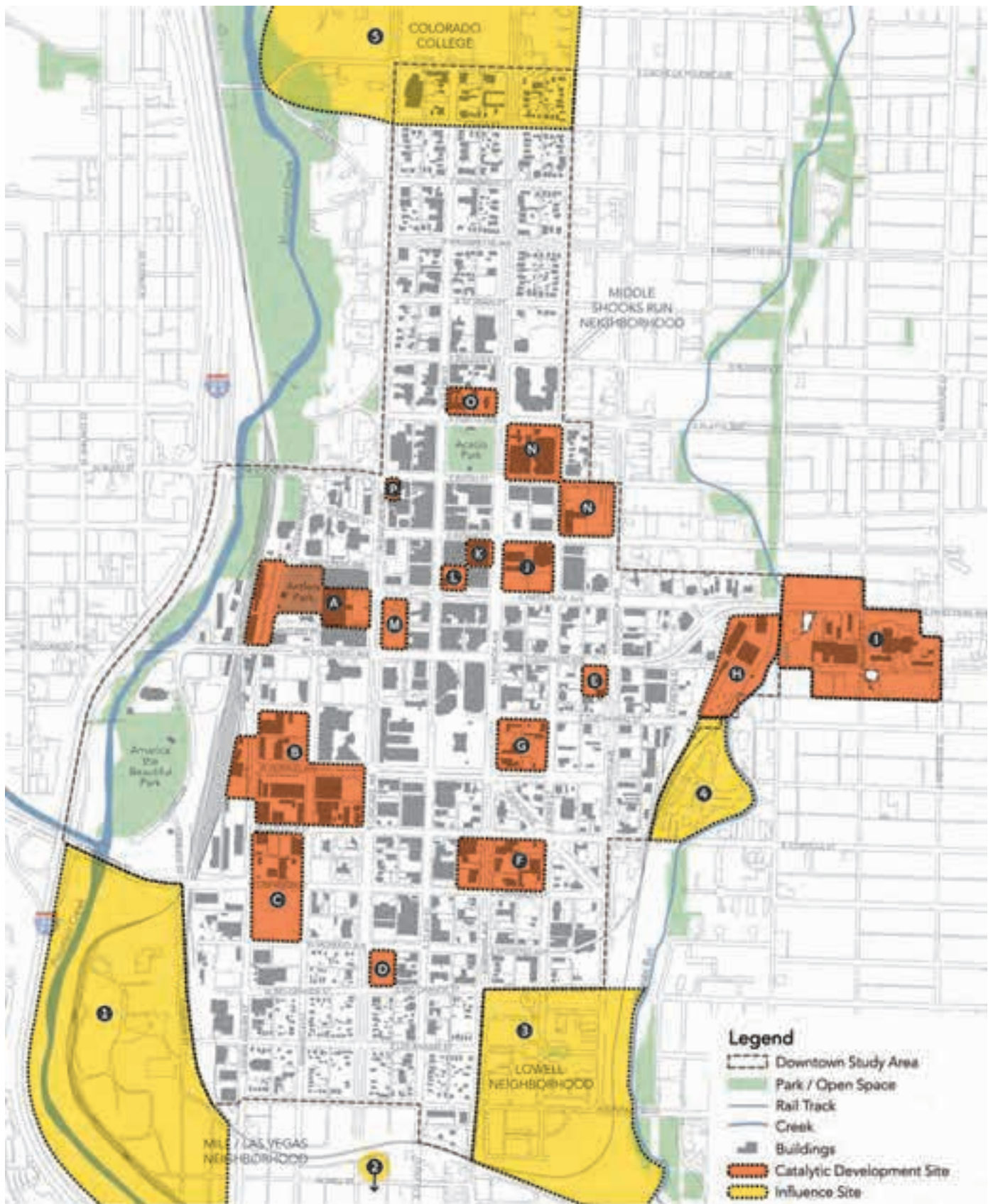
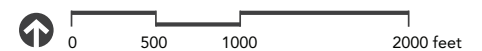


Figure 1.5 | Catalytic Development Sites





The historic Depot is currently vacant but remains a great opportunity and asset to the City.

A **Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Depot, Antlers Park, and Antlers Hotel and Plaza**

Built in 1887, the building served as a depot for passenger and freight on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad until 1971. Its historic Late Victorian/Queen Anne architectural style and location make it a significant catalytic site for Downtown. The added historic significance of **the depot, adjacent Antlers Park, and Antlers Hotel serving as the city's original visitor gateway** makes the site all the more important. Linked just steps from the future U.S. Olympic Museum by Sierra Madre Street, the site offers opportunities for a mix of uses, as it has at various times since 1971.

Critical catalytic elements include:

- Destination tenants for the Depot property
- Multi-modal connectivity infrastructure and access to rail
- Park improvements and placemaking elements, including lighting and safety improvements and ongoing programming
- Special purpose street improvements on Sierra Madre Street
- Palmer Center plaza redesign to be inclusive toward east face



Palmer Center is Downtown's largest formal plaza, but used infrequently.



Antlers Park - an underutilized Downtown asset.

B U.S. Olympic Museum and Southwest Downtown District

This iconic museum located at Sierra Madre Street and Vermijo Avenue will **enhance the city's reputation as a center for world class athletics and a global tourist destination** expected to draw 350,000 visitors a year. Development planned to accompany and support the museum has the potential to transform several underutilized blocks on the southwest side of Downtown, and become the essential "front lawn" to Downtown.

Critical catalytic elements include:

- U.S. Olympic Museum
- Pedestrian Bridge connecting to America the Beautiful Park
- Plaza and pedestrian focused streetscape infrastructure, suited for frequent community celebrations of large and small scales
- High density mixed use development
- Multi-modal connectivity infrastructure and access to rail



The U.S. Olympic Museum and pedestrian bridge to America the New Development will transform the southwest side of Downtown.

C Citygate

One of the premier mixed-use infill redevelopment opportunities in Downtown, Citygate is a 12-acre, four-block site on the south side of Cimarron Street between Sierra Madre and Sahwach streets. Its history as an industrial area and location near the rail tracks offer **an authentic, urban aesthetic not available in many parts of the city center**. Bordered to the south and east by mature neighborhoods and small local-serving retail nodes, and just a short walk to America the Beautiful Park, the site has strong potential to stimulate further investment and **create a more cohesive urban fabric along Cimarron Street**. Future development should be integrally designed to fit into Downtown's street grid with street-facing buildings constructed to activate the public realm.

Critical catalytic elements include:

- Proximity to America the Beautiful Park and the future U.S. Olympic Museum
- Major interchange and multi-modal improvements at Interstate 25 and Cimarron Street
- Proximity to Drake Power Plant, set for decommissioning no later than 2035
- One of the largest available development sites in the core
- Important element of the Cimarron Street gateway



D South Cascade Residential Development

Local developers are making early forays into the multifamily market. Several projects are currently in the final stages of planning, including a 187-unit multifamily development on Cascade Avenue between Moreno and Rio Grande streets. The addition of new residents will increase the density and vibrancy of the existing residential neighborhood and will **provide additional support for a range of businesses emerging along South Tejon Avenue.**

E South Wahsatch Residential Development

Also through local developers, a 172-unit multifamily project at Colorado and Wahsatch avenues has broken ground. This development will create an **important node of activity and density that will begin to link the East End and the core along Colorado Avenue.** It also adds a residential use in an area currently dominated by commercial uses and surface parking lots and will set a new standard for density and streetscape interface in the area.

The larger scale of the two aforementioned projects allows the incorporation of amenities not offered in any urban product currently available, including clubhouses, fitness rooms, pools, community decks, dog wash stations among other more common amenities such as garage parking and dedicated bike storage, and pet relief areas. Both projects also are designed to offer two-story brownstone-style units on two or three sides, providing a better interface with the street and pedestrian realm.



source: Nor'wood Development



source: Nor'wood Development

New residential developments in the New South End and East End districts (see Districts on page 2-24) will add needed density and vibrancy to areas just outside the City Center.

F Blue Dot Place Development and Vicinity

Blue Dot Place is a four-story development with 33 one- and two-bedroom apartment units located near the intersection of Nevada Avenue and Costilla Street. Several other new businesses, renovations, and vacant sites near this intersection have positioned it as a key redevelopment area. **The first new for-rent residential project built in the study area since 1960 already has had a positive catalytic influence**, helping “make the case” to potential Downtown investors that latent demand exists for this type of product. Although this scale of apartment project may be more feasibly replicated throughout Downtown (compared to the larger projects mentioned previously), the development does not provide pool or fitness facilities, making the facilities offered at the YMCA even more important as an urban amenity.

This development and the area around it are strong examples of the catalytic power of strategic investment downtown. At the completion of the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan, no one would have pegged the intersection of South Nevada Avenue and Costilla Street as the next node for investment in Downtown. But today, the New South End neighborhood is anchored by Blue Dot Place apartments and small businesses emerging in the area. The 2016 State of Downtown Report notes that **strategic funding from the DDA between 2013 and 2016 has leveraged a fiftyfold return in private investment in the immediate area**. To date, approximately \$14 million in announced, in-process or completed investment by the private sector has occurred in a four-block radius of the intersection. This includes Blue Dot’s 33 new residences, another 29 residential units in the mid-term pipeline, and eight new small businesses.



source: Jana Bussanich Photography

Blue Dot Place is in the heart of the emerging New South End district.

G Block on Nevada and Vermijo Avenues

This block between Nevada Avenue and Weber Street and Cucharas Street and Vermijo Avenue is a strategic redevelopment opportunity. In addition to the Colorado Springs Independent newspaper building, it consists primarily of large surface parking lots and several low intensity and underutilized buildings including the former Colorado Springs Health Partners (CSHP) offices and clinic, now vacant. There are several catalytic advantages to the location. Redevelopment of this block would fill in and activate a significant area linking the City Center and New South End districts. This site also is located at the intersection of the proposed urban greenway at Weber

and Cucharas planned streetscape improvements along Vermijo. Public realm improvements will provide safe and comfortable non-motorized transportation movement within the City Center as well as easy access to the Legacy Loop. **Residential and mixed use development would add vibrancy throughout the day in an area that is currently commercially oriented.** Specific attention should be paid to the streetscape and pedestrian crossings around the site, but particularly along Nevada Avenue. The size and prominent position of this block mean that it has immense potential to set the tone for other blocks along Nevada Avenue and the transition between the City Center and East End districts.



The block northeast of Nevada and Vermijo avenues is an important mixed use redevelopment / adaptive reuse opportunity.

H Catalyst Campus

This innovation campus on the east side of Downtown offers a unique model combining industry specific start-up space, support services, workforce training, and access to capital all located in the renovated Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad depot and surrounding parcels near the intersection of Pikes Peak and Colorado avenues. As Catalyst grows and develops it is likely to become **a significant employment and education node within Downtown, supplying new primary jobs** that will attract more retail, restaurant and service amenities to the east side.

Critical catalytic elements include:

- Renovated historic depot buildings
- Improved connectivity to the Legacy Loop and connection across Shooks Run to the east
- Concentrated employment cluster
- Large site with capacity for significant medium-density development

I Gazette and St. Francis Hospital and Surrounding Sites

These three sites, located along Prospect Street south of Pikes Peak Avenue, as well as the large vacant parcel across Pikes Peak Avenue to the north, provide **unparalleled views of the city center and Pikes Peak**. All three locations offer easy access to the Shooks Run Trail/Legacy Loop and the east side of the city center. The former Gazette building has an **industrial aesthetic and large central spaces somewhat uncommon in Downtown**, while several buildings on the former St. Francis site provide historic ambiance. The sites offer distinct redevelopment opportunities in close proximity to each other and to the core, with market potential for residents, resident-serving amenities, retail, office and/or artisan manufacturing.

Critical catalytic elements include:

- Potential to activate both sides of Pikes Peak Avenue at the eastern gateway to Downtown
- Connectivity to the Legacy Loop
- High density mixed use development
- Artisan manufacturing or maker space node
- Connectivity to Downtown (new pedestrian bridge crossing at Shooks Run)



source: Nor'wood Development

The Gazette and St. Francis Hospital sites are unique assets for redevelopment on the east side.

J City Auditorium

The auditorium building was built in 1923 and has played host to a variety of notable concerts and events. The City's Park System Master Plan identifies the auditorium on one of its top two priorities for "Recreation Buildings, Community Centers and Museums." The City is undertaking an economic feasibility study that will provide recommendations on how to best use the facility in the future. **Aligning recommendations for the Auditorium facility and the development objectives of the property owners of adjacent parcels**, including the large parking lot south of the auditorium building, at the intersection of Pikes Peak and Nevada avenues, is important in order to truly take advantage of this catalytic site.



Re-purposing the historic City Auditorium building and developing the surrounding block will activate a key site in the City Center.

K Transit Center Relocation

In 2016, Metropolitan Mountain Transit is studying options for relocating the Downtown transit station currently located on the southwest corner of Kiowa Street and Nevada Avenue. Removing bus operations from the lower floor of this structure opens up possibilities for **renovating and adaptively reusing the space for retail**, hospitality, and other uses that activate the ground level along both streets while achieving greater functionality and TOD potential for future transit operations. (see Figure 1.6)

L Parking Lot on Tejon Street and Pikes Peak Avenue

This large L-shaped parking lot on the northeast corner of Tejon Street and Pikes Peak Avenue occupies prime real estate in the city center. Higher intensity development on this site will **activate one of the key intersections Downtown** and fill an obvious gap in the pedestrian realm on one of the signature blocks of Pikes Peak Avenue.



The relocation of the Transit Center will help activate an important Downtown intersection.



Figure 1.6 | Transit Center Illustration (before and after)

M Parking Lot on Cascade Avenue between Pikes Peak and Colorado Avenues

This half-block parking lot is located across Cascade Avenue from the Antlers Hotel, Wells Fargo Tower and First Bank Tower. 1.7 acres in size, the lot is just steps from one of the more vibrant blocks of Tejon Street and two of its most important intersections at Pikes Peak and Colorado avenues. The site **has immense potential to develop a full range of uses given its location in the heart of Downtown**, and along a key neighborhood green street spine. Residential, office, commercial, and hospitality uses could all coexist and thrive on this key site.

N First Presbyterian / YMCA Expansion

The planned expansion of the Downtown YMCA and redevelopment of nearby buildings and parking lots operated by First Presbyterian Church southeast of Bijou and Weber streets will transform these two important Downtown blocks. The expansion will provide enhanced and updated services and facilities for YMCA members, incorporate a major health care component on-site, introduce senior housing and community services, and will potentially include a charter school. Most importantly, however, **the renovated facility will serve as a great amenity and attraction available to existing and future Downtown residents**. The YMCA expansion will bring new activity adjacent to Acacia Park, and both projects will leverage access to the neighborhood green street proposed on Weber Street (see Chapter 4).

O Acacia Park Apartments Reuse

The half block north of Acacia Park across Platte Avenue is somewhat underutilized given its proximity to the park, the vibrant retail along Tejon Street, and the planned YMCA expansion. The existing Acacia Park Apartments, a small but dated residential building, and the fast food restaurant do little to activate the northern edge of the park despite providing much needed affordable housing units. A freshening of these properties through **redevelopment or adaptive reuse with more pedestrian activated uses and articulation would catalyze Tejon Street and Platte Avenue**. Redevelopment of the residential properties should aim to retain affordable workforce housing, and accommodate for any possible displacement due to redevelopment.

P Bijou and Cascade Redevelopment

For many years, the gateway along East Bijou has been marked by a small but influential site at the corner of Bijou and Cascade. A former drive-through bank, the property has remained vacant for many years and is troubled with vagrancy and trespassing. In 2016, developers announced plans to construct a 10-story, 176-room hotel facility. **Development of this site is a critical to enhancing the Bijou gateway**, as well as future re-development of surrounding sites to create an activity center in this important gateway.



Adaptive reuse of the Acacia Park Apartments will help activate Acacia Park and key pedestrian streets nearby.

Influence Sites

1 Drake Power Plant

The future redevelopment of the Drake power plant site represents a once-in-a-century opportunity. In a monumental decision made by the board of the Colorado Springs Utilities in 2015, a full decommissioning date has been set for the year 2035.

The stage is set for the transformation of the site that currently dominates the land use and skyline of Southwest Downtown. Downtown stakeholders must continue to support the closure of Drake and push for an acceleration of the 20-year shut down time frame. Mitigation and redevelopment of the site will help knit together key downtown assets including the Legacy Loop, America the Beautiful Park, the Citygate redevelopment, and the existing Mill Neighborhood. Planning efforts must commence immediately to anticipate infrastructure, open space, and other public investments that will help guide the redevelopment and transform the site and some of its structures into a landmark destination in Downtown.



The planned closing of the Drake Power Plant by 2035 represents a once-in-a-century opportunity to completely transform an important site just outside the Downtown study area.

2 Springs Rescue Mission – Multi Agency Campus Expansion

Located just south of the Downtown study area boundary and adjacent to the southern end of the Legacy Loop lies the existing Springs Rescue Mission campus, which serves the homeless population with low-barrier shelter and other supportive services. Colorado Springs currently faces a shortage of several hundred year-round shelter beds, lacks a day center facility and lacks storage services for unsheltered populations. However, efforts are under way to address these issues through the Continuum of Care (CoC), a collaborative initiative to sustain a durable system of care that prevents and ends homelessness. Springs Rescue Mission's campus expansion will include new year-round shelter beds, a day center, and new kitchen and dining hall, all in Phase 1; a second phase includes new permanent supportive housing. While the many human service agencies within the greater Downtown area provide a range of much needed services to the community, a keen focus on increasing youth and low-barrier shelter services is the most critical element necessary to ensure that unsheltered populations have safer sleeping alternatives to alleyways, business doorways, creeks, trails, etc.



The Springs Rescue Mission will better serve a great need near Downtown by providing a low barrier shelter, day center, expanded kitchen and dining facilities.

3 Lowell Neighborhood

Encompassing 58 acres surrounding the historic Lowell School, the Lowell neighborhood represents a unique and historically centered new-urbanist neighborhood in the heart of the city. Originally approved as an Urban Renewal Area in 1988, the Lowell Neighborhood has been the only new neighborhood to emerge adjacent to downtown in decades, providing hundreds of residential units over its 25-year life. The neighborhood is generally bound by Rio Grande Street to the north, Nevada Avenue to the west, the railroad tracks to the south and Shooks Run to the east. Due primarily to lags in market cycles, the area's redevelopment is not completed, and several acres still exist for new development. Lowell is an integral part of the Downtown, despite being just outside the study area boundaries, and should be treated with similar priority to core sites.



source: <http://www.csurbanrenewal.org/>

The Lowell Neighborhood will provide an attractive entry into Downtown, innovative mixed income housing opportunities, and neighborhood oriented commercial activities adjacent to the core.

4 Transit Mix

Located along the Legacy Loop and Shooks Run corridor, the Transit Mix Concrete Company site on the east side of Downtown is another important potential redevelopment adjacent to the study area. Although the site currently continues with regular Transit Mix operations, focused planning efforts should begin to assess the site's integration into the Downtown fabric, its impact on access to the Legacy Loop, close in neighborhoods such as Hillside, and connections to Catalyst Campus and other catalytic sites on the east side of Downtown.

5 Colorado College Development

The majority of the Colorado College campus is located just north of the Plan's study area boundary, although, of course, CC has been and continues to be considered an essential part of the Downtown fabric. A campus master plan was completed in 2015 that calls for locating several new campus facilities south of Cache La Poudre Street between Tejon and Weber streets (within the Plan's Study Area boundary). The College owns several blocks in this area and intends to complement the campus uses with mixed use development that will support both students as well as area residents. This development is an opportunity for cooperation and better linkages with the core of Downtown to the south. Additionally, the neighborhood greenway designation of Cascade, Weber and Cache La Poudre streets is vital for traffic calming, better connectivity of the campus to the Downtown core, and safer pedestrian and bike access throughout the greater campus area.

Parks, Trails and Waterways

Highlights

Completing missing links of the Legacy Loop is a top priority.

Prioritizing these projects will not only enhance one of Downtown's greatest assets, but also increase connections among many other important destinations and activities in the core.

Regular reassessment and reprogramming of the city center's parks

will ensure they remain beloved amenities for residents and visitors alike. Each Downtown park has a unique role to play, and together they offer recreation opportunities for a diverse range of users.

Downtown's creeks and waterways are underutilized resources.

Projects that increase access to and enjoyment of these amenities should be prioritized.

Overview

Legacy Loop

Urban and Neighborhood Greenways

Downtown Parks and Waterways

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chapter

Overview

Colorado Springs' connection to and celebration of the natural environment is ingrained in the origins and very fabric of the city. Beyond its incomparable views of Pikes Peak, **Downtown's most tangible connection to this history and beauty is through its parks and trails.**

Historic Acacia and Antlers parks punctuate the core's urban grid, while America the Beautiful Park creates an amazing backdrop and future connection to the U.S. Olympic Museum. Monument Valley Park serves as a historic amenity and contains the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail as part of the Legacy Loop, and the amenities of Prospect Lake and Memorial Park are a short distance east of Downtown.

The Legacy Loop Trail and the various parks and greenways that nearly encircle the city center are unique assets for residents and visitors alike, and an attractive amenity to employers and investors in downtown. Completing missing trail links and better connecting Downtown to the loop are key imperatives of this plan. In concert with existing recreational and open space assets, these improvements will support numerous Imagine Downtown Master Plan goals including celebrating the natural setting, promoting a healthy downtown, providing safe and convenient modes of transportation, and ensuring an unforgettable visitor experience.

This section addresses the Legacy Loop and its missing links, introduces the concept of urban greenways, and discusses how the role of Downtown parks can be expanded to better serve both residents and visitors. As new development and density influence the area, it is important to rethink the scale and variety of parks and gathering spaces available in the core. It is also critical to more **proactively address access to the great asset of Downtown's adjacent waterways.**



Acacia Park is currently programmed with a play facility, an historic band-shell and a semi-public shuffleboard court.



Uncle Wilber Fountain is a cherished summertime destination in Acacia Park.



Antlers Park is a strong potential location for an urban off-leash dog park.

Legacy Loop

Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods are woven together by a natural greenway and trail system, known as the Legacy Loop (see Figure 2.1). The system consists of existing parks and trails that expand along Monument and Fountain creeks. Connecting these natural assets in a loop surrounding Downtown has long been a vision of the community. The City's Park System Master Plan notes that **expanding the urban trail system was identified by the public as a top priority**, and the 2012 Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel Report also stressed the importance of prioritizing the completion of this key Downtown asset.

General Palmer, who dedicated thousands of acres to the city for parks and open space, supported this notion of a "Park Ring" around the city (now Downtown). The Legacy Loop's 6.7-mile system of trails is currently a place for jogging, biking, special events, exploring or just strolling. However, missing links are apparent and new facilities and updated infrastructure are needed to complete the loop. **Completion of the Legacy Loop is a top priority of the Experience Downtown Master Plan.** The Park System Master Plan identifies portions of the Pikes Peak Greenway, Shooks Run Trail, and the connecting Rock Island Trail (between Circle Drive and Powers Boulevard) as Tier 1 priorities for greenway improvements and connectivity.

Also crucial, as the Loop serves as a gateway into Downtown, is the cleanliness, safety and ongoing upkeep of the trails and creeks that make up the Loop.

In mid-2015, Colorado Springs was awarded a \$1 million grant from Great Outdoors Colorado in support of these efforts. The grant is being used to address some of projects listed below that will enhance access to and overall connectivity of the trail system.

- Building approximately 2.5 miles of 12-foot wide multi-use trail along northern sections of the loop;
- Constructing a trail to connect the Pikes Peak Greenway, Rock Island Trail, and Shooks Run Trail at the north end of the system, closing one of the largest existing gaps in the loop, and linking the major north-south and east-west regional trails in the city;
- Constructing new trail and underpasses along the northwest portion of the loop to create a continuous 10-mile loop without street crossings;
- Construction of a new multi-use trailhead at Fontanero Street with 100 parking spaces and amenities for hosting races and other community events; and
- The Popcycle Bridge project (in partnership with Kids on Bikes) was completed in 2015 and provides gathering spaces for bicyclists, bicycle-themed art, and facilities for bicycle safety training.



Pikes Peak Greenway Trail along Monument Creek is the western segment of the Legacy Loop.

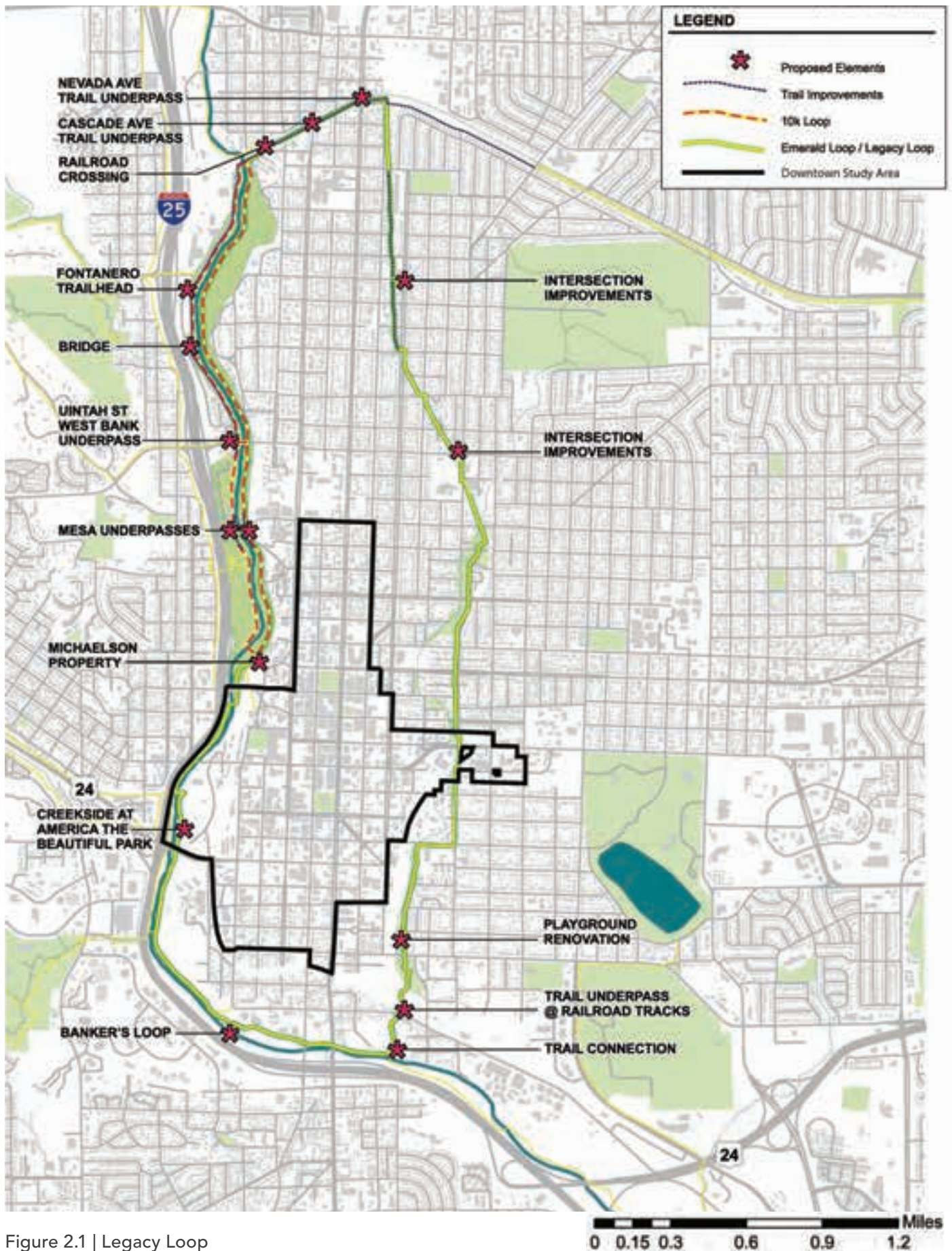


Figure 2.1 | Legacy Loop

This suite of projects will represent a major achievement for Downtown and greater Colorado Springs, moving one step closer to completing the Legacy Loop. However, remaining connectivity gaps will still exist at the southern end of the system, and addressing them should be a top priority for future planning and funding opportunities.

In 2016, a facilities master plan was under way to determine multi-modal transportation and drainage infrastructure improvements along the Shooks Run Corridor, which makes up the eastern portion of the Legacy Loop. A transformative approach has been

selected that addresses facilities needs, and will guide how infrastructure improvements are implemented over the next 50 years.

Beyond connectivity, Legacy Loop's character should be strengthened with recognition and preservation of the ecological resources along the greenway and waterways, ongoing improvements such as Olympic-themed interpretive signage and public art installations. Another priority for the Legacy Loop is **increasing connectivity from the trails and waterways to and from the core by way of a series of urban and neighborhood greenways.**



Renderings depicting Legacy Loop improvements at America the Beautiful Park (above) and along Shooks Run (below, from the Envision Shooks Run Master Plan by Design Workshop).

Urban and Neighborhood Greenways

The concept of urban and neighborhood greenways is explored in more detail in Chapter 4. These corridors are important within the context of parks and trails, as they are **designated routes designed to slow automobile traffic and create safe street environments for pedestrian and bicyclist movement**. They provide the opportunity of improving important east-west connectivity to the Legacy Loop and within the city center, facilitating increased accessibility to Downtown and regional parks and trails by residents, employees, and visitors. This enhanced access supports both healthy living and multi-modal transportation goals. Physical improvements such as designated and protected cycling lanes and specialty paving treatments will distinguish these corridors from other Downtown streets. Furthermore, urban and neighborhood greenways are intended to stand out within the established street grid by incorporating some of the natural features found along the Legacy Loop. These elements include: street trees, natural landscaping and natural stormwater management infrastructure such as bioswales. Figure 2.2 illustrates a number of these cutting edge public realm and greenway design options along Sierra Madre Street. Urban and neighborhood greenways not only provide safe connections to the beautiful outdoor settings, they also **integrate natural features from a trail system into an urban context**.



Urban and neighborhood greenways can add beauty and improved mobility to Downtown as depicted in Boulder, CO.

Downtown Parks and Waterways

Downtown parks provide urban open spaces and recreational and gathering opportunities for residents and visitors. Currently, there are three main city parks within the Study Area: Acacia, Antlers, and America the Beautiful, plus a fourth park being the grounds surrounding Pioneers Museum known as Alamo Park. Monument Valley Park and Shooks Run border the core on the west and east respectively and are very much considered part of the Downtown fabric. Memorial Park and Prospect Lake are easily accessible from Downtown by walking, biking, or transit.

The Park System Master Plan discusses a strong support for Downtown revitalization and infill as a key opportunity for future improvement in the system. The Experience Downtown Master Plan supports and reinforces this vision. As future development and redevelopment occurs, **Downtown will be tasked with re-imagining existing parks and incorporating new public spaces with park-like elements, including trail connections, parklets, community gardens, and informal gathering spaces** (as discussed in the Residential Garden Streets section of Chapter 4).

In addition to noting a very high proportion of residents who enjoy the city's recreation and outdoor opportunities, the Park System Master Plan also identifies using parks and special events as a means to promote tourism. **Each Downtown park has a distinct character that defines its current uses and future opportunities to serve both locals and visitors.**

Parks, recreation and cultural services resources should be leveraged to support these efforts, as the Park System Master Plan states that Monument Valley Park, Acacia Park and Antlers Park are among the top priorities in the category of neighborhood parks, community parks and playgrounds. Acacia and Monument Valley parks are also identified as top priorities for evaluation and facilities management plans.

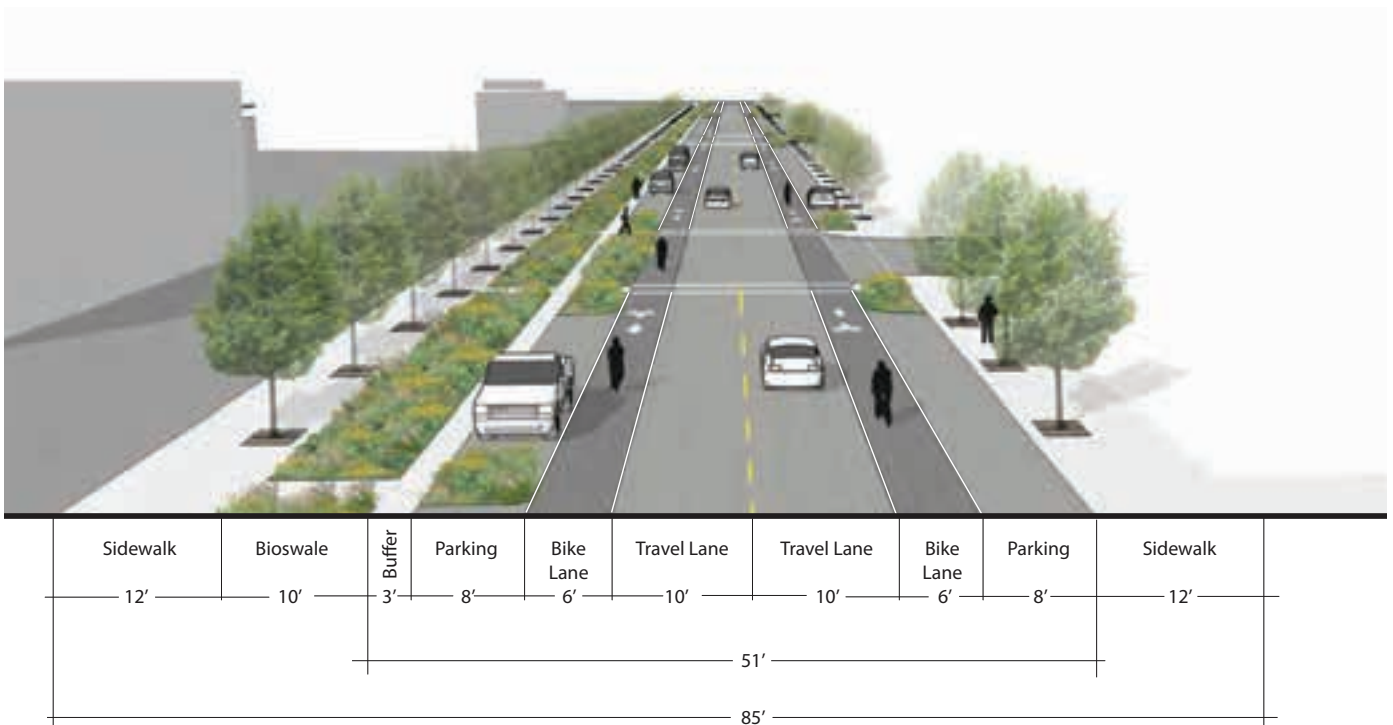
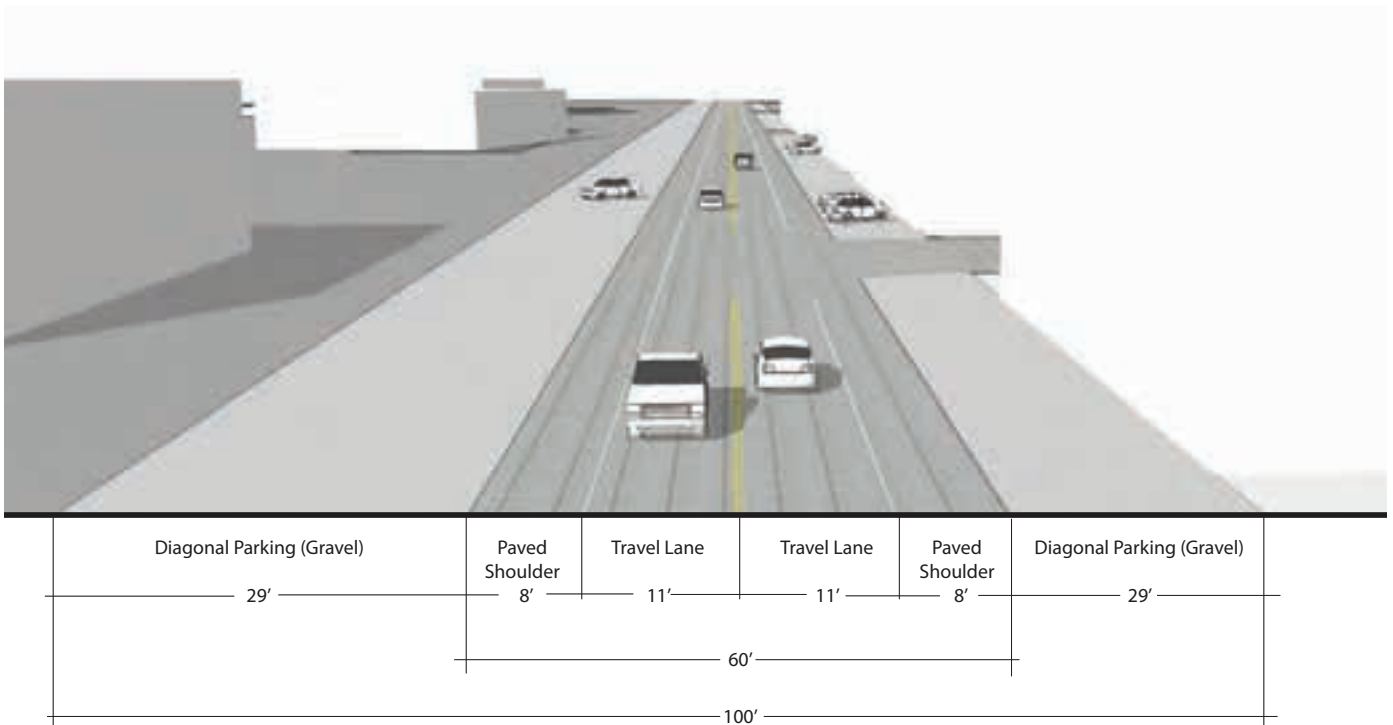


Figure 2.2 | Sierra Madre Urban Greenway Street Section (looking north, from Cucharras Street; before and after)

ACACIA PARK

Acacia Park serves as one of the centers of activity and recreation Downtown. **Recent improvements in amenities and programming have increased its use by a wider range of residents.** Its proximity to one of the more successful retail blocks of Tejon Street increases its visibility to Downtown visitors and solidifies its role as a major site for events Downtown. Recent programming efforts, such as the Downtown Sunday Market, Skate in the Park, summer concerts and other festivities have enlivened the park dramatically.

However, **several factors create challenges in the park**, including the sunken playground; landscaping that can hide people and diminish park safety; the aging and underused shuffleboard area; poorly maintained restrooms; and the visibility and design of the band shell's side.

ANTLERS PARK

Antlers Park, once a prominent site, especially for train passengers disembarking at the Denver and Rio Grande Station across Sierra Madre Street, **is now one of the least used spaces Downtown.** Hidden from most of the core by the Antlers Hotel to the east, the park sees little active use among its giant historic shade trees. Numerous stakeholders mentioned it as an ideal location for creating a key missing urban amenity in the city center: an off-leash dog park. A variety of programming is possible in Antlers Park, but viable only if circulation and access are improved. The site is currently isolated and bounded by vacant and underutilized parcels. However, with the proposed transformation of Sierra Madre Street, reactivation of the historic depot, and new programming efforts, **Antlers Park should once again become a favored gathering spot Downtown.**

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL PARK

America the Beautiful Park lives up to its name, with majestic views of Pikes Peak and a combination of manicured and natural areas including the confluence of Monument and Fountain creeks. The park is currently difficult to access from many parts of Downtown. However, the planned pedestrian bridge connecting to the future U.S. Olympic Museum will create an essential and strong link. In addition, the development expected to accompany the museum, development at Citygate, the multi-modal trail improvements being constructed as part of the Interstate 25 and Cimarron interchange, and the upcoming Creekside project will **further position and highlight the park as an iconic element of Downtown.**

WATERWAYS

The newly completed Creekside Project at America the Beautiful Park should serve as a model to encourage greater access to Downtown's multiple waterways for all types of users and abilities. Although many of Downtown's waterways are currently difficult to access, great opportunities exist to emulate the success of other Front Range cities. Denver, Boulder, Pueblo and Fort Collins have embraced their local streams and rivers by enhancing safe access, and integrating them into the fabric of Downtown. Colorado Springs should actively identify similar opportunities to increase access to its waterways, particularly in conjunction with adjacent park and trail projects.

Gateways and Districts

Highlights

Gateway areas must be enhanced to improve placemaking and multi-modal access, showcase local arts and culture, and incentivize private investment. A wide range of incremental improvements and investments can be utilized to revitalize these areas based on levels of prioritization and funding.

Downtown's districts are a key part of its identity as a unique destination in the city. The design, programming, and infrastructure investments in each district should **support the vision and branding of Downtown as a whole** while also creating differentiated areas that **serve and appeal to a wide range of residents and visitors.**

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Gateways

Districts

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Overview

Gateways and districts are two essential facets of Downtown's identity and image. "Welcoming" is one of the key values identified by community stakeholders, and enhanced gateways are a great opportunity to create the **welcoming environment that is vital to success.**

Downtown's primary gateway locations are typically found on the periphery of the study area, often in transition areas or near major infrastructure such as Interstate 25. However, few of these locations currently inspire the sense of arrival one should feel when entering the economic and cultural heart of the region. In many cases these entrances to the core are visually unappealing and feel safe only to those arriving by car; walking and biking are not always comfortable options. This plan recognizes current efforts to address these challenges and suggests new strategies to **enhance placemaking, ensure multi-modal access, showcase community arts and culture, and foster private realm development and improvements.**

While the gateways create people's first impression of Downtown, collectively the **districts provide a range of uses and settings to suit many different needs.**

A clear sense of definable districts in the city core is still evolving. While Downtown itself strives to be more relevant to residents in other parts of the city, too strong of a focus on subareas could dilute that message. However, the array of different uses, building types, art and culture, and activities associated with the various districts is part of the allure of Downtown and should be celebrated. A nuanced strategy that balances these two perspectives and evolves over time is crucial as Downtown markets itself and its brand to the broader region.

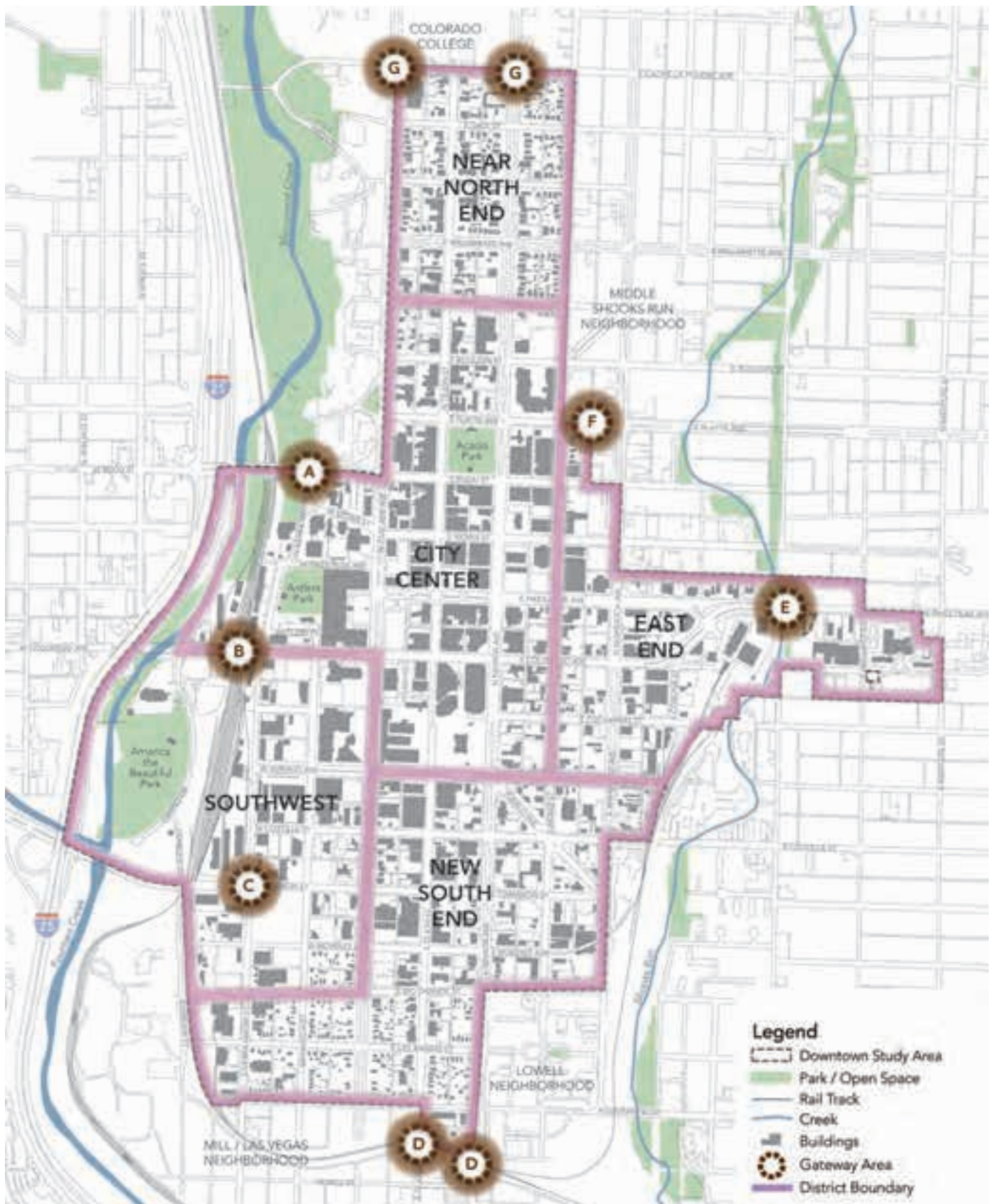
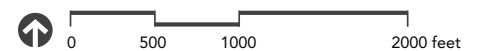


Figure 3.1 | Gateways and Districts



Gateways

Primarily located at major automobile entrances to Downtown, the gateways identified on the Gateways and Districts map (see Figure 3.1) **currently fail to provide the type of first impression desired** as people visit from other parts of the city and beyond. Visually unappealing uses and infrastructure tend to dominate the western and southern gateways while the eastern gateways (particularly Pikes Peak Avenue) provide spectacular views of Pikes Peak, but lack a commensurate quality of streetscape and built form. The northern gateways physically link the Colorado College campus with Downtown, but fail to inspire a true sense of connection with the core just five blocks to the south.

The nine gateways listed on the following pages are not the only entrances to Downtown, but they are **locations where connectivity and land use improvements will have the greatest impact**. Although the gateways are described in association with specific streets and intersections, the identified challenges and opportunities generally apply to a wider area around each location. Perceptions and experiences of residents and visitors often extend several blocks prior to and after a specific location. Gateway areas are indicated by letter on Figure 3.1.



Kiowa Street with its swift moving one-way traffic, serves as a primary entrance to Downtown.

WESTERN GATEWAYS

Bijou and Kiowa streets  comprise a major highway access point into the city's core. While the view of the Downtown skyline announces a sense of arrival, other aspects of the approach must be improved. Roadway configuration and prominent uses are two key issues. The design of these streets as a **one-way couplet speeds drivers into and out of the core and confuses orientation and wayfinding**, especially for drivers unfamiliar with the area. On the north side of Bijou Street, the Marian House Soup Kitchen run by the Catholic Charities of Central Colorado and a large Firestone Auto Care Center are the most prominent structures. Although both uses are valuable assets to the city, opportunities to enliven the public realm surrounding these properties with engaging public art, and additional street level development on the adjacent blocks should be pursued. Catalytic site P (Figure 1.5) has been proposed by developers as a future site for a new 10-story hotel, which would add development in urban form and provide added pedestrian level activity. Creating opportunities for more iconic and inspirational public art, signage, uses and buildings at this important entrance should be a priority.

Colorado Avenue  provides **clear and direct access into Downtown from Old Colorado City** and other neighborhoods to the west. However, improvements are needed for connecting pedestrians and bicyclists from these neighborhoods into the core. Similarly, **creating safer and more comfortable access** for Downtown residents and visitors trying to reach America the Beautiful Park should be a priority. Signalizing the intersection at Sahwatch Street should be considered to help walkers and bikers using Colorado more easily access Antlers Park, the historic Depot, and Sierra Madre Street connecting south to the U. S. Olympic Museum.

The **Cimarron Street / Interstate 25 interchange**  is undergoing a major overhaul from 2015 to 2017, in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Transportation. This \$115 million project involves the reconstruction and realignment of bridge structures, ramps, and acceleration/deceleration lanes; improved regional trail connectivity and aesthetic improvements, and the reconstruction and enhancement of over 2,000 feet of the Upper Fountain Creek habitat. **These improvements will drastically alter the experience of entering Downtown at one of the busiest interchanges in the region** and the primary highway access point for the future U.S. Olympic Museum. In conjunction with Citygate, other Southwest Downtown Urban Renewal District projects along Cimarron, and the City's plan for a two-way cycle track along the north side of Cimarron east of Interstate 25, in addition to the new pedestrian bridge that is designed to connect America the Beautiful Park to the U.S. Olympic Museum, the western gateway will become a premier entrance to Downtown for all modes.

SOUTHERN GATEWAYS

Tejon Street and Nevada Avenue  are the primary gateways from neighborhoods such as Ivywild and the Broadmoor to the south. Both are dominated by I-25, rail bridges and aging infrastructure, have roadways generally undesirable for non-automobile travel, and are surrounded by land uses and buildings that have not been updated in decades. A range of improvements, which can be implemented incrementally, are available for these gateways and explored in greater detail in Chapter 4. Figure 3.2 illustrates a concept for the Tejon gateway which shows how **important entrances to Downtown can be designed and programmed to improve multi-modal access and begin to address visually unappealing uses and infrastructure.**



The Cimarron Street gateway is a vital access point to the U.S. Olympic Museum and the Citygate catalytic site but is currently uninviting and not pedestrian oriented.



Figure 3.2 | Tejon Gateway Illustration (before and after)

EASTERN GATEWAYS

Pikes Peak Avenue  provides access to the core of Downtown from Memorial Park and other areas to the east, passing by several important catalytic sites. The intersection with Colorado Avenue, the width of Pikes Peak Avenue (particularly between Corona Street and Nevada Avenue), and the large surface parking lots and underutilized parcels all detract from the area's vitality. In addition, **the connection to and from the Legacy Loop at this key juncture is poorly marked in both directions.**

Platte Avenue  is a key component of east-west mobility, including connecting to the Middle Shooks Run neighborhood, the U.S. Olympic Training Center, and as far as those in the eastern suburbs of the city. However, the experience of walking, biking, and driving along Platte is generally considered to be an uncomfortable experience for all modes. While the street itself lacks in mobility function, the intersection at Platte Avenue and Wahsatch Avenue is largely comprised of fast food restaurants and parking lots, which do not support the broader vision. Lack of bicycle facilities further compounds the unappealing nature of this entrance to Downtown, particularly for students at nearby Palmer High School. While this gateway is primarily a locally utilized location, creating a better sense of place and comfortable access for all modes of transportation along the street will increase the area's vibrancy as an urban neighborhood.

NORTHERN GATEWAYS

The northern gateways are marked at **Cache La Poudre Street**  intersections, representing Downtown's transition area with Colorado College. Until recent years, the few businesses in this area were college-serving in nature and did not attract much non-student business. Colorado College completed its Master Plan update in 2015 and began its new off-campus development program with a renovation of historic Spencer Hall. In addition, **the college has plans to develop several blocks along Tejon and Weber streets with a mixed-use combination of school facilities, housing, and ground floor retail designed to attract both students and the wider community. The school has indicated a desire to work with the City and Downtown Partnership to help strengthen the physical and programmatic links between the campus and the rest of Downtown.**

Districts

This plan update recognizes and refines the concept of districts within the core. The Gateways and Districts map (see Figure 3.1) delineates five such areas, each with a distinctive character and function in the context of Downtown.

The **districts and their distinct boundaries provide a framework for the City and its partners to prioritize and implement improvements throughout Downtown.** To residents, employees, and visitors, the districts themselves are more malleable. Boundaries are not indicated on the ground and definitions and perceptions of where a change in character takes place can differ. Nonetheless, **these areas each have an identifiable character based on their location, uses, and anchor institutions.** Beyond these differences and unique identities, however, the districts' most important role in Downtown is their collective diversity and character, distinct from the rest of the city.

The sections below describe the five districts, providing an illustrative snapshot of the primary uses, activities, and desired ambiance for each area.



Pioneer's Museum is an iconic expression of historic architecture integrated into Downtown's skyline.

CITY CENTER

The City Center district is both the geographic and activity center for Downtown. People of all ages and backgrounds commingle in the City Center: Palmer High School students, college students, professionals, entrepreneurs, Olympic athletes, church parishioners, artists, loft dwellers, tourists and more.

Its character changes throughout the hours and days of the week. Office workers fill coffee shops and lunch spots during the early part of the day. Evening hours attract a variety of users including art enthusiasts perusing galleries; running clubs hitting the streets, and diners exploring locally owned restaurants. Later on, a range of people enjoy independent films, dance clubs, unique events and festivals at the City Auditorium, or the Colorado Springs Philharmonic. On weekends, experiences in the City Center change yet again, with shoppers perusing boutiques, children splashing in Uncle Wilber Fountain and church parishioners enjoying a leisurely brunch.

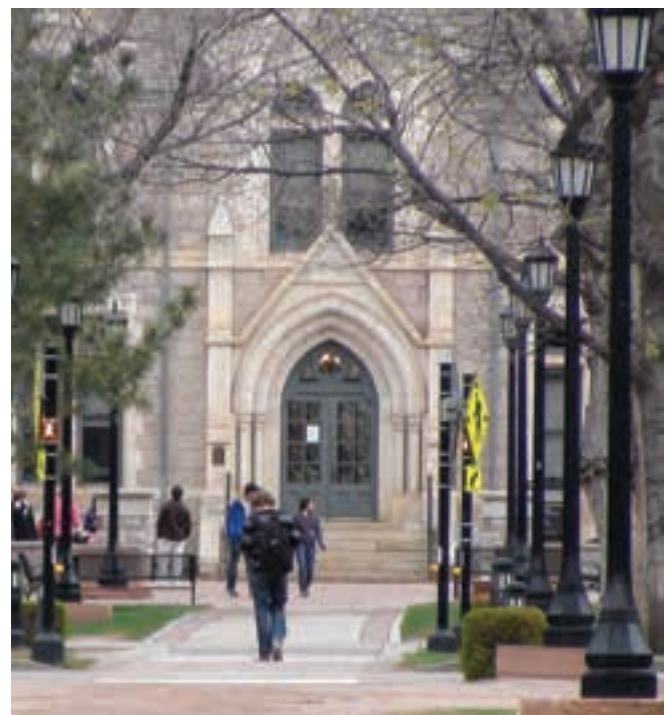
While the cupola of Pioneer's Museum – the former county courthouse – may be the most distinctive element of the Downtown skyline, the core features buildings of every type: historic churches, class A office buildings, co-working spaces, converted lofts and apartments, and even the more solid and pragmatic architecture of government buildings. But the core is also a **place for reinvention – where an old movie theater becomes a climbing gym and a historic mining stock exchange becomes a boutique hotel.**

NEAR NORTH END

The idyllic campus of Colorado College is situated just beyond the northern border of the Near North End district. Its students spill onto the streets of the Near North End in search of funky hang-outs and retail shops. North Tejon Street provides students with just what they seek: delis, taco shops, and the neighborhood pizza place are all within walking distance of the dormitories at the south end of the campus while laundries, salons, and stores intermingle with business offices and residences. **The Near North End links the Colorado College campus to the core of the city while providing unique offerings** catering to both college students and residents.

Off the well-worn path of Tejon Street, quiet residences and offices silhouette the side streets. Boasting large, landscaped medians and tree-lined streets, **the neighborhoods in the Near North End feel historic and inviting.** Throughout the district, grand houses are reused as apartments and bed and breakfasts, filling the needs of CC students and out-of-town visitors, while more modest homes along the side streets are home to young professionals and families.

The arts and cultural scene is strong within the district. The Fine Arts Center overlooks Monument Valley Park and the mountains beyond. The exquisite paintings and exhibitions are matched only by the views from the western balcony. Located within the art museum is Bemis Art School, a longtime favorite school for children and adults alike. Within walking distance of the Fine Arts Center are the American Numismatic Association Money Museum, where patrons can study history through various forms of currency, and the Edith Kinney Gaylord Cornerstone Arts Center. After classes, students can be found hanging out on the CC quad.



The Near North End district is characterized by its quiet residential areas and proximity to Colorado College.

NEW SOUTH END

A quirky mix of historic and rejuvenated industrial, commercial, and residential properties lies just south of Vermijo Street. Converted residences along Tejon Street and Cascade Avenue now house professional offices and the occasional restaurant. Warehouses and other industrial buildings have been adapted for restaurants, and modern retail uses occupy revitalized spaces throughout the district. **The area has undergone somewhat of a revival, but many redevelopment opportunities still remain**, especially for housing development as a new neighborhood begins to grow and flourish.

The primary residential component of the district (clustering around Sahwatch Street and South Cascade Avenue) consists of modest cottages and bungalows neatly ordered with consistent setbacks. Substantial, landscaped medians and street trees provide a shady canopy along Cascade and plentiful greenspace; however, streetscape is inconsistent and sparse throughout the residential areas and on side

streets. Clusters of residential apartment housing are beginning to emerge, with new apartments built and planned for South Nevada Avenue, as well as Costilla Street. Many lots are underdeveloped and poised for residential product types.

Although parts of the district have been revitalized, the area has maintained its historic character. One example is the Colorado Springs Day Nursery, in operation since 1923, which stands at the corner of East Rio Grande and South Tejon streets. For 85 years the nursery has watched over children from families in all economic brackets. It has evolved into one of Colorado Springs' most beloved landmarks and adds to the district's diverse composition and suite of resident-serving amenities.

New retail uses have started to emerge around Costilla Street and South Tejon Street including breweries, restaurants, a children's store, hair salons, fitness studios, new bank buildings and other activating uses that complement the primarily residential and office users.



Residential streets and small-scale retail and restaurant areas add character to the New South End.

EAST END

The district's location between the City Center district and Memorial Park makes it an ideal opportunity for mixed-use development. Presently, several creative industry uses are located within the area, including a western music recording studio, a well-known potter, KKTV, and Cottonwood Center for the Arts.

The East End is home to several architectural assets including the historic Santa Fe Depot building and the former St. Francis hospital. The depot property, purchased and renovated by O'Neil Group Companies in 2014, has been converted into the Catalyst Campus for technology, targeting aerospace, defense, and cyber security companies, while providing co-working space and educational resources in the same industry arena. Across Shooks Run Creek adjacent to the campus sits nearly 14 acres of property poised for

redevelopment. The site includes the former Gazette property, four industrial buildings totaling 129,000 square feet, which housed the local newspaper until its move further into the core in 2013, and the historic Penrose St. Francis Hospital which has been vacant since 2010. While the synergies and users have not been fully defined between the two campuses, **these important architectural and land assets provide a potential center of gravity for the East End that will create an economic spin-off effect** for the entire district.

In addition to the larger urban campus development potential in the district, there also has been recent residential development activity, including a 172-unit apartment building at the corner of Wahsatch and Colorado avenues. It is essential that the **neighborhood is anchored with residents to ensure that vitality and active streets evolve in the area.**



Historic assets and underutilized sites provide ample redevelopment opportunities in the East End district.

SOUTHWEST

Linked together and to the core by Sierra Madre and Vermijo streets, the district has significant opportunities to leverage public investments in streetscape improvements to become a vibrant Downtown destination. The district is anchored by a regional green space – America the Beautiful Park – and the new U.S. Olympic Museum, which is a catalytic investment that will become an extraordinary destination and centerpiece for the district. The influence of the U.S. Olympic Museum and proximity to America the Beautiful Park (and the long-awaited pedestrian bridge to reach it) will imbue the area with an atmosphere of sport, the outdoors, and natural beauty.

The opportunity to build a stadium or ballpark continues to intrigue numerous Downtown stakeholders. While a 10,000 seat, multi-use sports and events center was supported by the Colorado Economic Development Commission in 2013 as part of the City for Champions Regional Tourism Act (RTA) funding, the community has yet to determine the feasibility of such a facility. A privately funded study is currently under way to assess the feasibility of a facility and to explore potential user groups.



The Southwest district's character has a predominantly industrial feel but also contains Downtown's largest park, America the Beautiful Park.

In addition to the U.S. Olympic Museum, the proposed sports and events facility could serve as another important anchor for Downtown and Southwest Downtown in particular. Due to the nature of existing sites and consolidated ownership, a stadium could help in filling the abundance of developable land downtown while creating a new destination with regional appeal. Many midsize cities around the country have successfully capitalized on stadiums and ballparks as anchors of economic development and revitalization strategies, including: Columbus, Ohio; Oklahoma City; Charlotte, N.C.; El Paso, Texas; and Minneapolis, Minn.

The effort to revitalize Southwest Downtown Colorado Springs represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to completely transform an underutilized segment of the core into a new urban neighborhood: an ambitious, mixed-use development with extraordinary places to live, work, play and learn. Planned mixed-use development on blocks adjacent to the museum as well as further south at Citygate will add a critical mass of residents and visitors, bringing to life this long blighted area.



Mobility, Transportation and Parking

Highlights

All Downtown streets must have safe and comfortable access for walking and biking. Streets that are not prioritized as part of this plan's tactical mobility framework should still meet baseline minimum standards until they can be prioritized for more enhanced upgrades.

Excess street width provides opportunities for more diverse, active, and welcoming public spaces and to create safer mobility options for Downtown walkers and bikers.

Urban and neighborhood greenways are primary routes to connect users from the Legacy Loop to the Downtown core and circulate residents and visitors within the city center.

Enhanced regional and local transit are critical aspects of creating improved mobility options for Downtown and other city residents.

The City Parking Enterprise and the County's parking services **must balance operational needs with other important objectives** including urban design, economic development and improved multi-modal access.

Overview

Mobility Framework

Transit

Parking

4 chapter

Overview

Although Downtown has begun the process of creating more robust pedestrian and bicycle networks, much work remains. A focus on **forward-thinking mobility and parking** is a critical aspect of this tactical update. A balanced approach seeks to **bolster walking, biking, and transit** as key modes for traveling to and within Downtown, while maintaining navigability and operations for cars.

Mobility and parking issues affect the experience of every resident and visitor to the city's core and are crucial components of the important goal of successfully developing more housing and mixed-use density. This section addresses the hierarchy, function, and character of Downtown streets; the role of transit; and parking considerations. Additional concepts are identified to better connect Downtown to the Legacy Loop, enhance trails and parks, embrace Fountain and Monument creeks, and create more livable and memorable urban spaces.

Mobility Framework

A focus on Downtown mobility is supported by the Regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan adopted by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) in 2015. It identifies 68 corridors of improvement and 21 prioritized corridors. Of the 21 prioritized corridors, seven corridors are connected directly to Downtown and/or the Legacy Loop (see Figure 4.1). In addition, all seven of the Downtown connected corridors are identified as either short- or short/medium-term prioritization.

One noteworthy characteristic of nearly all of Downtown's major corridors is their large street widths. Generally, at either 100 feet or 140 feet, **these rights-of-way far exceed those in most downtowns**. The wide right-of-way and multiple travel lanes are requisite for primary automobile routes such as Nevada Avenue (the main north-south corridor through Downtown), and major arterials connecting to Interstate 25 such as Bijou and Kiowa streets and Cimarron Street. However, for many other streets in the city center, the **excess street width is an opportunity to provide better experiences** for walkers and bikers and to create more diverse, active, and welcoming public spaces.

Street types are generally grouped into classes, or systems, according to the traffic service that they intend to provide. The U.S. Department of Transportation classifies streets as follows:

- **Local Street** - Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.
- **Collector Street** - Provides a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials.
- **Arterial Street** - Provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control.

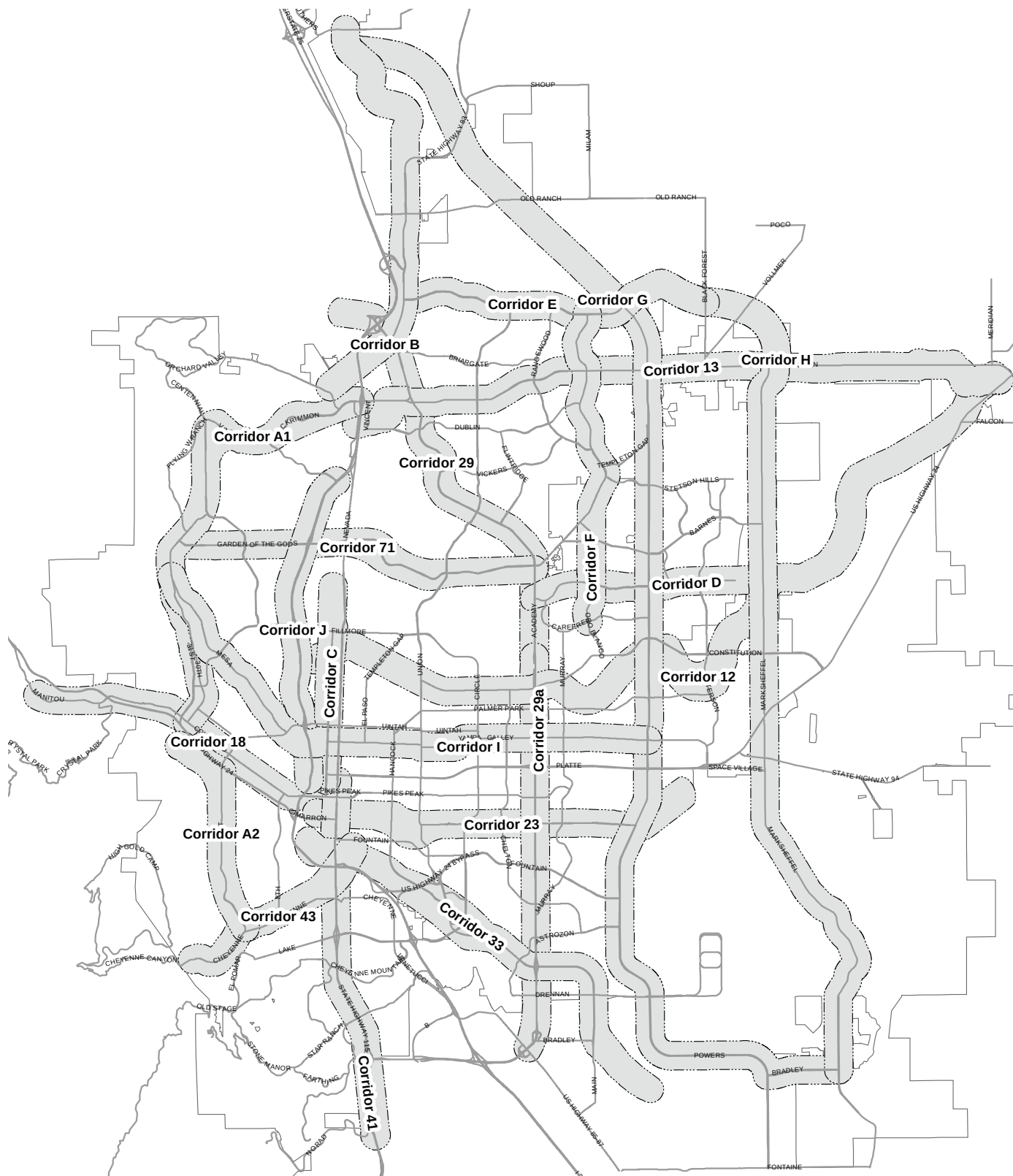


Figure 4.1 | Prioritized Improvement Corridors¹
 Identified in the Regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

1. The numbers on the map indicate the corridor reference number in the Regional Non-Motorized Transportation System Plan which identified 68 improvement corridors of varying length throughout the region.

Streets in Downtown Colorado Springs are classified primarily as local streets and collector streets. Arterial streets exist Downtown, but should be limited to minor arterials, establishing safe streetscapes for pedestrians and bicyclists. This would require Nevada and Wahsatch to be re-classified from major arterials to minor arterials. Downtown speed limits should be posted at the lower end of existing ranges, and lanes should be narrowed to an urban scale. Though general street classifications are defined above, more detailed explanations establish Downtown's mobility framework.

The mobility framework for this plan is described below and illustrated in Figure 4.2. Key streets are identified and categorized based on their potential character and functional role within the system. This typology addresses:

- **Signature Streets, Pedestrian Priority Streets, and Downtown Alleyways**, which focus on providing a great walkable environment Downtown that supports key retail, entertainment and employment nodes;
- **Urban and Neighborhood Greenways** that create major walking and biking routes through the core, provide connectivity to the Legacy Loop, and help address stormwater management with innovative Low Impact Development (LID) strategies that preserve or re-create natural landscape features, maximize pervious surfaces, and emphasize control and treatment of water as close to the source as possible;

- **Residential Garden Streets and Special Purpose Streets** that re-imagine the beauty, functionality, and range of activities that unique streets Downtown can support;
- **Major Transportation Streets** that will provide efficient and orderly flow of automobile and truck traffic to pass through and into the city center; and
- **Other Downtown Streets** need to maintain minimum infrastructure, (as outlined in Figure 5.4 | Streetscape Elements Matrix) but are not prioritized for the purposes of this plan.

All street types in the city center must have safe and comfortable access for walking and biking. **Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity measures are encouraged on every street type**, including complete sidewalks and bike facilities. Not all Downtown streets are classified as part of the mobility framework. Rather, this framework identifies the **Downtown streets that are short- to medium-term tactical priorities** for creating an even more robust multi-modal network for moving people throughout Downtown and connecting them to the Legacy Loop trail system. As these priority projects are completed, remaining Downtown streets should be categorized and prioritized for enhanced multi-modal access based on future development patterns and newly identified connectivity needs.

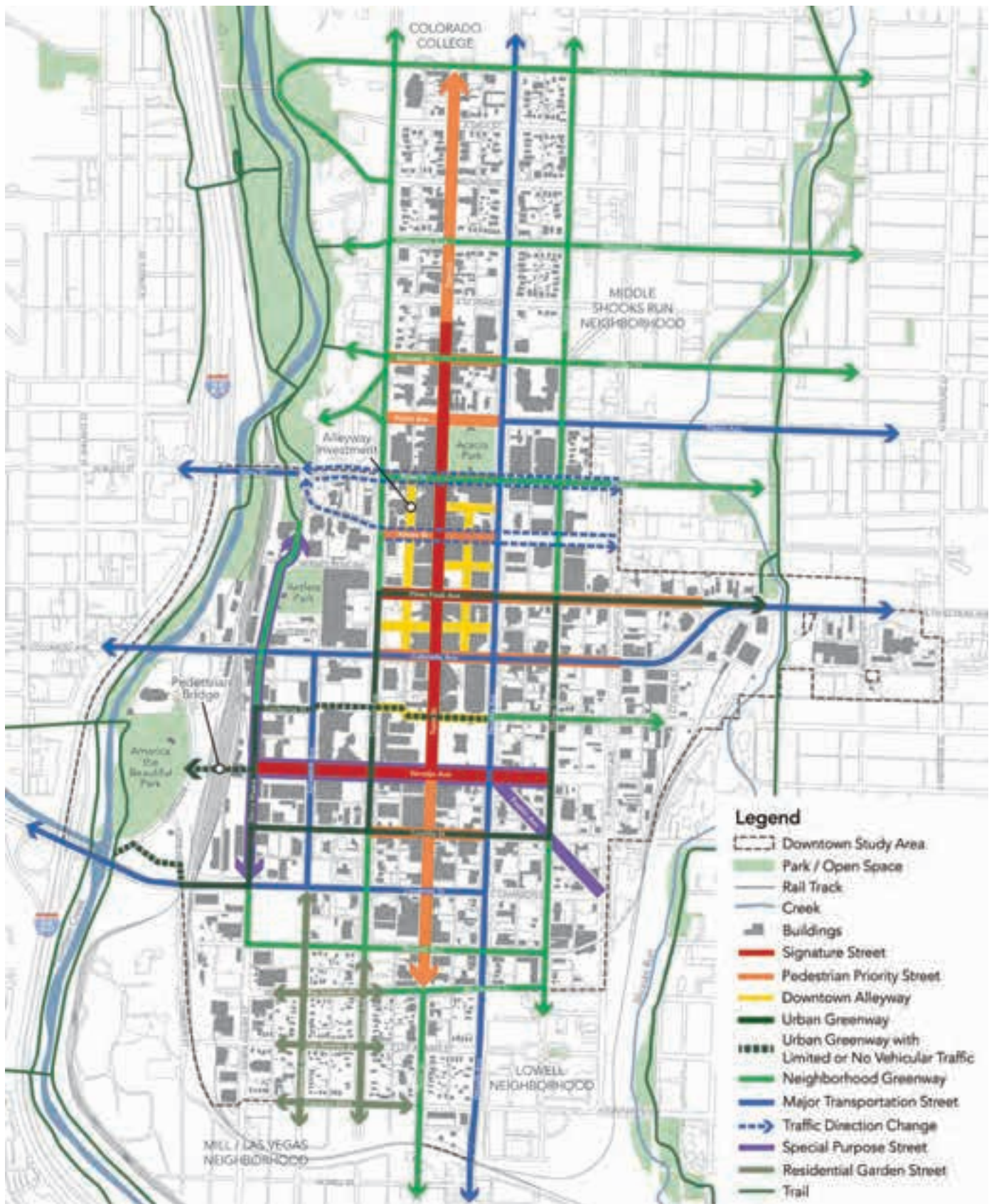
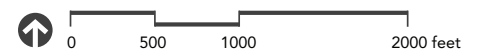


Figure 4.2 | Mobility Framework



The Experience Downtown Master Plan's emphasis on safe multi-modal travel also is reflected in the mission statement of the City's Bicycle Master Plan (expected completion 2017): "Colorado Springs is a vibrant community where bicycling is integral to the city's culture and quality of life for people of all ages and abilities, where a well-connected and well-maintained network of trails and on-street infrastructure offers a bicycling experience that is convenient, safe and inviting for transportation and recreational purposes."

Level of service considerations in new street designs Downtown should account for the capacity of all modes, rather than just automobiles. Many of the street types in this mobility framework, particularly those that emphasize use by walkers and bicyclists, will be designed to reduce excessive automobile speeds and to be more sensitive to surrounding land use context. Finally, Downtown street guidelines emphasize seizing opportunities to reallocate street right-of-way in appropriate contexts to provide wider sidewalks, safer bicycle facilities, green spaces and natural stormwater infrastructure, and on-street parking. The following list illustrates additional considerations and standards that should inform the design of Downtown streets moving forward.

- Intersections should be designed to minimize inter-modal conflicts, slow speeds of automobiles (and in some cases, bicyclists), and maximize the visibility, safety, and comfort of pedestrians.
- Street and intersection design features (such as narrower travel lanes, on-street parking, paving materials, signage, medians, and mid-block curb extensions) and other elements of the streetscape and surrounding land use context should encourage drivers to use lower speeds Downtown.
- Where possible, space in streets and intersections that is not needed for the efficient movement of automobiles, should be reclaimed to create safer environments for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.
- New and redesigned streets and intersections should take advantage of opportunities to reduce the amount of pavement and other impervious surfaces and integrate sustainable stormwater management practices when the context allows.
- Priority pedestrian areas should provide amenities that enhance the safety, comfort, and enjoyment of walkers including public art, street trees and landscaping, street furniture, and easily legible wayfinding for a variety of users.

SIGNATURE STREETS

Pedestrian activity with thriving retail, restaurant and entertainment currently exists on Tejon Street between St. Vrain Street and Moreno Avenue. The Pikes Peak Avenue intersection at Tejon Street is especially characteristic of Downtown's signature streetscape. By identifying Pikes Peak Avenue and Tejon Street as "spines," the mobility framework symbolically identifies the importance of these two signature streets to Downtown (See Figure 4.3). While it does not possess the activity levels of Tejon Street today, developing more street level activity along Pikes Peak Avenue from "depot to depot" is a priority for connecting and revitalizing Downtown.

These key segments of **Tejon Street and Pikes Peak Avenue set a precedent for Downtown's character.** Serving as major walking corridors and retail attractors, these corridors are characterized by wide sidewalks; sidewalk patio dining; adjacent retail and entertainment activities; and streetscape design features such as patterned street crossings, low level pedestrian lighting, ornamental landscaping, pedestrian benches, and public art. Though many Downtown streets should strive to have similar characteristics as these segments, Vermijo Avenue is primed to become a signature street in the near future.

As described in Chapter 1 as a catalytic site, the U.S. Olympic Museum and Southwest Downtown area are poised to develop along Vermijo Avenue. With this concentration of growth and current position within the context of Pioneers Museum and Tejon Street, Vermijo Avenue will become the newest antenna of Downtown's Signature Streets, between America the Beautiful Park and the U.S. Olympic Museum to Weber Street.

Defining Signature Streets Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Required inclusion of a great breadth of site furnishings within a defined palette;
- Encouraged pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Required enhanced hardscape features;
- Required installation of landscape elements in raised beds and tree grates;
- Encouraged incorporation of space saving on-street parking; and
- Required distinguished and consistent public signage accessible and legible for a variety of users.



A great pedestrian environment supports residential, retail, and mixed use areas.

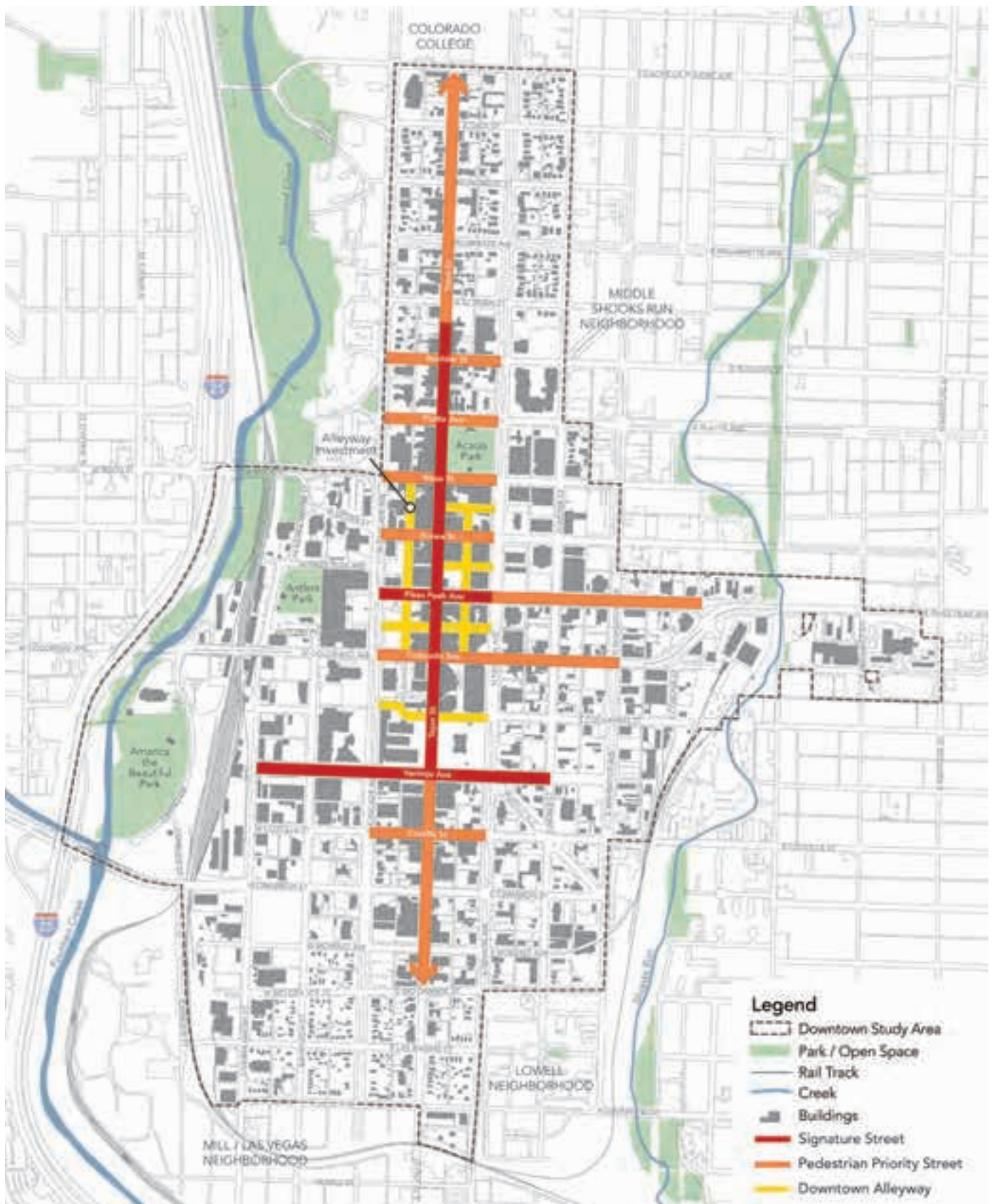
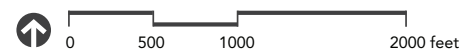


Figure 4.3 | Pedestrian Realm



PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY STREETS

Several streets are identified in the mobility framework as pedestrian priority streets, ideally suited to leveraging and expanding the pedestrian and retail orientation along the signature streets (see Figure 4.3). These segments should include components such as **social gathering spaces, wayfinding features, mobility and access for all abilities, and designated places with capacity for events and programming.** Suggested pedestrian and retail-oriented extensions from the Signature Streets include:

- Tejon Street north of St. Vrain Street to the Colorado College campus;
- Tejon Street south of Vermijo Avenue to Rio Grande Street;
- Boulder Street, Platte Avenue, Bijou Street, Kiowa Street, and Costilla Street between Nevada and Cascade avenues;
- Pike Peak Avenue from Nevada Avenue to Corona Street; and
- Colorado Avenue from Nevada Avenue to Wahsatch Street.

These street segments build on what's working well along Tejon Street and Pikes Peak Avenue and respond to potential future developments. Emphasizing Tejon Street as a pedestrian priority to the north supports Colorado College's plans for increased mixed use development and retail opportunities between Cache la Poudre and Dale streets.

Pedestrian priority streets can support considerable commercial activities and residential uses, but generally have less concentrated retail and entertainment activities in comparison to the signature streets. Street level office uses may be a good fit, and fill approximately 60 to 70 percent of buildings on the pedestrian priority blocks north of Acacia Park and along Colorado and Pikes Peak avenues as mixed use

development accelerates in those areas. Increased access for Downtown workers to a more accessible and connected pedestrian network will further support the retail and entertainment uses along the pedestrian priority and signature streets.

Defining Pedestrian Priority Streets Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Required inclusion of a great breadth of site furnishings within a defined palette;
- Encouraged pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Required enhanced hardscape features;
- Required installation of landscape elements in raised beds and tree grates;
- Encouraged incorporation of space saving on-street parking; and
- Required distinguished and consistent public signage.



Amenities and gathering spaces along pedestrian priority streets can attract and support retail and office users as shown in Noe Valley in San Francisco.



The alley off Bijou Street has notable upgrades, making the space ideal for pedestrian activity.



Simple alleyway improvements and beautification can create intimate Downtown gathering spaces as shown in Seattle, WA.

DOWNTOWN ALLEYWAYS

Many of Downtown's alleys (Figure 7.3) can be utilized to create alternative walking routes to and from destinations and parking facilities. Activating alleys for pedestrian use creates a finer grained feeling of movement and access in the core. The alleys can also become welcoming spaces in their own right, inspiring secondary store entrances, outdoor dining opportunities, venues for public art and murals, event spaces, and informal gathering areas. All these uses **activate the alleys, creating safer and more inviting areas for pedestrian activity and greater variety** and opportunity for retail and hospitality businesses. The alleys indicated in Figure 7.3 are the top priorities for conversion and adaptation given their centralized locations and ability to facilitate mobility and retail activity in the city center. However, alleys in other parts of the core also will be considered for future improvements and programming.

A system of policies and ordinances to address trash service, delivery access (and center lane use for deliveries) and utility use is needed in conjunction with alley improvements.

Defining Alleyways Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Encouraged addition of appropriate site furnishings and pedestrian lighting;
- Limited pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Required accessible paving material and underground utilities;
- Limited landscape elements;
- Encouraged parking structure access; and
- Required identity and wayfinding signage.

URBAN AND NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

These streets are designated routes through Downtown designed to slow automobile traffic, create safe environments for pedestrian and bicyclist movement, and create better connections between existing neighborhoods, trails and parks that border Downtown in all directions. Improved greenway facilities are planned to exist every two block faces from any given point in Downtown, and will include multi-modal and specific streetscape improvements. Urban and neighborhood greenways prioritize sensible reductions in the number and width of automobile travel lanes and parking, the provision of dedicated or preferably protected bicycle lanes, and safe transitions at intersections and between different types of multi-modal facilities.

Other design considerations include:

Using colored pavement to help create visibility and awareness of cyclists.

- If a cycle track exists on the same side of the road as transit stops, the transit stop and waiting area should be located between the cycle track and the street.
- Special care must be taken in designing intersections involving cycle tracks, particularly as related to the turn movements of automobiles.
- On street parking should be discouraged approaching intersections or driveways to ensure adequate visibility of approaching cyclists.
- Striping for dedicated bike lanes should often be continued through unsignalized or complicated intersections to help direct both bicyclists and motorists.
- When possible, provide bicycle lanes that run to the left of dedicated automobile right-turn lanes to avoid potential conflicts between turning vehicles and bicyclists.

A concept for transforming Downtown streets to greenways is illustrated on Weber Avenue in Figure 4.4.

The mobility framework proposes two levels of greenways – Urban and Neighborhood (see Figure 4.5). **Urban greenways are the primary routes to connect the Downtown core to both sides of the Legacy Loop** on Pikes Peak Avenue to the east and Cucharras and Costilla streets to the west via a pedestrian bridge to America the Beautiful Park. These segments are connected north to south with additional urban greenways along Sierra Madre Street, Cascade Avenue and Weber Street. Together, these links create an easily navigable east to west connection from Shooks Run Trail to the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail. Importantly, these six segments create **dynamic urban greenway Loops designed to circulate residents, employees, and visitors within the core of Downtown**, connecting many existing assets and catalytic development sites. The Loops will not only greatly enhance circulation in the city center, but will also be **a signature feature and attraction for Downtown**. The network of urban greenways will seamlessly connect urban amenities to the regional trail system and bring those natural features into Downtown in a tangible and beautiful way.



All urban greenways should be complemented by easily accessible bicycle parking and amenities.

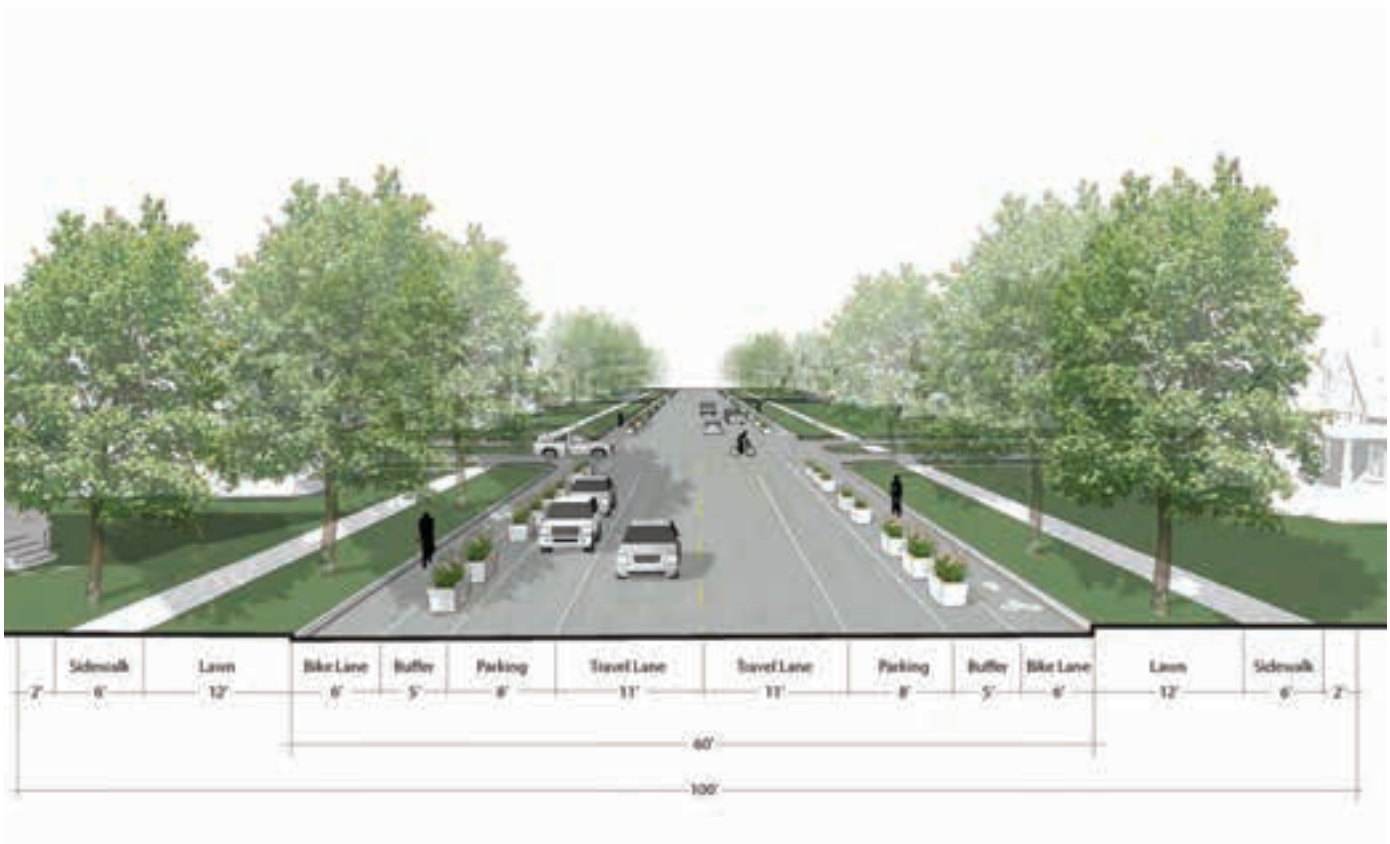
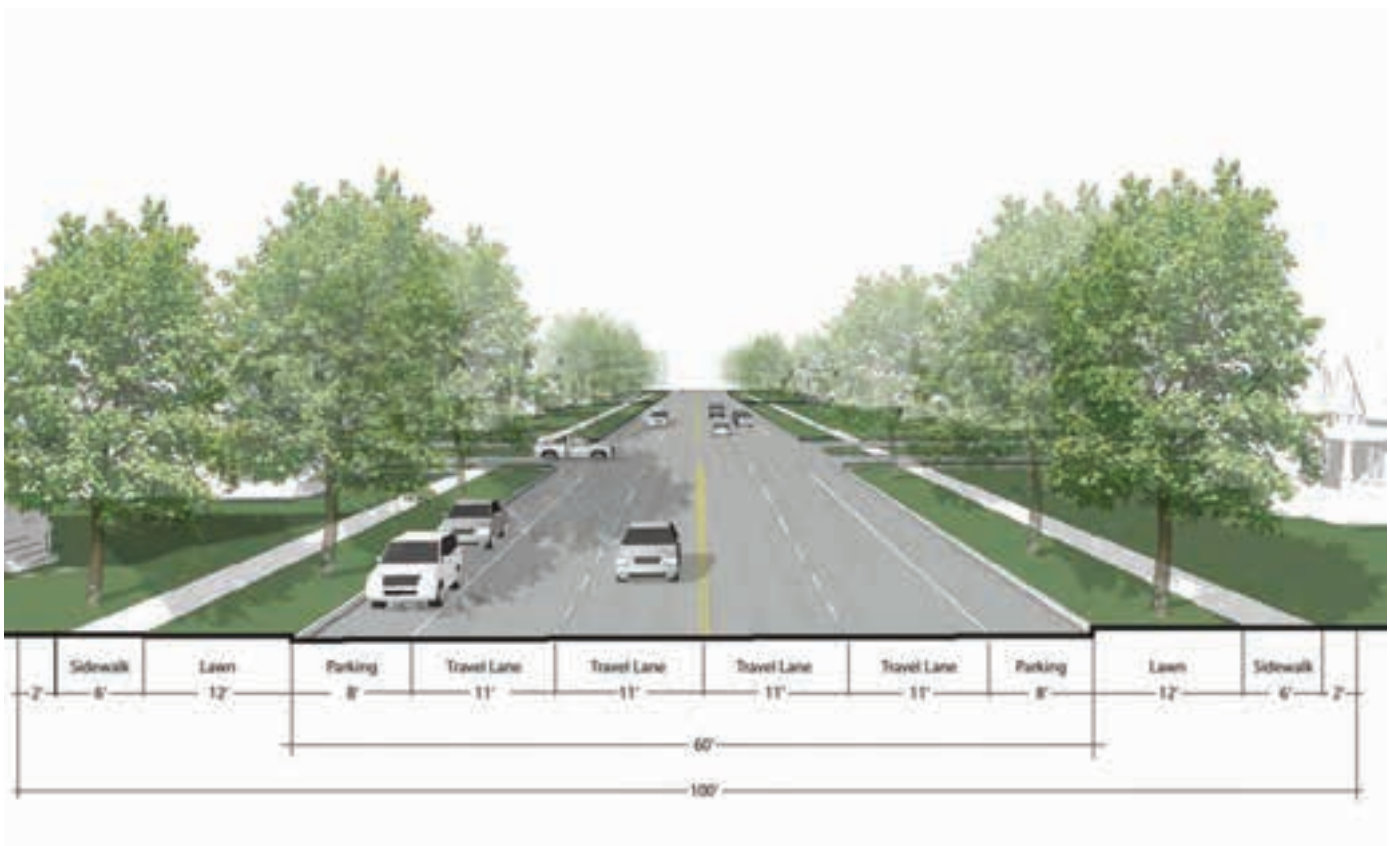


Figure 4.4 | Weber Street Section (looking south, near Willamette Avenue intersection; before and after)

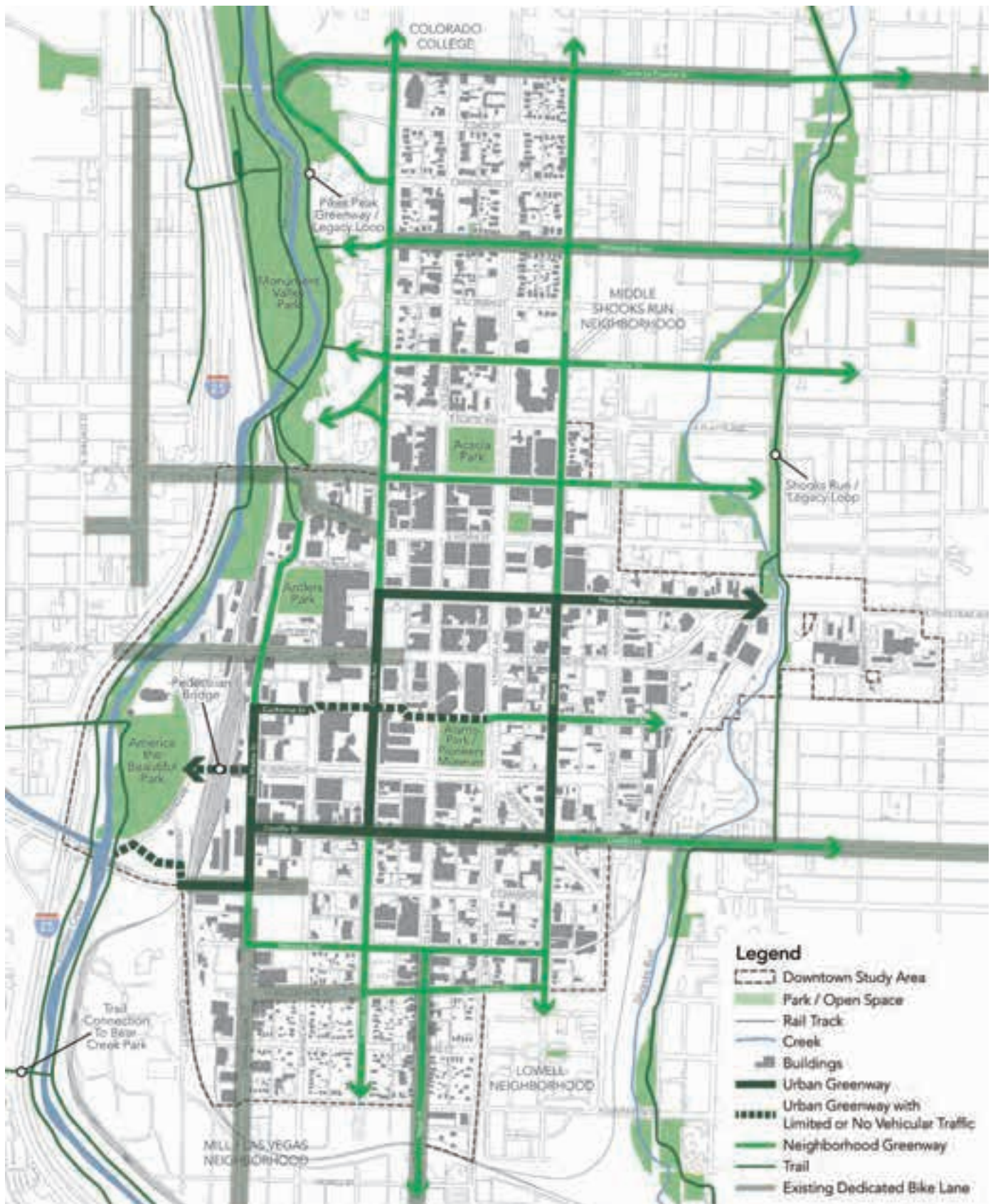


Figure 4.5 | Greenways, Trails and Parks

The urban greenway loops are connected to other parts of Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods by the neighborhood greenways. **This network connects missing links of the existing bike lane network, while enhancing certain routes in function and aesthetic.** The following streets are classified as neighborhood greenways:

- Cascade Avenue and Weber Street from the Old North End to the southern train tracks;
- Sierra Madre Street from Monument Valley Park to Moreno Avenue;
- Tejon Street from Moreno Street to neighborhoods south of I-25;
- Rio Grande Street from Cascade Avenue to Weber Street;
- Moreno Avenue from Sierra Madre to Weber Street;
- Costilla Street from Sierra Madre to eastern Downtown neighborhoods and Memorial Park;

- Cucharas Street from the Pioneers Museum to Shooks Run Trail;
- Bijou Street, Boulder Street and Willamette Street from Cascade Avenue to the Shooks Run Trail and eastern Downtown neighborhoods; and
- Minor routes off of Cascade Avenue to Monument Valley Park;

The neighborhood greenways will share many characteristics with the urban greenways, including designated bicycle and pedestrian facilities and integrated landscaping, but these features may be slightly scaled back or modified depending on the context and circulation needs along each segment.

These routes place more design attention on multi-modal connectivity and less to identity and placemaking. Neighborhood greenways connect surrounding neighborhoods to Downtown by making certain improved pedestrian and bike facilities exist every two blocks.

Both urban and neighborhood greenways also should be designed and viewed as connective elements that link Downtown's districts and provide a unifying theme and aesthetic that bridges the different look and feel in different parts of the core. While residents and visitors will see and experience a variety of streetscape and design elements in the different districts, being on a greenway will solidify the impression that they are in a cohesive Downtown network.

Defining Urban and Neighborhood Greenways Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Encouraged site furnishings where appropriate;
- Encouraged pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Encouraged landscape elements planted according to adjacent land use;
- Conditional on-street parking options; and
- Required wayfinding signage.



Protected bicycle facilities on urban greenways increase safety and comfort for users as shown in Vancouver, British Columbia.

RESIDENTIAL GARDEN STREETS

Streets in the Mill/Las Vegas Neighborhood south of Cimarron Street have wide rights-of-way and low amounts of pass-through automobile traffic. Streets such as Sahwatch Avenue, Rio Grande Street, and Las Animas Street (Figure 4.6), therefore have the potential of supporting a range of **improvements such as gardens, small park spaces, green infrastructure, wayfinding features, and places for gathering and play.** These features will combine to establish an original neighborhood image and identity and utilize the excess right-of-way to create spaces for living rather than just driving. Figure 4.7 illustrates this type of transformation on Sahwatch Street. These unique Residential Garden Streets will provide amenities that increase the distinctiveness of the neighborhood and attract new residents. This area is primarily a single family residential neighborhood, but adjacent catalytic sites should encourage more residential and mixed-use growth in coming years. **Many of these improvements can be implemented incrementally, and customized to fit the needs and desires of the local residents,** both existing and future.

Defining Residential Garden Streets Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Conditional site furnishings;
- Encouraged pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Required wide accessible sidewalks;
- Encouraged landscape improvements;
- Conditional on-street parking options; and
- Required wayfinding and identity signage.



Community gardens are a key distinguishing amenity of Residential Garden Streets as shown in Whiteaker, Eugene.



Low Impact Development (LID) infrastructure adds beauty, storm water mitigation and water quality improvements to neighborhood streets as shown in Portland, Oregon.



Figure 4.7 | Sahwatch Residential Garden Street Illustration (before and after during a closed street event)

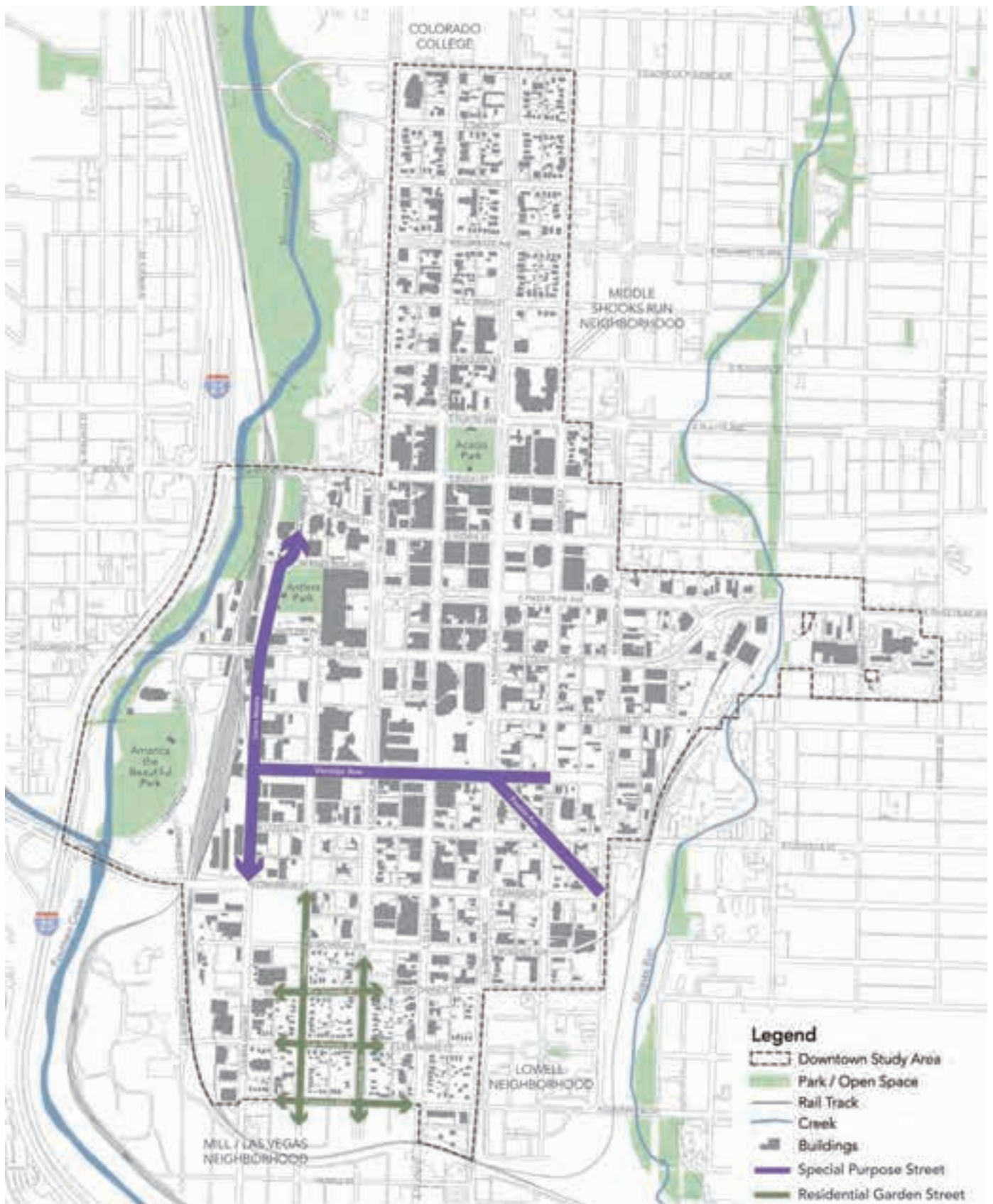
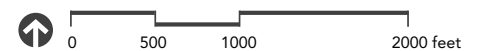


Figure 4.6 | Residential Garden and Special Purpose Streets



SPECIAL PURPOSE STREETS

Special Purpose Streets with unique, targeted enhancements include Vermijo Avenue, Sierra Madre Street, and Pueblo Avenue (see Figure 4.6). These segments all have the potential – based on their character and proximity to other Downtown assets – for enhancements and improvements that will **create distinctive environments that add to the richness of the urban fabric in the city center for both daily use and special events**. These streets provide opportunities for **increased programming** (either temporary or permanent) and events and are amenities that will help **catalyze redevelopment** at key catalytic sites. Each street can operate independently for smaller events or they can **be linked to create a linear plaza** or festival space connecting several districts and amenities.

Vermijo Avenue

Vermijo Avenue from Sierra Madre Street to Nevada Avenue is being designed as part of the Southwest Downtown Master Plan in conjunction with the construction of the U.S. Olympic Museum. Phase 1 of Vermijo Avenue, from Sierra Madre to Sahwatch Streets, is **programmed as a flexible use space, with a curb-less street design, high quality materials and signature streetscape features** to facilitate the significant connection and interaction with the museum plaza. The current designs also highlight sustainable stormwater management practices within the public realm and streetscape.

Sierra Madre Street

Sierra Madre Street from Cimarron Street north to Kiowa Street has the potential to **transform from a primarily industrial-serving functional road into a distinct multi-use street that connects several of Downtown’s most important assets** and serves as a spine of the emerging Southwest district. The segment of Sierra Madre Street from Costilla Street to Cucharras Street will receive much attention due to its proximity to the U.S. Olympic Museum at the intersection with Vermijo Avenue. However, connections south to Cimarron Street and the planned two-way dedicated bicycle track as well as north to the historic depot, Antlers Park, and the Bijou entrance to the Pikes Peak Greenway are equally important and as potentially transformative. Enhancements should include curbless edges, special paving materials, and bioswales that align with similar improvements on Vermijo Avenue.

Pueblo Avenue

Pueblo Avenue is an underutilized two-block diagonal street southeast of the Pioneers Museum between Nevada Avenue and Wahsatch Street. Several reasons support its **special purpose use as a plaza and market street**. One or both blocks can be activated for discrete regularly occurring markets and small events or be **used in conjunction with Vermijo Avenue (and even Sierra Madre Street) to create a combined festival, plaza, or market space for larger events or a parade route**. It is currently used primarily for daytime employee parking and has several small businesses, but is not heavily used for traffic circulation. Its central location is close to several catalytic development sites and is at the nexus of the City Center, East End, and South End districts.

MAJOR TRANSPORTATION STREETS

These streets primarily provide for the **movement of automobile traffic to and through the Downtown, as well as direct connections to the Interstate.**

Although safe walking and biking conditions should be pursued on all Downtown streets, efficient traffic flow, capacity and signal timing is of primary importance on these roadways at speeds appropriate for a primarily pedestrian environment. Examples include Platte Avenue east of Nevada Avenue, Colorado Avenue, Cimarron Street, Sahwatch Street between Cimarron Street and Colorado Avenue, and Nevada Avenue (see Figure 4.8). Sahwatch Street should be treated as a low-volume thoroughfare that provides primary automobile access into and through Southwest Downtown as it develops, placing high priority on pedestrian protecting infrastructure. Nevada Avenue is a particularly important and recognizable Downtown roadway that requires additional care to safely and comfortably accommodate its significant automobile traffic as well as consistent pedestrian activity.

These streets, closely associated with several of the gateways described in Chapter 3, serve as key entryways into Downtown. While it is important for automobile traffic to pass through these thresholds without major interruptions, particular attention should be paid to establishing an authentic character for each gateway. With the addition of emphasized streetscape elements and refined architecture, motorists will effectively know they're crossing into a pedestrian-oriented zone.

Kiowa and Bijou Streets

While the efficient flow of traffic is paramount, particularly on streets providing access to and from Interstate 25, one particular change is recommended that will reduce traffic flow in favor of other Downtown

objectives. Kiowa and Bijou streets, which currently operate as a one-way couplet to efficiently move cars into and out of Downtown, should be converted to two-way traffic flow east of Cascade Avenue. Such a change would **slow traffic, improve pedestrian safety, and increase visibility and access to retailers along these two streets, while still maintaining ease of automobile traffic flow and on-street parking.**

Adjacent catalytic sites, including the corner of Bijou and Cascade and the YMCA, will benefit from the standpoint of redevelopment potential after these streets support two-way traffic. Reconfiguring Bijou and Kiowa will make them viable for supporting businesses, public places and connecting streets.

Defining Major Transportation Streets Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Encouraged site furnishings;
- Conditional pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Required wide accessible sidewalks with planters and underground utilities;
- Encouraged landscape improvements;
- Conditional on-street parking options; and
- Required wayfinding and pedestrian signage.



Colorado Avenue is an important Downtown gateway and major transportation street.

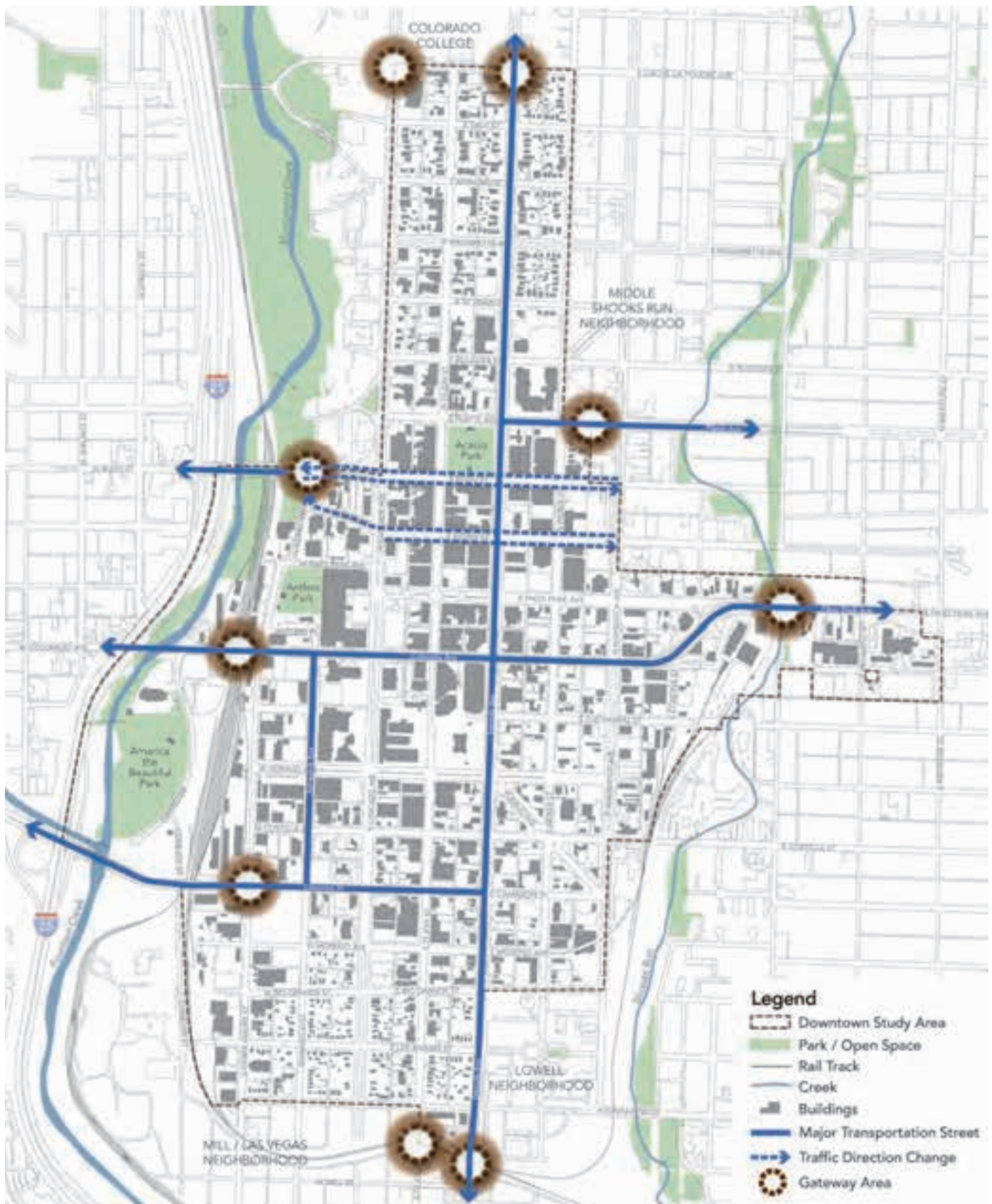


Figure 4.8 | Major Transportation Streets and Gateways

OTHER DOWNTOWN STREETS

Several Downtown Streets are not included in this mobility framework. The tactical nature of the plan requires prioritization of the most important projects and transformations. **As priority projects from this plan are completed, additional streets should be analyzed and categorized – based on the development character and connectivity needs that emerge around them – as part of an updated mobility framework** during the next plan update window. Many of these Other Downtown Streets are missing basic streetscape amenities and even basic infrastructure, such as sufficient lighting, sidewalks, curbs and gutters. Concerted efforts should be made to standardize the infrastructure on these streets to meet a baseline minimum standard until such time as they can be prioritized for more enhanced upgrades.



Other Downtown Streets such as Wahsatch Avenue and St. Vrain Street should be incorporated into a future mobility framework.

Cimino Drive

Given potential new development between Cimino Drive and the rail tracks, a street connection from Cimino Drive's southern cul-de-sac to Cimarron Street may be required by City traffic engineers. If the connection is constructed, improvements effectively calming traffic are necessary to reduce the amount of cut-through traffic, and a contra-flow bike lane would be essential to add multi-modal connectivity. A high level of automobile traffic is unwanted near the park due to park and recreation activity. Therefore, access between Cimarron Street and Cimino Drive should be limited to a right turn in and a right turn out.

Defining Other Downtown Streets Streetscape Elements *(highlights from Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5)*

- Conditional site furnishings;
- Conditional pedestrian gathering spaces;
- Required wide accessible sidewalks and underground utilities;
- Encouraged landscape improvements;
- Conditional on-street parking options; and
- Required wayfinding signage.



Transit

In Colorado Springs, local bus transit service is provided and operated by Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT), a department within the City of Colorado Springs (See Figure 4.9), while regional transportation efforts are led by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG). The operation of local public transportation service is a particular challenge in Colorado Springs due to limited funding that is spread thin given the sprawled development patterns in much of the city. However, improved transit options and increased transit utilization are crucial aspects of developing an urban center easily accessible from both local and regional destinations. Improved transit service also aligns with Downtown's goal of attracting and retaining both millennials and people age 65 and older, two demographic segments recognized for an increasing interest in transit. This section examines existing service and planned improvements for transit service to and within Downtown, regional transit options, and potential implications of the ongoing transit station relocation study.

LOCAL SERVICE

The PPRTA 2040 Regional Transit Plan notes that Mountain Metropolitan Transit primarily provides a lifeline service for its customers that have few other mobility choices. However, there is **growing community support for moving to a system that is not just based on access to services, but rather creating better general connectivity that will attract "choice" riders.** The MMT system and its budget expanded from 2004 to 2008, particularly in an effort to implement more express routes to attract those "choice" riders. However, much of this progress was reversed due to budget cuts during the 2008 to 2010 recession, and service levels were reduced by almost one-third. Little recovery was made for the first few years after the recession, but in 2015 and 2016, several initiatives were under way to increase both budgets and service levels, especially on the routes that had attracted the best ridership during the 2004-2008 expansion.



Mountain Metropolitan Transit is increasing service levels on popular Downtown routes.

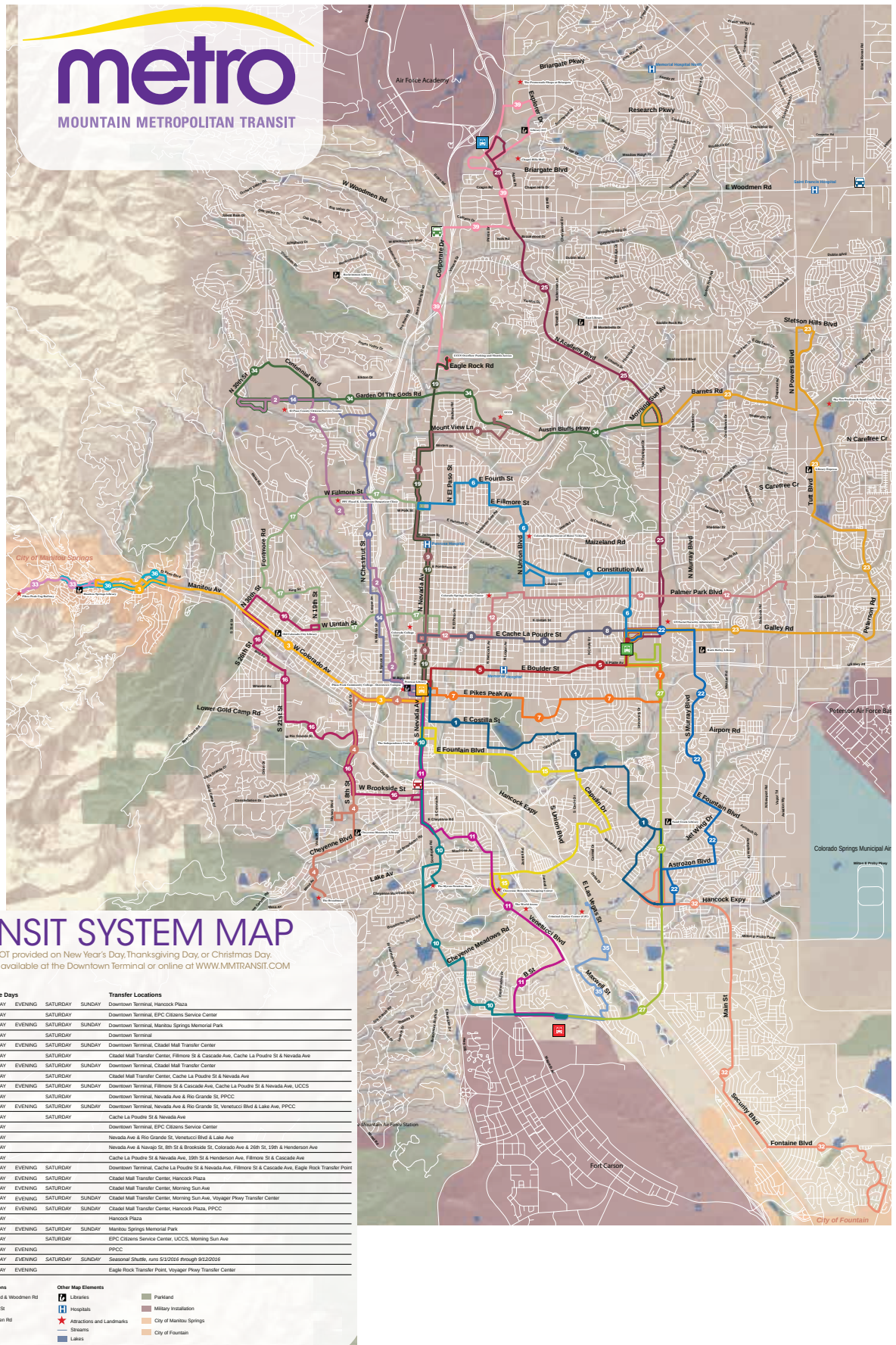


Figure 4.9 | Mountain Metropolitan Transit Service

One key action item from the 2040 Regional Transit Plan is to “Improve Connectivity, Transfers, and Hubs” in order to create a more seamless journey for riders and limit the number of transfers or out-of-direction journey time needed to reach key destinations. In response, **Mountain Metropolitan Transit has added more frequency to key routes passing through Downtown.** In addition to the increased frequency on these routes, Mountain Metropolitan Transit is working with other City departments to enhance these corridors from placemaking and transit-oriented development perspectives in an effort to further drive choice ridership on these key routes.

Despite these efforts, it is currently difficult to get around the city using the transit system. According to the PPACG 2040 Moving Forward Transportation Plan, it is estimated that 56% of Colorado Springs residents live outside existing transit service areas. MMT must **work more aggressively to enhance transit options and first- and last-mile connections** that will provide incentive to a wider spectrum of potential users to

use the system and increase their ability to reach Downtown and other major employment and activity hubs. The key focus, especially in the short-term, should be on frequency and mode shift towards choice ridership.

The Statewide Transit Plan and the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan note that the PPACG region will generate **enough revenue through 2040 (\$808 million) to continue operations and maintenance, but “does not allow Mountain Metro Transit to expand its system in any way.”** MMT and Downtown stakeholders need to embrace and promote creative strategies for improving the transit system and access to it. Without such efforts, the city will fail to rise to the challenge posed by the Statewide Transit Plan when it concludes that “Moving into the 21st century, the linkages between economics, land use and transportation are likely to become even more prominent as regions work to create sustainable, healthy and vibrant communities.”

DOWNTOWN SERVICE

Future plans for transit improvements that serve the goal of greater connectivity also should include an eventual shift to more of a grid system citywide. A number of stakeholder sessions for the 2040 Regional Transit Plan discussed the feasibility of transitioning the current multi-hub route structure to such a grid-based network. Though the plan identifies a key action of improving service hours and frequencies, it predicts that the degree of service increases proposed would still operate more effectively through its current multi-hub route structure for the time being.

Nonetheless, the maintenance and expansion of the grid-type effect already present Downtown is a priority in conjunction with an increased number of stops and higher frequency service throughout the city center.



A frequent service, fare-free zone Downtown could serve the role of a traditional circulator route as shown in Denver with RTD's 16th Street Mall Shuttle.

REGIONAL SERVICE

Existing and planned regional transit service falls short of providing Colorado Springs with needed connectivity to the Denver metropolitan area and its expanding FasTracks system. Currently, limited regional bus service from Colorado Springs is provided by the Greyhound national network and by Bustang, a CDOT-funded regional carrier with routes to Denver, Fort Collins and west on the Interstate 70 corridor to Glenwood Springs. Bustang has three stops in Colorado Springs, including the Downtown Station. However, there are a number of challenges associated with use of the Bustang system. Service is infrequent and typically focused only on peak commute hours. Additionally, a number of the Bustang buses leave the Colorado Springs area stops before local bus service begins at 6:15, limiting access for non-automobile users. Furthermore, service times make the service work for commuters going from Colorado Springs to Denver, not the other way. While at present time there is limited demand for southbound trips from Denver to Colorado Springs, it is anticipated that if service were improved in the reverse direction, ridership demand would increase. Similarly, the lack of a Denver Tech Center or south Denver stop makes the service prohibitive for many commuters working in those areas.

Examining future options for **improved and more regular long range transit connections is a crucial imperative for better linking Colorado Springs and Downtown into the regional system**, in particular the Regional Transportation District (RTD) FasTracks expansion in the Denver area, the largest such transit expansion under way in the country. Downtown stakeholders echo the analysis of the 2015 Statewide Transit Plan which shows that Colorado Springs is the only major urban area in the state without regional

bus or interstate train service providing regular travel into other major cities. In addition to this spatial gap in regional connectivity, the Plan also recognizes the distinct temporal gap that exists, with limited to non-existent transit service and frequency on weekends and during early morning and late evening hours that serve users other than typical 9-5 commuters. The Statewide Transit Plan reiterated the recommendations of the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority (RMRA) study that called for an Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS) as an important next step in following up and implementing the High-speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) feasibility study. This study concluded that HSIPR is feasible on two main Colorado corridors: I-25 from Pueblo to Fort Collins and I-70 from Denver International Airport (DIA) to Eagle County Regional Airport. CDOT began the ICS study in mid-2014.

Better regional service, especially to Denver, also will help Colorado Springs connect to interstate rail options. Colorado Springs is not served by either of the Amtrak routes that pass through Colorado: the California Zephyr that runs through Denver serving the I-70 corridor on its route between Chicago and San Francisco; and the Southwest Chief Route that travels through southeast Colorado on its route between Chicago and Los Angeles.



The Colorado Department of Transportation's Bustang service provides limited regional transit connectivity to Denver and beyond.

Based on the establishment and success of the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) and the subsequent demonstrated interest in regional cooperation and funding mechanisms, the 2040 Regional Transit Plan recommends pursuing a new governance structure for transit that **embraces a regional perspective and leads to regional planning and implementation of transit**. This regional perspective will benefit the city as a whole and Downtown in particular if it succeeds in expanding planning and cooperation that brings regular high-capacity transit options between Colorado Springs and Denver. When this more robust regional transit system is initiated, **the Downtown multi-modal station will be an obvious and crucial hub and one of Downtown's best tools** for attracting regional transit service at a scale and frequency that truly connect it to the Denver area and to interstate options in a meaningful way. The relocation of the Downtown Transit Station is a key aspect determining Downtown's ability to take advantage of future options for regional transit, particularly high speed rail. This factor must weigh heavily in the ultimate decision for where to locate the station and how to design it for easy future compatibility with regional bus and rail options.



The new transit center location should be within close proximity to shopping, restaurants and other amenities.

DOWNTOWN TRANSIT STATION RELOCATION STUDY

Ensuring that numerous routes provide east-west and north-south access every two to three blocks throughout Downtown is a priority of this plan. If operated as a free-fare/frequent-stop zone in Downtown, this improved service on existing lines could help serve the role of a circulator for employees, residents and visitors. The issue of foregone fare revenue in a fare-free Downtown zone will need to be addressed; the City may justify the missed revenues if the resulting system is seen as having a catalytic enough effect on Downtown development and activity.

The location, timing, and design of future bus stops Downtown also will be determined by the eventual relocation of the transit station. Although available resources limit expansion or major redesign of services at present, City, MMT, and Downtown stakeholders must begin work on medium- and long-term plans that focus on the importance of bringing people to and from the core, on both local and regional scales.

A comprehensive study is in progress to identify a location for a modern new multi-modal transportation facility in or near the core. The station should be located within two blocks of the urban greenway network and should not be located east of Wasatch Avenue. In addition, Mountain Metropolitan Transit desires to make the new station a truly multi-modal hub – with a focus on non-motorized connections – and a positive public space that enriches the Downtown urban fabric and operates during all hours of the day and evening. Multiple factors should be considered to ensure this goal is achieved, including:

- Proximity to existing or potential heavy rail corridor to ensure the possibility of regional rail transit in the future.
- Creation of a truly multi-modal facility and integration of all anticipated uses;

- A location with good street and trail connectivity to ensure safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle access;
- A location that links riders into a downtown free-fare/ frequent stop zone;
- Proximity to other desirable destinations and amenities including parks, educational facilities, retail shopping options, and employment nodes;
- Proximity to existing or anticipated concentrations of housing;
- Ease of access and use by tourists and visitors to the community;
- Bus or shuttle access creating connection to the Colorado Springs Airport;
- Mixed-use development options and compatible adjacent uses.

Finally, the relocation of the Transit station has implications for placemaking Downtown. **The current station location will be a key redevelopment opportunity** and provide an ideal location for ground floor activation and streetscape enhancements recommended in other chapters of this Plan. MMT should engage a range of public and private partners to leverage the development potential and activity associated with the transit station toward fulfilling these goals.

BIKE SHARE

Bike sharing is increasingly establishing itself as an integral part of multi-modal transportation strategies in cities nationwide. Downtown Colorado Springs should embrace a bike share program as both an important transit option as well as an economic driver in attracting tourists and workforce. With a Phase 1 bike share program centered on Downtown, stations should be geared toward first- and last-mile connection to transit; short round-trip options for office workers who commute by car; access for tourists to the multiple cultural attractions within the greater Downtown area; and connectivity for students at Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College and, eventually, UCCS.

Parking

One of the key components to any downtown revitalization effort is a transportation network that allows employees, customers, visitors, and residents convenient (and cost effective) access to the city center. Many cities have opted to address this need by strengthening public transportation networks including local and regional bus and rail, as well as convenient “last mile” connections such as bike share, streetcars, and downtown circulator systems. In addition to improving public transportation systems, many cities also encourage smart urban planning policies such as increasing residential density in transit served neighborhoods, improving walkability, and creating a more robust bicycle network within the urban context.

Though urban planning and transportation strategies for higher density and improved multi-modal connectivity are important aspects of Downtown’s evolution, the fact remains that most communities in the United States still rely on the automobile for more than 50% of trips generated to, from, and within a downtown. This means that **the parking system is one of the most critical elements to the economic success of the city center.**

Much of the central business district of Downtown Colorado Springs is **parking exempt, which allows businesses to develop by creating enough parking to meet market demands**, rather than by fulfilling code requirements that usually create an unnecessary surplus of parking. In this context, parking is often provided by both the public sector and the private sector, assuming parking rates are high enough to justify the costs of privately managed public parking.

COLORADO SPRINGS PUBLIC PARKING – EXISTING SYSTEM

Public parking in Colorado Springs is operated as an enterprise, a self-sustaining government-owned business that by code must receive at least 75 percent of its annual non-debt revenue from nongovernment sources. The Enterprise, while not strictly driven by revenue, collects revenue that can in turn be used to provide for planning, development, improvement, beautification, equipping and maintaining the parking structures and parking related facilities. **The Parking Enterprise is an asset and a tool to Downtown revitalization that can be used to achieve public goals,** to manage the parking system in a way that supports urban planning and design objectives, and as a tool for public-private partnerships in development of catalytic sites and priority uses.

Public parking within the city center consists of both three off-street structured facilities that are owned and managed by the City Enterprise as well as metered and time-limited on-street spaces. The three **public parking structures comprise roughly 38% of the total off-street parking supply in Downtown,** so the City Enterprise is a significant, but not the primary,

provider of structured parking. However, the Parking Enterprise is the only provider of metered on-street parking spaces. Hourly rates at metered spaces in the Downtown core are \$1 per hour, and \$0.75 per hour for areas outside of the core.

Several other Downtown parking garages are owned and managed by private entities such as office buildings, as well as by El Paso County. County facilities are generally not available for public parking, with the exception of juror uses and events at the Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts. **Greater efficiencies may be possible within the parking system if the City can partner with the County** and other private parking owners to offer excess parking for public use. This can be accomplished through programs and policies that encourage private participation in the parking market and by the City taking the lead in setting parking rates at a high enough price point that the private market also can compete.

One of the key factors influencing future growth in Downtown is its parking availability. From a parking supply perspective, **the system must be robust enough to not only accommodate existing parking demand, but have enough capacity**



Downtown parking strategy must price and manage on-street and structured parking to meet different goals.

to accommodate future growth. The current parking availability reflects the Downtown's ability to absorb additional vehicles if the city grows. A 2009 Downtown parking study conducted by Walker Parking Consultants indicated that the 2,661 street and garage public parking spaces were 58% occupied during the week and only 19% occupied on the weekend. This level of space utilization may present significant additional capacity for growth in Downtown, especially for weekend and evening uses. However, this Downtown parking occupancy data is somewhat dated and may not reflect current utilization trends. **Updated data to determine current and future utilization rates will be especially important for city center parking analysis.** The City Parking Enterprise should commission a more focused Downtown parking study in 2018-2019 after re-development in the Southwest Downtown district is anticipated to be partially complete.

As Downtown grows and faces new demands, the Parking Enterprise must continue to **balance operational needs with other City objectives**, including urban design, economic development and improved multi-modal access. In addition to strategic management partnerships, supplying public parking to a private project can serve as an economic development incentive and excellent example of a public private partnership. Historically the Parking Enterprise has been a partner in economic development initiatives, and should continue to be used as a tool for attracting more investment into Downtown.

PUBLIC PARKING PRICING

Public parking pricing in Downtown should generally be competitive with that of the private market. If public pricing is too low, it limits the potential for maximized revenue and thus public benefit, which is partially returned to the public in the form of investment in improved streetscapes and additional parking when and where needed. Pricing the public parking system too high will discourage use of the system and loss of customers to the private market, or from visiting Downtown all together. **Regular evaluation and inflation of parking pricing is encouraged in order to maintain a competitive advantage and to support the rising cost of operating the system**, particularly as the system grows into new areas or provides new infrastructure. Public parking rates currently are set by City Council, while hours are set administratively by Enterprise staff; flexibility to adjust rates would enable the Parking Enterprise to operate in a more market-driven manner.

The Parking Enterprise should continue to price on-street metered spaces and structured garage spaces to meet different goals. **On-street meters generally should be priced higher and with shorter lengths of stay to stimulate turnover** and to encourage use of garages. **Parking garages will generally be priced more affordable per hour to encourage long-term or all day users.** (An exception to the general rule of pricing on-street meters to promote turnover may be along certain urban and neighborhood greenways, where vehicles parked for longer duration help provide a consistent buffer for protected bicycle lanes.) Furthermore, accommodations for low emission vehicles, electric vehicles, car sharing and carpooling should continue to be integrated into the system.

PARKING TECHNOLOGY

Many new parking technologies may transform Downtown parking management in the coming years. These technologies include real-time parking occupancy systems, automated parking, cashier-less payment options using credit card payments and mobile phones, and enforcement option using license plate recognition. The near-term emphasis of technology investments and improvements should be providing **consistent payment methods and enhancing ease of customer use**. All meters should have a similar customer interface and accept credit cards. Certain streets should be considered for different payment systems such as pay stations in order to achieve street design goals. Removing meters (and converting to one or two payment stations per block) along from key segments of Special Purpose Streets (Vermijo, Pueblo, and Sierra Madre) will provide a much more flexible environment for festivals, markets, and other public gatherings and events. Over the mid-to long-term, opportunities will exist for the City to improve operational efficiencies by investing in proven technologies to better manage existing and future resources.

BICYCLE PARKING

While convenient parking systems are essential for success, **safe and convenient bicycle parking options** are also an important strategy for supporting a more multi-modal environment and facilitating mode shift. Bicycle parking should be **approached as systematically as automobile parking**. Designated areas should be available - at a minimum - every two blocks within Downtown to provide easy and safe access for residents, employees, and visitors. Additionally, **distributed bicycle parking along the streetscape is an essential feature to a bicycle friendly environment**. One of the primary advantages of traveling Downtown by bike is that one can park at exactly the desired destination.



Convenient and efficient Downtown parking supports local businesses.

Urban Design and Public Space

Highlights

Future code revisions should balance the desire for compact urban form, densities that support a range of urban amenities, and a connected, pedestrian-friendly walkable environment.

Promote and encourage **activated shared public spaces including sidewalks, plazas, and parklets that enhance people's feelings of comfort, safety, and enjoyment** while Downtown.

Careful **planning and management of public space and streetscape elements** will unify Downtown's look and feel while still providing opportunities to distinguish and differentiate the core's unique districts.

Overview

Form-Based Code

Public Space

5 chapter

Overview

Great design helps unite the look and feel of adjacent land uses; stimulates private development that engages the public realm; and creates streets and other public spaces at a human scale that invite people to gather and move about the city. These **public spaces are the connective tissue** among the other physical elements described in this plan. Strong urban design can help link the buildings, gateways, streets, parks, and trails in safe, comfortable, creative and engaging ways.

In combination with innovative land use strategies, **urban design should help foster the character that differentiates the various neighborhoods and districts within the city center.** It also should create distinctions between Downtown and the rest of Colorado Springs. The design of new and renovated buildings must focus on the activation of ground floors and the relationship of buildings to adjacent and nearby streets. In addition to the impact of individual buildings, the thoughtful design and maintenance of public roadsides, landscape, street furniture, public parks and plazas, public art, and signage are all elements that impact public space.

This chapter discusses and provides considerations for key urban design tools: Form-Based Code, public space and streetscape guidelines.

Form-Based Code

The **establishment of a Form-Based Code is one of the milestone achievements resulting from the Imagine Downtown Master Plan.** Adopted in 2009, the Code encourages compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly revitalization efforts in a delineated City Center district (see Figure 5.1 for the geographic extent covered by the Form-Based Code District). It is a key element in the City's vision to promote economic vitality, sustainable growth, and a better quality of life. Unlike traditional zoning that regulates primarily by use, the Form-Based Code focuses on directing high quality urban form to coordinate a variety of complementary uses around attractive streetscapes and public spaces.

This section outlines the regulatory basis for the Form-Based Code and discusses the sectors used to administer its guidelines and standards in different parts of the city center. As the Code will be under review in the near-term, this section also identifies areas where the Code Review Committee could consider changes or adjustments to best achieve the goals of the master plan.

REGULATORY BASIS FOR THE CODE

The Code is legally established through zoning ordinance 09-83 and 12-23 and its enabling legislations found in Section 7.3.801 of the City Codes. **The Downtown Review Board (DRB) was established concurrently with the Form-Based Code.** This board has the authority to approve, conditionally approve, or deny projects that require greater flexibility for specific standards. The DRB operates similarly to a traditional "board of adjustments," granting warrants from specific standards and making other discretionary decisions.

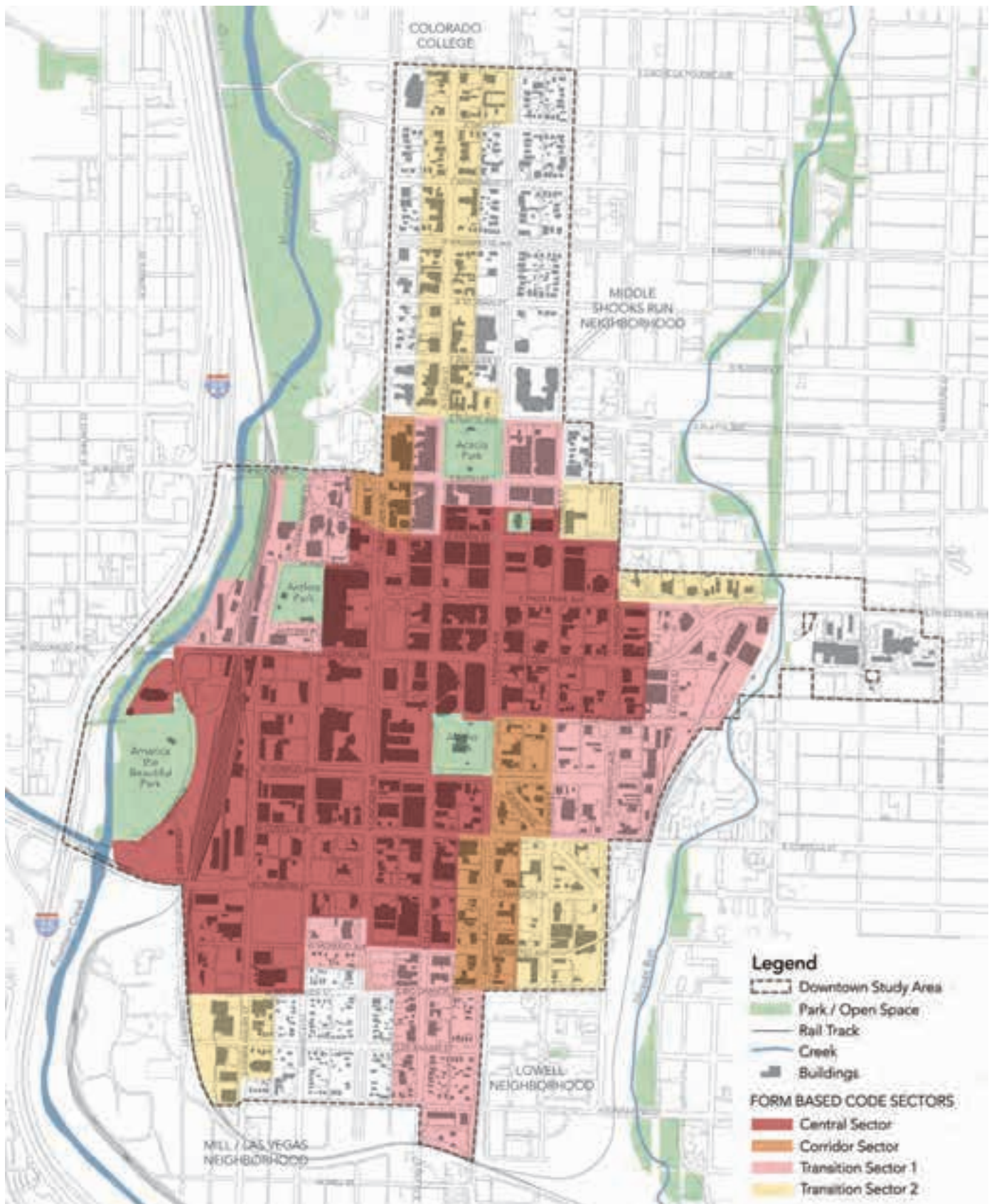
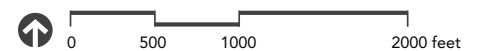


Figure 5.1 | Form-Based Code Sectors



SECTORS

Downtown is divided **into four sectors to guide the application of the Code**. Specific standards are correlated with specific sectors, which are represented on the Form Based Code Sectors Map (Figure 5.1). Some parts of the Downtown study area are not covered by the Form-Based Code. In particular, areas in the eastern part of Downtown are zoned Special Use and General Commercial or Residential Use. Additionally, the Form-Based Code District extends beyond the study area boundary to the south, encompassing critical gateways at South Nevada Avenue and South Tejon Street.

The Form-Based Code sectors do not directly align with the districts in this plan. In particular, the Central Sector of the Form-Based Code covers a significant portion of the Downtown study area and overlaps the City Center, New South End, Southwest, and East End districts. The lack of alignment between the districts and the FBZ sectors could cause concern for implementing zoning modifications that can effectuate district wide change, however **because the district sectors in this plan are primarily meant to guide public realm improvements and facilitate a “sense of place,” their discrepancy is not inherently problematic**. The next update to the Form-Based Code should however consider whether rezoning Code sectors to more closely match the district boundaries is appropriate or desired.

Each sector is detailed as follows:

The Central Sector encompasses the majority of the Downtown Form-Based Code District, and geographically represents the heart of Downtown. **The primary goal for the Central Sector is to increase Downtown density, create an iconic skyline and establish a high-quality pedestrian environment**

at the street level. The central sector has a two-story height minimum, but does not restrict maximum building heights, encouraging increased building densities both horizontally and vertically. It is intended that the Central Sector will have commercial uses (retail, restaurant, entertainment and office) on the first level of most buildings, with residential, lodging and office uses on the upper levels. The Central Sector does not require specific parking standards, both to encourage a multi-modal environment that is not solely dependent on the car, as well as to respond to market demands for parking.

The Corridor Sector is found in three distinct areas of the city center: at the southern end of Downtown just north of I-25; along South Nevada Avenue and South Tejon Street; and along two blocks of North Cascade Avenue near the Kiowa Street and Bijou Street entrance from I-25. While these areas aren’t envisioned to support the density of the Central Sector, a unique set of standards was developed to **reflect the importance of these areas as gateways**, and to address the appropriate height and intensity of developed land along the significantly wide rights-of-way on Nevada and Cascade avenues (each approximately 140 wide).

The Transition 1 and Transition 2 Sectors surround much of the Central Sector in order to provide an area of transition from the high density land uses to the lower density residential and mixed uses in surrounding neighborhoods and other master planned districts. These sectors allow a variety of non-residential uses and a mix of housing types at medium to low intensities and densities, but permit all building types outlined in the code.

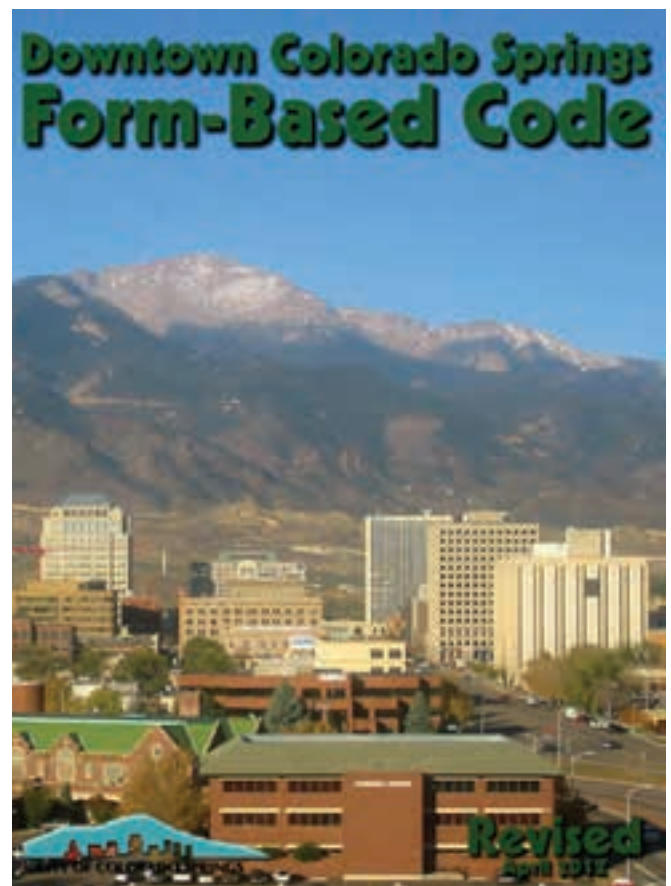
OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The Form-Based Code specifies private building standards that **promote a high quality, pedestrian-oriented public realm that encourages activation of the space** for the comfort and safety of all users. The Code provides standards that require the design of new buildings to support the density, street level activity, visual interest, and engaging public spaces demanded by Downtown residents, employees, and visitors. The Code standards are organized into several categories, including building type, frontages, uses, parking, block standards, public spaces, and signage.

Specifically, and in line with the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan, the Code outlines regulatory guidelines and standards to:

- Create a predictable investment environment for development;
- Remove barriers to revitalize Downtown Colorado Springs;
- Promote a mix of uses including retail, office, residential, institutional, and others;
- Establish transitions from the Downtown core and urban renewal sectors to the surrounding neighborhoods;
- Clearly communicate through simple language and easily understood graphics the physical requirements and expectations for new development;
- Implement a review and approval process that is efficient and effective in approving projects that meet the Code's requirements;
- Promote new development which respects the historic building fabric, as well as the natural environment, and enhances the pedestrian experience;
- Establish a coordinated streetscape plan including street trees, public art and appropriate street furnishings;

- Accommodate the changing uses of buildings while maintaining the integrity and viability of the public realm, with an emphasis on intermodal transportation options and pedestrian linkages and orientation; and
- Implement the goals, objectives and strategies of the Downtown Development Authority and its Plan of Development to ultimately revitalize and improve Downtown Colorado Springs.



The Downtown Form-Based Code was revised in 2012.

FORM-BASED CODE CONSIDERATIONS

Design provisions are outlined in the Code to achieve the objectives listed above. Since the code's inception in 2009, there have been limited opportunities to see the effects of the Code on physical construction primarily due to the sluggish development climate during the recession. However, several **current and planned developments have started to demonstrate the positive effects of the Code throughout Downtown.**

However, since the Code's creation, a handful of issues have been brought to light, some minor and others more philosophical in their potential impacts on Downtown development. The following should be considered by the Code Review Committee when considering revisions to the code:

Use Categories

The focus of Form-Based Code is the form, massing, and location of buildings and public space. However, the Code does specify a few prohibited and conditional uses in the Form-Based sectors to promote "a balanced and desirable collection of varied uses" and to support the goal of increased residential uses Downtown. Limited refinements should be considered by the Code Review Committee to ensure efficacy of the code and to make consideration for new or changing industries, such as medical and recreational marijuana uses, businesses with different types of liquor licenses such as breweries, different types of manufacturing, and others that may still be emerging. Creating more clarity around conditional and prohibited use will inform future businesses and investors of the priorities for the area.

First, the code should more carefully define "Mixed-Use Buildings" and include a specific criteria requiring that a minimum percentage of building ground floors are occupied by active uses, understanding the constraints with the encouragement of podium parking.

More importantly, Code adjustments should be considered to allow a new light industrial use category as a conditional use in the Form Based Zone to **better accommodate the potential for artisan manufacturing and maker spaces.** The 2016 Market Assessment written in parallel with the Experience Downtown Master Plan notes the importance in Downtown of niche opportunities for small-scale light industrial and artisan manufacturing; flexible, collaborative, co-working spaces; and non-traditional office formats often favored by entrepreneurial and innovation based businesses. In some cases, these uses may find suitable spaces in existing older buildings around the periphery of the Downtown core. The market assessment states that there also may be opportunities to replicate this product type through creative construction of low rise, open floorplate, light industrial concepts and through conversions and subdivisions of existing Class B and C office properties. Each of these potential opportunities should be supported and encouraged with this suggested zoning use change.

Downtown Architecture Considerations

Many aspects of well-articulated ground floors and building façades are covered by the Code. Several revisions will further enhance its effectiveness in creating the type of activated, ground floor streets, sidewalks, and public spaces desired in Downtown.

Design Guidelines should more clearly **encourage creative and eclectic design, and architectural diversity** and variety. In addition, options for active ground floor uses will be improved by blurring the lines between interior and exterior spaces by encouraging operable walls, functional garage doors, etc. Guidelines should expand on the importance of prominent entrances, orienting entrances on all active street faces, and celebrating corner entrances. High quality, human-scaled materials will further enhance the pedestrian realm.

Sustainable design principles should be highlighted that encourage active and passive solar design in new and renovated buildings, climatically sensitive design such as entrance vestibules, and rainwater catchment and Low Impact Development techniques that can serve as beautiful, functional, and interactive design elements. Section 4.1 of the Code on Architectural Guidelines already addresses step backs and transitions, two critical elements often used to ensure proper shade to sun ratios. Further detail and guidelines could be provided specifying the importance of solar access in public rights-of-way for added pedestrian comfort.



Some Downtown buildings already foster interactions between their ground floor and public space users by incorporating transparent façades and seating patios.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

"LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. There are many practices that have been used to adhere to these principles such as bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels and permeable pavements."

Source: www.epa.gov



Public Realm

Streets and sidewalks are the primary areas where people experience the public realm and its relationship to private buildings. Design principles that help create **comfortable, human-scaled outdoor "rooms" improve the public realm**. The Code calls for active uses on ground floors, and a higher proportion of doors, windows, and outdoor seating options all to help increase the safety and comfort of pedestrians and improve the look and feel of the buildings themselves. Encouraging uses such as outdoor dining contributes to the feeling of activity and safety on streets. While the Code does a good job of supporting these goals, refining the following categories in Sections 2 and 4 will increase its effectiveness.

Revised requirements for Vehicular Zones can offer prototypical solutions for **allocating roadway space for more uses beyond vehicular lanes and parking**. Multi-modal and public space objectives can be supported with adjustments to lane reductions, reduced lane widths, stronger pedestrian realm and crossing requirements.

Revision should consider the introduction of an **"activation zone"** between the building edge and the pedestrian way that encourages ground floor commercial and residential tenants to utilize the space just outside their entrance for outdoor seating, display of goods, and other elements such as umbrellas, tables, and plantings. This can be achieved by intentional encroachment and use of the wide rights-of-way for greater amenity zone activation, helping create more room for activation space along the building frontage.

Finally, adjusting requirements for glazing and fenestration percentages, providing more specific design solutions for pedestrian-friendly alleyways, revising building step back transition requirements, modifying design guidelines for drive-through lanes – longer term – considering parking maximums will all enhance the Code's efficacy in providing the type of streets and public spaces described and called for in this Master Plan.

Public Space

Colorado Springs' Downtown will become more vibrant by encouraging active use of its public spaces. Streets, sidewalks, plazas, and parklets are the primary areas where people experience the public realm and its relationship to private buildings. Requiring and encouraging **design principles that create comfortable, human-scaled outdoor "rooms" supports increased pedestrian use and improves use and enjoyment of shared public spaces.**

Good public spaces are perceived as safe, comfortable, and welcoming when activated. Therefore, design is integral to how people will use public space, or whether the space will even be used at all. Both the public and private sectors have important roles to play in creating activated, well-used public spaces. Though a space may be part of the public realm, adjacent buildings help shape its character, use, and design. **A cohesive transition and relationship between public and private built forms** has the ability to help establish strong public spaces.

Active uses on ground floors, and a higher proportion of doors, windows, and outdoor seating options all help to increase the safety and comfort of pedestrians and improve the look and feel of the buildings themselves. Encouraging uses such as outdoor dining contributes to the feeling of activity and safety on streets. Ground floors should be well-designed to showcase restaurants, shops, resident entrances and patios, and active office spaces. These spaces must work symbiotically with the surrounding sidewalks and public spaces to **provide experiences that are active, engaging, safe, and comfortable.** Curating and managing ground floor spaces with façade easements, promoting temporary uses in vacant lots and storefronts, assisting longer-term tenants with retail strategy, wrapping un-activated façades with activating uses are all strategies for improving and activating adjacent public spaces.

Figure 5.2 illustrates how many of these public space design principles can be used to transform the wide right-

of-way and under-used public spaces along Pikes Peak Ave east of Nevada Avenue.

The following is a list of general principles outlining public and private enhancements to improve Downtown's public spaces:

Public Enhancements

- Provide opportunities for outdoor dining, public art, street furnishings, information booths, vendors and landscaping.
- Enhance street safety, including lane reductions, reduced lane widths and crossing requirements.
- Revise vehicular zone requirements to reallocate roadway space for uses beyond vehicular lanes and parking.
- Provide more specific design solutions for pedestrian-friendly alleyways.
- Modify design guidelines for drive through lanes.
- Establish parking maximums.
- Enhance Downtown's image by planting more trees and other vegetation.
- Activate the edges of new and existing parking structures.
- Enhance neighborhood connections to Downtown.
- Ensure that all infrastructure investments are designed and implemented to enhance the aesthetic quality.

Private Enhancements

- Promote active and visible uses on ground floors including more transparency through doors and windows and by providing outdoor seating options.
- Ensure that buildings are designed to promote a well-scaled, pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Introduce an "activation zone" that encourages the space outside commercial entrances for outdoor seating and other amenities.
- Adjust requirements for glazing and fenestration percentages.
- Revise building step back transition requirements.



Figure 5.2 | Pikes Peak Avenue Illustration (before and after)

PUBLIC SPACE ELEMENTS

Public space elements are defined in this Plan as additional features added to the streetscape and other public spaces with the intent of improving their appearance and function. They exist within the public right-of-way and help establish the character pedestrians, bicyclists, and others experience in the public realm. This section addresses public space elements in Downtown Colorado Springs from several perspectives including overarching district wide themes and specific applications based on street types identified in the mobility framework in Chapter 4.

The broad categories of streetscape elements discussed in this Plan (with examples) include:

- Site furnishings – benches, pedestrian level street lighting, public restrooms, etc.
- Pedestrian gathering spaces – plazas, café seating, etc.
- Hardscape features – bulb-outs, wide sidewalks, etc.
- Landscape elements – grouted street trees, shrub beds, etc.
- Circulation and mobility – pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, etc.
- Parking options – on-street parallel parking, parking structures, etc.
- Signage – wayfinding signage, gateway signage, etc.
- Public art – sculptures, murals, etc.



Well-designed public space elements improve the appearance and function of Downtown.

Consistent and Unifying City Center Elements

Public space elements are installed throughout Downtown; however, they are more concentrated and generally **more cohesive in the City Center than in other districts**. Based on a thorough inventory and analysis of elements within the City Center, the following list identifies the most common and consistent elements. Examples of these elements are also illustrated in Figure 5.3.

- Variations of the emerald green color are used to coat benches, street lights, trash bins, utility enclosures, and other elements.
- Street lights are generally all the same height, traditionally designed with pole groves and ornamental frosted coverings, and positioned near the back of the curb.
- Bulb-outs with raised planters are most commonly seen at intersections along Tejon Street and Pikes Peak and Colorado avenues.
- Special paving materials (brick pavers) occur in amenity zones (areas on the backside of the curb) throughout streets with high pedestrian activity.
- Planted street trees are located throughout the district, generally with tree grates in denser locations and tree lawns in more residentially focused areas.

Inconsistent City Center Elements

In contrast to the elements listed above, there are a number of elements found throughout the City Center that contrast or conflict with the more consistent palette. The list below identifies several categories of elements that tend to have inconsistencies. Figure 5.4 on page 88 illustrates specific examples of elements that are outliers from the established City Center palette and detract from its cohesive character.

- Absence of or inconsistent tree grates throughout denser commercial areas.
- At least nine types of pedestrian lights exist throughout the district.
- Dissimilar bike racks, unevenly positioned.
- Unique raised planters (and planting materials) and a disproportionate level of furnishings provided by private building owners.
- Inconsistent hardscape and paving materials block-to-block and incongruent adjacent palettes.

Elements in Other Districts

The other Downtown districts generally lack the concentration and cohesive identity of public space elements found in the City Center. With few exceptions, specific public space elements identified in the City Center do not exist in the surrounding districts. Furthermore, where pockets of elements are found in these districts, the range of elements used is typically inconsistent. As a result, **the peripheral districts tend to lack a distinct or identifiable public space character**.

Complete consistency of public space elements among Downtown's various districts is not necessary, nor even desirable. A balance must be struck **between unifying elements and features that reveal differences among key Downtown areas**. A few common design themes and consistent application of select elements will help people identify Downtown as a cohesive entity. Beyond this, however, the public space palette for each district should reflect its unique history, assets, and identity.



Figure 5.3 | Consistent and Unifying City Center Public Space Elements



Figure 5.4 | Inconsistent City Center Public Space Elements

ENHANCED DISTRICT IDENTITY

The distinctive qualities of each Downtown area should be **reinforced through the addition of recognizable public space elements**. For each district, this section encapsulates the character profile provided in Chapter 6 to help identify a theme or approach that the public space palette should build from. Though each district is distinct in character, a blending of identified elements should be established on urban and neighborhood greenways, unifying Downtown's character as a whole (refer to the urban and neighborhood greenways in Chapter 4 and the Streetscape Elements Matrix, Figure 5.5).

City Center

The City Center is Downtown's activity hub and its most established district in terms of identity. The district invites people of all ages and backgrounds to walk its streets and enter its buildings. Therefore, numerous public space elements already have taken hold, shaping the district's overall look and feel.

Public space elements recommendations:

- Continue using the existing color palette and primary furnishing typology identified above in Existing Public Space Elements.
- Discontinue use of inconsistent site furnishings noted above.
- Incorporate a greater diversity of planters and vegetation that complement existing features.
- Consider accenting some streetscape furnishings with complementary colors to emerald green adding more variety and detail.
- Proactively work to adequately space furnishings based on estimated pedestrian use.
- Select paving patterns that complement existing materials and avoid repetitive treatments.
- Identify locations for parklets built to provide additional public space and complement adjacent uses.
- Integrate bicycle safety improvements at intersections (including those with bulb-outs treatments) such as:
 - Bike boxes: designated areas at the head of traffic
 - Intersection crossing markings and through bike lanes: designating bicycle space through intersections, in concert with turn lanes and bulb-outs
 - A cycle track intersection approach: reducing turn conflicts by designing separated bicycle facilities built into the hardscape
- Design sustainable public spaces that include long-lasting, low-maintenance materials and low-water use native plantings, and incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) strategies for stormwater management and water quality such as permeable pavers, bioretention techniques, and tree box filters.
- Make wayfinding signage accessible and legible to all abilities and generations.
- Install public restroom(s) in highly trafficked places, designed to deter misuse by including features such as: locked exterior doors during certain hours, sensor surveillance, unlocked main room (to reduce queuing and extended private uses), ventilated ceilings, ADA compliant, no mirrors, etc.

Near North End

The Near North End links the Colorado College campus to the core of Downtown and includes other cultural institutions including the Fine Arts Center. The district generally has a historic and inviting feel, accentuated by student-oriented restaurants, coffee shops, and stores, as well as historic single family homes and small scale offices. The public space palette for the Near North End should **draw from the established Colorado College palette and mirror the more traditional, open, and natural setting** found in the area, including the new landscaping installed along the college's southern edge at Cache La Poudre Street.

Public space elements recommendations:

- Include traditional street furnishings to reflect the historic identity and the presence of established cultural institutions.
- Pull from Colorado College's palette, using black powder coated street furnishings.
- Fill Tejon Street with street trees and continue establishing tree lawns on adjacent streets with more residential character.
- Continue using sandstone paving slabs as accents in furnishing zones.
- Incorporate LID design elements on wide streets and on streets with medians.



Public space elements in the Near North End reflect the influence of Colorado College and the adjacent residential areas.



A consistent material palette will allow for individual uses to create their own identities within the larger area, depicted here in Madison, WI.



Use repetition in landscape design to create a consistent canopy for both shade and aesthetic appeal, shown here in Prospect New Town, Longmont , CO.

New South End

The New South End includes an eclectic mix of residential, commercial and light industrial uses. As the existing neighborhood evolves, many development and redevelopment opportunities exist, especially for mixed use and housing. Substantial rights-of-way exist on all streets in the area, creating a disjointed feel between land uses, but also providing **ample opportunity for creative use of the streets for amenities** that will enhance the neighborhood. Sizable landscaped medians and tree lawns are characteristic of the district. Tying the variety of land uses together with a unifying public space/streetscape is an overarching principle for the area.

Public space elements recommendations:

- Emphasize consistent landscape elements and planting areas
- Celebrate the “small neighborhood feel” of the district with accessible clusters of furnishings and other elements that will attract neighbors to gather.
- Focus on elements that utilize excess rights-of-way to minimize the separation caused by large street widths, including:
 - Pedestrian crossings and bike lanes.
 - Pedestrian gathering spaces.
 - Hardscape features such as bulb-outs.



The eclectic character of the New South End requires public space elements that unify the streetscape and other public areas.



Seating parklets can both consolidate and disperse pedestrian gathering spaces throughout the district, such as this application in Minneapolis, MN.



Landscape elements can help to tie together numerous land uses in pedestrian-oriented environment, such as this example in Austin, TX..

East End

The East End is currently an underutilized part of Downtown, but opportunity exists to reinforce its authentic and artistic character. Large underutilized and vacant sites delineate the district's eastern border. The former Gazette newspaper building, St. Francis Hospital, and historic Santa Fe Depot are unique architectural relics poised for inventive redefinition. Several creative industries and galleries are located within the area and a variety of artistic elements including murals punctuate the area. The emerging identity of the East End is **rooted in repurposing underutilized space, celebrating the connections to Shooks Run**, and adding residential and employment intensity to bolster the authentic character.

Public space elements recommendations:

- Improve the consistency of public realm features.
- Incorporate the Santa Fe Train Depot theme and color palette.
- Build off of the semi-industrial architectural theme that currently exists in the district.
- Employ public space elements and materials that can develop a patina and weathered character.
- Emphasize wayfinding and improved visibility of Legacy Loop access.
- Include site furnishings that are less ornate and include defined edges, similar to the hard buildings and features currently present.
- Incorporate existing street art and new public art into the public realm.



Public space elements in the East End should provide consistency and celebrate the semi-industrial and artistic character of the area.



source: M. Kennedy

Opportunities to gather informally should be integrated within the industrial fabric using a minimalist palette, shown here in Old Town Philadelphia.



Art and wayfinding can be an integral part of a blended material palette that's used to establish an identity, depicted here in Monor, Hungary.

Southwest

The Southwest district will transform more rapidly than any other part of Downtown. It is a scene of remarkable contrasts where underutilized sites and industrial uses will be replaced with a modern world-class museum and adjacent development. Desolate roads are being re-imagined as a “Champions Boulevard” with innovative, multi-modal festival streets. The barrier of freight rail tracks gives way to the splendor of America the Beautiful Park and Pikes Peak. All of these elements will inform the function and aesthetic of **a truly vibrant, mixed use district, just blocks from the Downtown core.**

Public space elements recommendations:

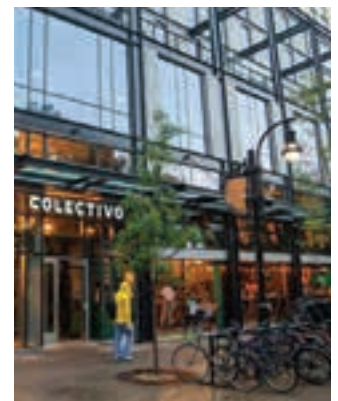
- Embrace the strong contrast between old and new, authentic and modern.
- Design a palette combining natural, industrial, and sleek modern elements.
- Emphasize pedestrian and mobility features that celebrate health, athletics, and outdoor culture.
- Reinforce and protect the natural beauty of the district by incorporating sustainable, green technologies and LID elements.
- Emphasize intersection and crosswalk treatments to better accommodate the high levels of pedestrian traffic expected in the area.
- The sections of Vermijo Avenue and Sierra Madre Street categorized as Special Purpose Streets should receive special treatments that enhance their visibility and usefulness as special streets Downtown, including distinct paving and a curbless environment, specialized pedestrian level street lighting, removable bollards, and parking solutions that eliminate regularly spaced meters.



Public space elements in the Southwest district shall balance the area’s gritty aesthetic with the polished look of new development like the U.S. Olympic Museum.



Seating and gathering should respond to the needs of all user groups, including commerce in the public realm, depicted here in Austin's Second Street District.



Material cues from the existing context should inform the architecture as it will largely reflect the character of the area, such as Collectivo Coffee in Madison, WI.

PROPOSED ELEMENTS BY STREET TYPE

The district-oriented recommendations above highlight overarching themes to guide design. The City and its partners will also propose, design, build and maintain streetscape improvements on a street-by-street and block-by-block basis. The mobility framework presented in Chapter 4 identifies a range of prioritized street categories that will help guide public realm planning and investment Downtown. This typology is the basis for the Streetscape Elements Matrix on page 95 (Figure 5.5). **The matrix is a tool for determining the appropriate streetscape elements for the street types identified in the mobility framework**, providing a finer level of assessment than the more thematic district-wide recommendations.

For each street type, elements in the streetscape categories listed at the beginning of this chapter are rated as Required (R), Encouraged (E), Limited (L), or Prohibited (P).



Downtown streets require different streetscape elements depending on a pedestrian, bicycle, or public space focus.

	Signature Streets	Pedestrian Priority Streets	Green Streets	Alleyway Improvements	Transportation Streets	Residential Garden Streets	Other Downtown Streets	Gateways
Site Furnishings								
Benches	R	R	L	E	L	L	L	L
Lean Bars	E	E	L	E	L	P	L	L
Trash and Recycling Bins	R	R	E	E	L	L	L	L
Pedestrian Level Street Lighting	R	R	R	R	E	E	E	E
Overhead Streetlights	R	R	R	L	R	R	R	R
Hydration Stations	E	E	E	P	E	P	L	L
Bicycle Racks	R	R	R	E	E	L	L	E
Bicycle Repair Stations	E	E	R	L	E	E	L	L
Enhanced Bicycle Storage	L	L	E	L	E	L	L	L
Newspaper / Information Kiosk	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Transit Stop Bench*	R	R	R	P	R	R	R	L
Transit Stop Shelters	E	E	E	P	R	L	E	E
Public Art Displays	R	R	E	E	E	E	E	E
Ornamental Planters	R	R	E	R	L	E	L	E
Renewable Energy Installments	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Dog Parkers**	E	E	L	L	L	P	P	L
Public Restroom/ Loo Facility	L	E	E	P	L	P	L	P
Pedestrian Gathering								
Plazas	E	E	E	E	L	L	L	L
Parklets/Parking Lane Patios	E	E	E	P	L	E	L	L
Pocket Parks	L	E	E	L	L	E	L	L
Café Seating / Tables	E	E	E	L	L	E	L	L
Hardscape Features								
Sidewalk (6' minimum)	R	R	R	L	R	R	R	R
Wide Sidewalks (12' minimum)	R	R	E	P	E	E	E	E
ADA accessibility ramps	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Bulbouts***	R	R	E	P	E	L	L	R
Pedestrian Islands	L	L	E	P	R	E	E	E
Enhanced Amenity Zone	R	R	E	R	E	L	L	R
Underground Utilities	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Raised Planters	R	R	E	P	R	L	L	R
Circulation and Mobility								
Pedestrian Crossings	R	R	R	L	R	R	R	R
Mid-Block Crossings	L	L	L	L	E	L	L	E
Traffic Calming Design	R	R	E	E	E	E	E	R
Public Transit Circulation Route	P	L	P	P	R	P	L	L
Transit Bulb Out	P	L	P	P	R	P	L	L
Designated Bicycle Lanes	L	L	L	L	L	E	L	L
Protected Bike Lanes	E	E	R	P	E	E	E	L
Buffered Bike Lanes	E	E	L	P	E	E	E	L
Public Space Connectivity / Access	R	R	E	R	R	R	E	R
Landscape Elements								
Street Trees	R	R	E	P	E	L	E	R
Native Planting Areas	E	E	E	P	E	E	E	L
Tree Lawns	L	L	L	P	L	E	L	L
Landscaping Beds	R	R	E	E	E	E	E	R
Landscaped Medians	L	L	E	P	L	E	L	L
Inorganic Material Landscaping	L	L	E	L	E	E	E	L
Urban Agricultural Plots	L	L	L	L	L	E	E	L
LID Improvements	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Parking Options								
On-Street Parallel Parking	E	E	E	P	E	E	E	E
On-Street Diagonal Parking	L	L	L	P	L	L	L	P
Angled Median Parking	L	L	L	P	P	P	L	P
Parallel Median-Parking	L	L	L	P	P	L	L	P
Reversed Angle Parking	L	L	L	P	P	L	L	L
Surface Parking Lots (behind buildings)	P	P	L	L	L	L	L	L
Parking Structures (with first level retail)	R	E	L	E	E	P	L	L
Parking Structures (100% parking)	L	L	L	L	L	P	L	L
Public Signage								
Wayfinding Signage	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Identity Signage	R	R	E	R	L	R	L	E
Banners	R	E	L	L	E	P	P	R
Trail Entry Signage	L	L	R	P	L	L	L	R
Bicycle Route Wayfinding	R	R	R	L	R	L	E	E
Pedestrian Signage (non-flashing)	E	E	E	R	R	E	E	E
Gateway or Downtown Entry Signage	E	E	L	L	E	L	L	R
Traffic Engineering								
9'-10' lane widths	E	E	E	L	L	E	E	L
11' lane widths	L	L	L	L	E	L	L	E
12' or wider lane widths	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	L
Vehicles Prohibited	P	P	P	L	P	P	P	P
25 miles or less speed	E	E	E	R	L	R	E	L
25 - 35 miles per hour speed	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P

Figure 5.5 | Streetscape Elements Matrix

Legend R = Required E = Encouraged L = Limited P = Prohibited

* Transit stops should be strategically located throughout Downtown

** A brand of permanent street lockers for dogs, www.dogparker.com

*** Bulbouts designed with straight angles and lines, not rounded

Acknowledgments

The creation of this plan would not have been possible without the efforts and support of numerous individuals and groups. Downtown and City staff would like to thank all those who participated in these efforts and who ultimately made this plan a reality.

Colorado Springs Mayor and City Council

Mayor John Suthers

Merv Bennett, Council President, At-Large

Jill Gaebler, President Pro-tem, District 5

Don Knight, District 1

Larry Bagley, District 2

Keith King, District 3

Helen Collins, District 4

Andy Pico, District 6

Bill Murray, At-Large

Tom Strand, At-Large

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Darryl Glenn

Dennis Hisey

Peggy Littleton

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Jill Gaebler

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Dot Lischick

David Lux

Jessica Modeer

Chuck Murphy

Ingrid Richter

Antony Rosendo

Downtown Review Board

Stuart Coppedge, Chair

Daniel Hankins

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Gary Marchio

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Lisa Tessarowicz

Dot Lischick

Kristin Heggem

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Randy Case

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Sherrie Gibson

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Jackie Hilaire

Charles Castle

Scot Hume

Ron Ilgen

Alex Johnson

Jason Rupinski

Hank Scarangella

Gary Bostrom

Carol Beckman

Charlie Dunn

Downtown Master Plan Project Management Team

Susan Edmondson, President and CEO, Downtown Colorado Springs Partnership

Sarah Harris, Director of Business Development & Economic Vitality, Downtown Colorado Springs Partnership

Karen Palus, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, City of Colorado Springs

Peter Wysocki, Director of Planning and Development, City of Colorado Springs

Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, City of Colorado Springs

Travis Easton, Director of Public Works, City of Colorado Spring

Downtown Master Plan Technical Advisory Committee

Aaron Briggs, HB&A Architects

Al Wenstrand, Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance

Aubrey Day, Live Well Colorado

Doug Price, Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau

Edward Bledowski, DLR Group

Jeff Finn, Nor'Wood Development Group

Jim Smith, Mountain Chalet
 Lisa Tessarowicz, Epicentral Coworking
 Nolan Schriener, NES Landscape Architects
 Ray Walkowski, Colorado Springs Planning Commission
 Simon Penner, Newmark Grubb Knight Frank
 Steve Engel, Griffis/Blessing, Inc
 Tatiana Bailey, Southern Colorado Economic Forum, UCCS
 Jim Rees, Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority

Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority

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 Merv Bennett
 Randy Case
 Gary Feffer
 Toby Gannett
 Valerie Hunter
 Jim Mason
 Brian Olson
 Jim Raughton
 Peter Scoville
 Robert Shonkwiler
 Jack Wiepking

City Staff and Civic Partners

Bob Cope, City of Colorado Springs, Economic Development
 Brian Olson, El Paso County, Sales and Use Tax Administrator
 Brian Shevock, City of Colorado Springs, Bike Planner
 Brian Vitulli, Mountain Metro Transit, Planning Supervisor
 Carl Schueler, City of Colorado Springs, Comprehensive Planning Manager

Chris Lieber, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, Park Development Manager
 Connie Perry, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, Landscape Planner
 Craig Blewitt, Mountain Metro Transit, Director
 Deanne McCann, El Paso County, Economic Development
 Elena Nunez, Colorado Springs Utilities, Economic Development
 Greg Warnke, City of Colorado Springs, Parking Administrator
 Henry Yankowski, El Paso County, County Administrator
 Jeff Greene, City of Colorado Springs, Chief of Staff
 Jessica McMullen, El Paso County, Assistant to the County Administrator
 Kathleen Krager, City of Colorado Springs, Traffic Engineer
 Katie Carleo, City of Colorado Springs, Principal Planner
 Lonna Thelen, City of Colorado Springs, Principal Planner
 Matt Mayberry, Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, Director
 Meggan Herington, City of Colorado Springs, Land Use Review Manager
 Mike Chavez, City of Colorado Springs, Engineering Manager
 Mike Schultz, City of Colorado Springs, Principal Planner
 Sara Lobato, El Paso County, Economic Development
 Tim Roberts, City of Colorado Springs, Senior Transportation Planner
 Tyrone Johnson, Colorado Springs Utilities, Business Development Manager
 Mathew Fitzsimmons, City of Colorado Springs Planner II

Consultant Team

Chris Beynon, MIG Inc., Principal
 Jay Renkens, MIG Inc., Principal
 Chris Ryerson, MIG Inc., Project Manager
 Cole Gehler, MIG Inc., Project Associate
 Brad Segal, P.U.M.A., President
 Erica Heller, P.U.M.A., Vice President
 Erin Lyng, P.U.M.A., Associate
 Joshua Mehlem, Alta Planning + Design, Associate
 Brian Bergeler, Alta Planning + Design, Planner
 Jeremiah J. Simpson, Walker Parking Consultants
 David J. Lieb, Parking Consultant III
 Bruce O'Donnell, Starboard Realty Group LLC, Principal

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RESOLUTION NO. 116-16

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS AND APPROVING THE EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, by Ordinance No. 06-135, the City Council of the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado (the "City Council"), had previously determined that it was prudent and necessary to establish the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority (the "Authority") for the public health, safety, prosperity, security, and welfare in order to halt or prevent deterioration of property values or structures within the central business district, to assist in the planning, development, and redevelopment of this district, and it will be of special benefit to the property within the boundaries of the district; and

WHEREAS, by Ordinance No. 07-15, the City Council had created and established the Authority in accordance with the requirements of Part 8 of Article 25 of Title 31 C.R.S., the Downtown Development Authorities statute, and other applicable law; and

WHEREAS, by Ordinance No. 15-20, the City Council amended Ordinance No. 07-15 to redescribe the Authority's plan of development area so as to include certain additional property; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 56-07, the City Council made certain findings and approved the Imagine Downtown Final Plan of Development for Colorado Springs dated February 2, 2007 as the plan of development and describing the plan of development area for the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Experience Downtown Plan of Development, Volume 1 as attached, (the "Experience Downtown Plan") is intended to update the Imagine Downtown Final Plan of Development for Colorado Springs and constitutes a plan of development as defined in C.R.S. §31-25-802 (6.6) and sets forth the boundaries of the plan of development; and

WHEREAS, the boundaries of the Experience Downtown Plan is intended to hereafter constitute the "plan of development area" as defined in C.R.S. § 31-25-802 (6.8); and

WHEREAS, School District 11 has been permitted to participate in an advisory capacity with respect to inclusion in the Experience Downtown Plan as provided for in C.R.S. § 31-25-807 (3)(d); and

WHEREAS, the Authority's Board has considered and approved by resolution the Experience Downtown Plan and recommended approval by the City's Downtown Review Board, City Planning Commission and the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City's Downtown Review Board and City Planning Commission have considered and recommended approval of the Experience Downtown Plan with minor technical and typographical corrections; and

WHEREAS, following duly given public notice, the City Council held a public hearing on November 8, 2016 at which the City Council considered all written comments that were received by the City Council and all persons present were afforded the opportunity to be heard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS:

Section 1. The above recitals are incorporated by reference in this resolution and such recitals constitute findings by the City Council in support of the following resolving sections.

Section 2. The City Council finds and determines that there is a need to take corrective measures in order to halt or prevent deterioration of property values or structures within the boundaries of the Experience Downtown Plan, to halt or prevent the growth of blighted areas therein, and further finds that the Experience Downtown Plan, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein, will afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs and plans of the City of Colorado Springs as a whole, for development or redevelopment of the plan of development area as described in the Experience Downtown Plan by the Authority and private enterprise.

Section 3. The City Council finds and determines that the Experience Downtown Plan shall be used as a basis for development of public facilities and other improvements to public or private property of all kinds, including removal, site preparation, renovation, repair, remodeling, construction or other changes in existing buildings that may be necessary or appropriate to the execution of such plan which, in the opinion of the City Council, will aid and improve the downtown development area as described in the Experience Downtown Plan. The Experience Downtown Plan as the plan of development will promote the economic growth and implement such physical changes as may be appropriate within the plan of development area.

Section 4. The City Council finds and determines that the tax increment provisions set forth in the Imagine Downtown Final Plan of Development for Colorado Springs and the Experience Downtown Plan, including the continuation of the thirty (30) year period for tax increment financing as approved in the Imagine Downtown Final Plan of Development for Colorado Springs through Resolution No. 56-07, are adequate and necessary to provide tax increment financing and to implement the Experience Downtown Plan.

Section 5. The City Council finds and determines that the boundaries of the plan of development and plan of development area are those boundaries described in Chapter 3 of Volume 1 of the Experience Downtown Plan.

Section 6. The City Council hereby, except as otherwise set forth in this Resolution, replaces the Imagine Downtown Final Plan of Development for Colorado Springs dated February 2, 2007 with the Experience Downtown Plan.

Section 7. The City Council finds and determines that the Experience Downtown Plan for the City of Colorado Springs as presented to City Council on November 8, 2016 has been duly reviewed and considered by City Council, is hereby adopted by the City Council and incorporated in this resolution by reference as if fully set forth herein.

Section 8. The City Council authorizes development projects within the boundaries of and consistent with the Experience Downtown Plan.

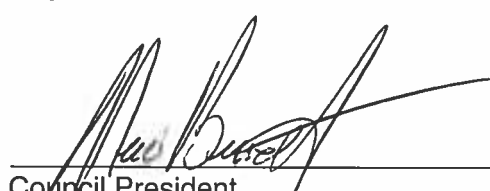
Section 9. The City of Colorado Springs and the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority are authorized to take any and all actions pursuant to the Downtown Development statute, Part 8 of Article 25 of Title 31 C.R.S, and other applicable law to carry out the Experience Downtown Plan.

Dated at Colorado Springs, Colorado this 8th day of November, 2016.

ATTEST:


Sarah B. Johnson, City Clerk





Council President