ESTES PARK, COLORADO
DOWNTOWN PLAN

JANUARY 23, 2018

A VISION FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Town of Estes Park

Randy Hunt, Director of Community Development
Audem Gonzales, Planner II/Project Manager
Tina Kurtz, Environmental Planner/Planner III
and Floodplain Administrator
Greg Muhonen, Director of Public Works

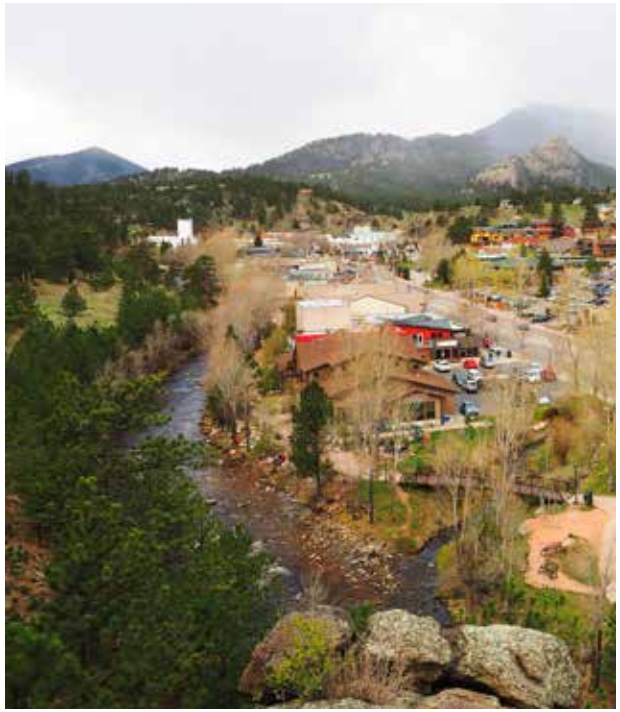
Consultant Team

Noré Winter, Winter & Company
Brad Johnson, Winter & Company
Nicholas DiFrank, Winter & Company
Steve Lane, BAS1S Architecture
Vanessa Solesbee, Kimley-Horn
Brian Valentine, Kimley-Horn
Laurie Marin, Kimley-Horn
Jamie Licko, Centro
Bruce Race, RACESTUDIO
Jim Leggitt, studioINSITE

Downtown Plan Steering Committee (DPSC)

Kimberly Campbell
Tom Dority
Sue Doylen
Ann Finley
Ginny McFarland
Holly Moore
Greg Rosner
Cydney Springer
Ron Wilcocks
Faith Zimmerman

INTRODUCTION 1



Estes Park: A place like no other! It stands in a stunning location, with spectacular views, rushing rivers and a lively Downtown. Community members are energetic, care about the Town's future and seek to assure a high quality of life for residents, workers and visitors. Downtown is also challenged. Its rivers are outstanding assets, but present serious flood risks. Rising visitor populations from regional locations and from afar help drive Downtown's economy, but also result in impacts that require management and mitigation. Improving circulation and access, accommodating more housing, and building a more resilient community are everyday discussion topics for residents.

This Plan addresses Downtown's challenges and opportunities, and sets a vision for a more resilient future that benefits the community at large. The Town has experienced shocks, including natural disasters, economic instability and swings in visitor populations. In each case, it has proven its ability to rebound. This Plan recommends actions that will minimize future shocks and support a more stable economy. The Plan sets forth several proposals for improving resilience. Some focus on broadening Downtown's economic base and strengthening its social and cultural networks. Others seek to minimize flood risks. While the Plan focuses on Downtown, it benefits the entire community by establishing a solid vision and framework for the future of the Town's economic and cultural heart.

Background

In 2015, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs awarded a planning grant from the State Energy and Mineral Impact Fund to prepare a Downtown Plan. The Downtown Plan process was intended to result in documentation of a community-driven vision for Downtown over the next 20 years. The Estes Park Downtown Plan guides future Downtown development and infrastructure investments. The planning process was undertaken over the course of 2017 and 2018, and explored a range of Downtown topics with the community, including the character of development, multi-modal circulation, flood mitigation, parking strategies and more.

Regional Setting

The Town of Estes Park is located in the southwest corner of Larimer County, just east of Rocky Mountain National Park and 30 miles west of Loveland. State Highways 34 and 36 connect Estes Park to the Front Range. Highway 7 provides a southern connection to Boulder County. The Fall River converges with the Big Thompson River in Estes Park before flowing east to Loveland and beyond. Figure 1.1 shows Estes Park within its regional context.

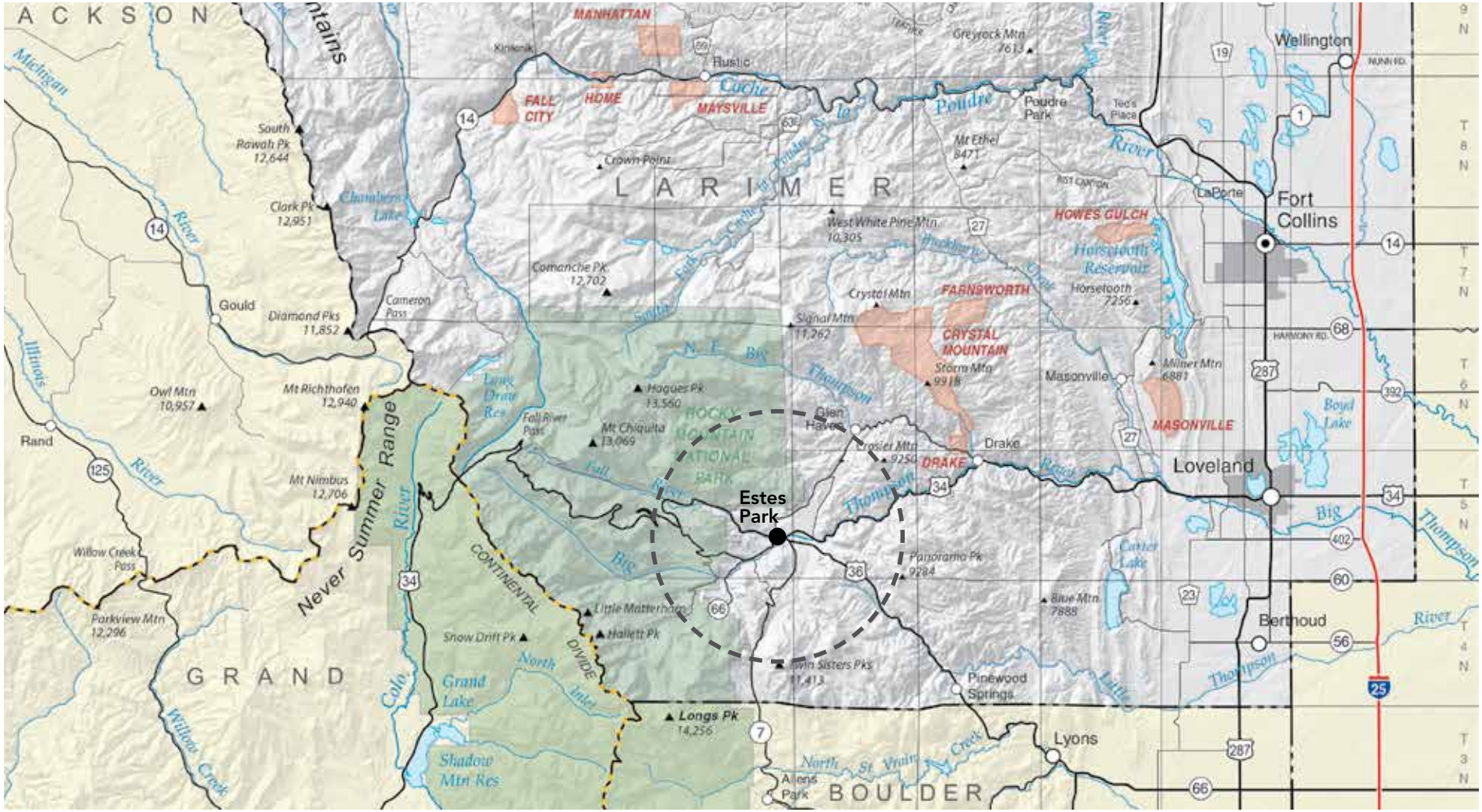


Figure 1.1-Estes Park Regional Map

Local Setting

The Plan Area is located in the north-central portion of the Town, just west of Lake Estes. Figure 1.2 shows the Plan Area within the local context.

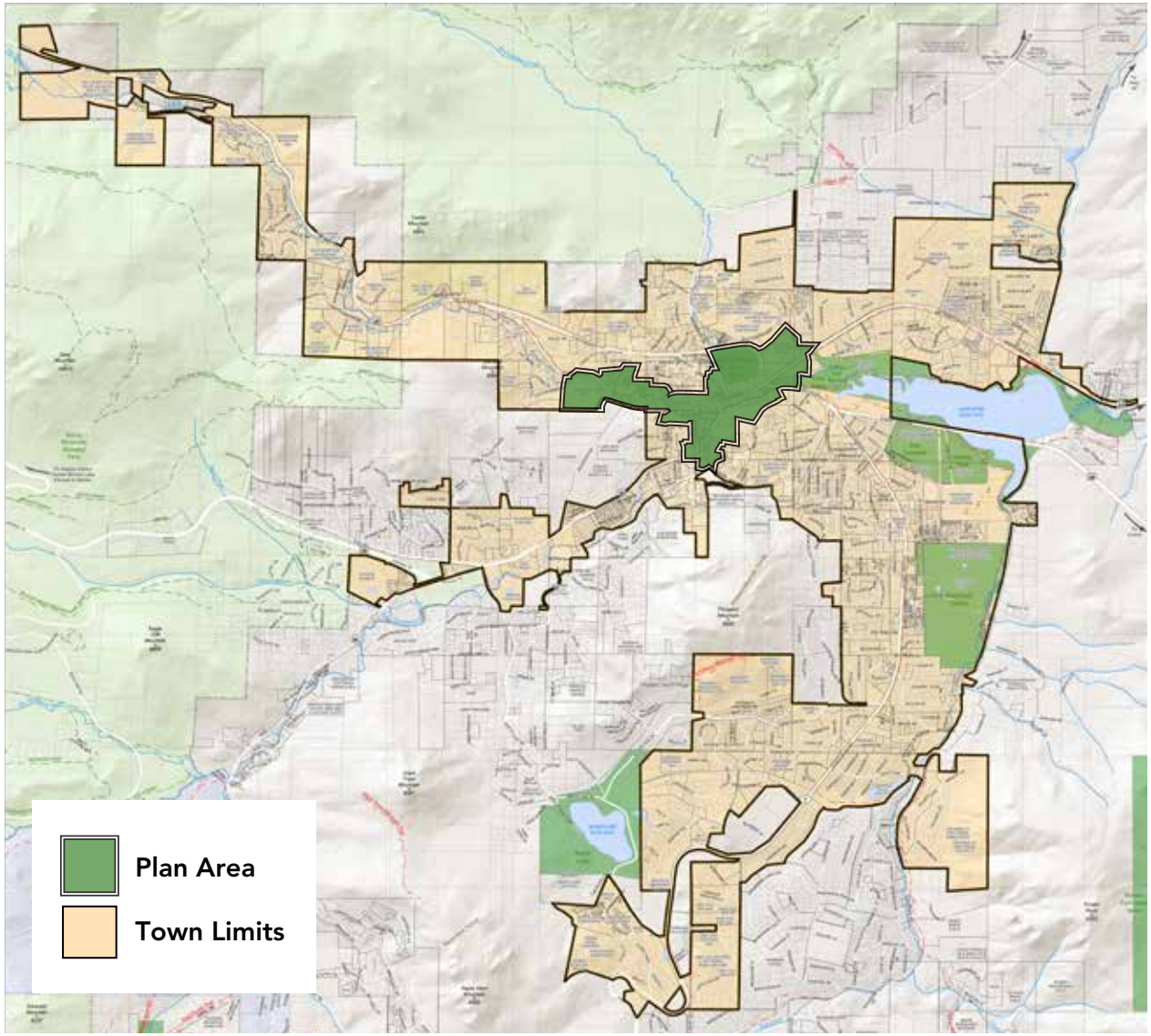


Figure 1.2-Local Context

Plan Area

The Plan Area generally includes properties fronting Elkhorn Avenue, Big Thompson Avenue, Cleave Street and Moraine Avenue. The Plan Area is shown on Figure 1.3.

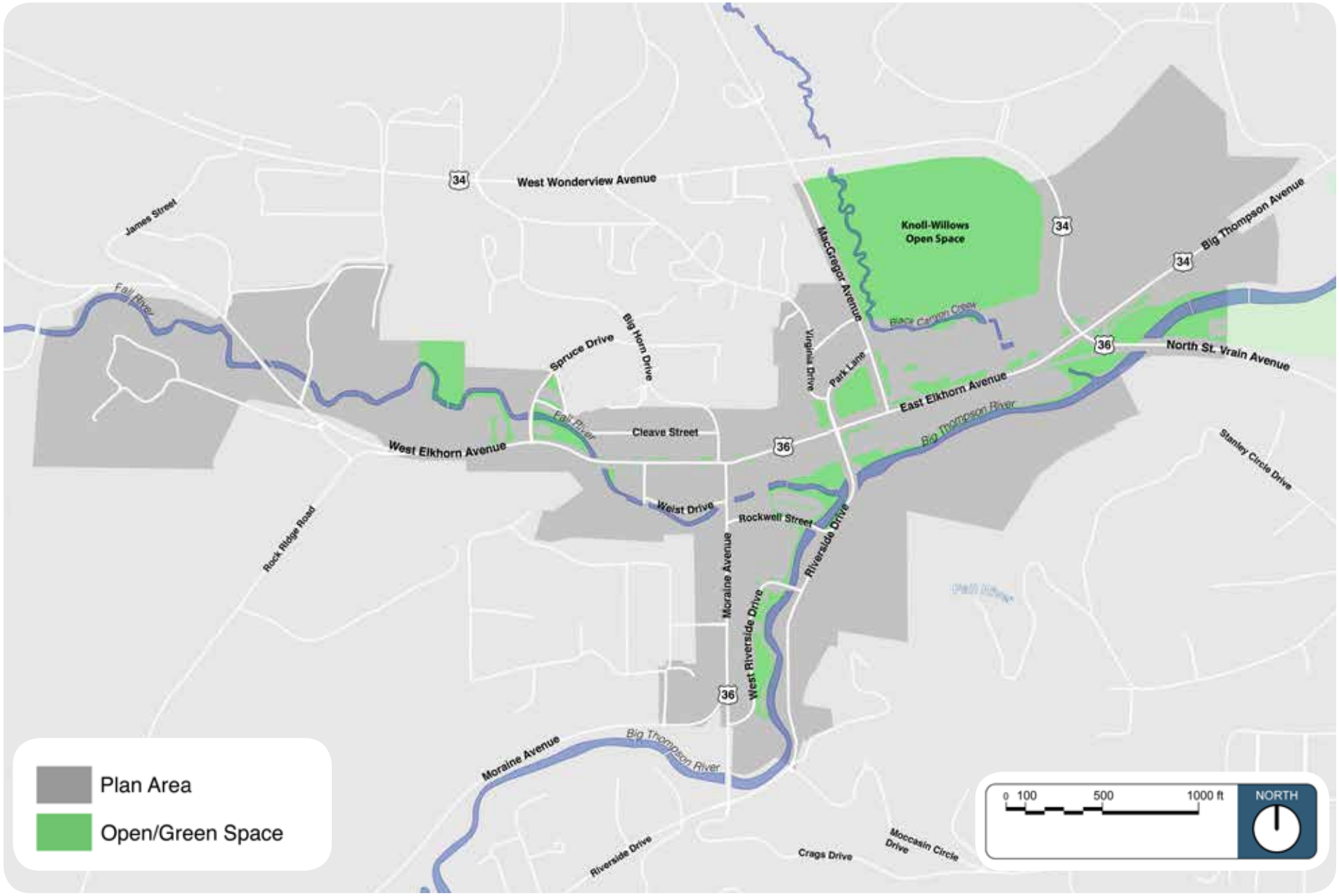
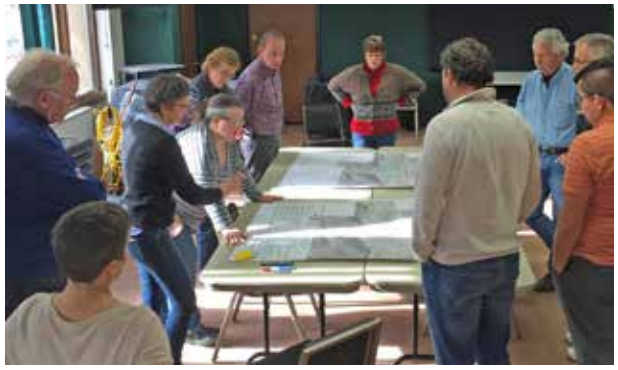


Figure 1.3-Downtown Plan Boundary



Plan Purpose

This Plan's purpose is to document a community vision for the future of the Plan Area over the next 20 years and beyond. It illustrates a vision, provides specific recommendations and alternative solutions for achieving that vision, and identifies an action-oriented implementation strategy to realize it. The Plan provides guidance for several topics, including land uses, the built environment, transportation and infrastructure. All recommendations are intended to meet an overarching vision for a resilient Downtown Estes Park that can respond, recover and adapt to slow and sudden shocks to its environment, economy and social fabric. The Downtown Plan serves as a framework and guide for future decision-making related to private development and public improvements. It should be used by community members, Town staff, potential investors and decision makers. All future public and private investments in Downtown should be reviewed for consistency with this Plan.

Plan Administration

This Plan was formally adopted as a Town of Estes Park plan on January 23, 2018. It will be administered by Town staff as proposed development projects are reviewed. It will also be used by committees, Town Board members, Planning Commissioners, community members and others in considering Downtown investments. Over time, the Plan may require periodic updates or amendments based on new information, a changing economy or other factors. All amendments to the document must be formally adopted by the Town Board.

Implementation Considerations

This Plan's vision will be achieved over the next 20 years through public investments by the Town and other agencies, private investments by landowners and local organizations and, in some cases, joint ventures between these entities. The design concepts included in this Plan demonstrate potential infrastructure projects and redevelopment opportunities. Concepts typically show a preliminary idea or a series of design alternatives, all of which meet the overall objectives of this Plan. Implementation of each concept will require further design study, coordination with property owners and analysis of potential impacts. The specific recommendations presented in this Plan are intended to serve as a framework for future planning. Concepts are not definite and will likely vary depending on landowner choices, availability of public funding and future market conditions. The Plan's recommendations should be interpreted with the following implementation considerations in mind:

Balance Vision with Practicality

The Plan includes a strong vision for action, but it is practical in how implementation is conceived. Plan implementation will take time and the Town will need to marshal economic and human resources, including grants and creative partnerships to achieve the vision. The Town should continually seek to build capacity to realize and manage improvements.

Plan for Changing Conditions

While the Plan sets forth a strong framework with many specific ideas, it should be implemented flexibly to respond to new information that may affect development opportunities and infrastructure projects. Alternative solutions to specific recommendations are possible and as more detailed planning occurs during implementation stages, adjustments can occur while remaining true to the Plan's vision.

Pursue Partnerships

The Plan creates opportunity for private property owners to invest in Downtown, through expanding businesses, improving properties or creating amenities. It also sets a framework for private groups and public agencies to partner in projects that meet the Plan's vision for flood mitigation, circulation and access, parks and recreation, and create economic opportunities for landowners. The Plan should be implemented to leverage funding and gain double or even triple benefits from each dollar invested.

Planning Assumptions and Regional Trends

This Plan is based on the following key assumptions and trends:

Regional Growth

The population along the Front Range is projected to grow substantially in the next 20 years, and a substantial proportion will be in the northern part, including Larimer County. New residents will follow jobs along the Interstate 25 corridor and will seek recreation, dining and shopping opportunities that capture the Rocky Mountain experience. Estes Park is well positioned to capitalize on this.

Increased Housing Demand

Downtown and many of its adjacent neighborhoods will accommodate additional housing in the next two decades and at increasing densities. This will provide market support for Downtown businesses and services.

National Park Visitor Patterns

Rocky Mountain National Park's high visitation numbers will continue over the next two decades, providing a substantial market for Downtown. This includes those who stop in Town on their way to and from the Park and those who stay longer to take part in the Estes Park experience.

Flood Impacts

Flood risks will continue to be a concern over the next 20 years. Flood events will hold the potential to significantly impact the community including its natural environment, built environment and economic system.

Resilience and the Downtown Plan

According to 100 Resilient Cities (100resilientcities.com), urban resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a town to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. In the context of the Downtown Plan, resilience is addressed by promoting policies that facilitate the community's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from short- and long-term shocks. Every policy, concept and recommendation in this Plan is intended to contribute to Downtown resilience.

Environment

The Rockies' forests and rivers naturally recover when they experience drastic changes because they have evolved to withstand external shocks. They are resilient. Even so, Estes Park faces both potential slow moving and fast moving disasters. Slowly-occurring disasters, such as drought, climate change, and invasive beetles, create the conditions for fast-moving catastrophic events such as forest fires and flooding.

Economy and Fiscal Health

The local economy is expected to benefit from an expanding visitor season, an increase in year-round residents, and an expanding population and economic growth. However, floods and national crises can still shock Estes Park's economy. A resilient economy is able to withstand this.

Social Networks

Creating a resilient Downtown requires maintaining and growing social and business networks that are redundant, meaning duplicate systems are in place in case of failure. These networks must also be adaptive to changing conditions and circumstances. Social networking and support for fellow community members makes Downtown more resilient. During disruptions, supportive relationships can help Downtown survive and recover more quickly.

Organization of the Downtown Plan

This Downtown Plan contains the following chapters following this Introduction:

- **Chapter 2, Community Process** summarizes the public engagement process that led to this Plan.
- **Chapter 3, Plan Vision** describes the vision for Downtown, including broad goals, objectives and principles.
- **Chapter 4, Concept & Framework** describes the fundamental urban design concepts for Downtown, focusing on broader framework elements that apply across the Plan Area.
- **Chapter 5. Character Areas** builds on Chapter 4 by providing more specific recommendations for land use a,d physical design improvements for smaller areas within Downtown.
- **Chapter 6, Circulation** identifies recommendations for bicycles, pedestrians, transit and private automobiles.
- **Chapter 7, Parking** identifies high-level parking strategies and objectives.
- **Chapter 8, Flood Mitigation** identifies flood mitigation objectives and strategies.
- **Chapter 9, Utility Infrastructure** identifies infrastructure upgrades that will be required to serve anticipated Downtown development, including for wastewater, stormwater and potable water.
- **Chapter 10, Implementation** provides an action-oriented strategy for implementing the Downtown Plan.
- **Appendices** provide additional guidance and background information relevant to the Plan, including Downtown Design Guidelines.

COMMUNITY PROCESS

2

2 COMMUNITY PROCESS

This chapter describes the public process for the Downtown Plan. A range of community representatives participated, including local residents, town organizations, property owners, business owners, Town staff and other stakeholders. Board members and Commissioners also joined in public workshops, meetings and events. This chapter summarizes the community process including Downtown Plan committees, outreach events and the adoption process. Figure 2.1 shows the Downtown Plan process in graphic format.

DPSC visioning session

Downtown Plan Outreach

This section describes formal committees that were engaged for the Downtown Plan process and outreach methods.

Downtown Plan Steering Committee (DPSC)

The Downtown Plan Steering Committee (DPSC) was established by the Board of Trustees on October 13, 2015 to help guide the Downtown Plan process. It consisted of ten volunteer members appointed by the Town Board. The DPSC's primary roles were as follows:

1. Provide guidance to the process and ensure ample public participation.
2. Review and provide feedback on process, content and Plan.
3. Serve as a link to the community by spreading news about the project.
4. Provide a venue for public input at their meetings.

DPSC met monthly to review and discuss Plan and process-related topics. All DPSC meetings were noticed and open to the public.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

A Technical Advisory Committee composed of Town staff and outside agencies provided technical assistance during the Downtown Plan process. The Town Departments joined representatives from outside agencies, such as Estes Valley Fire Protection. TAC meetings were open to Downtown Plan Steering Committee (DPSC) members.

Outreach Methods

An array of outreach methods were utilized to raise community awareness of the project and encourage participation, including:

- Mailings
- Press releases
- Flyers
- Property notifications
- Project website staff promotion/interactions
- Surveys

Key Events and Activities

This section describes the public events held during the planning process.

Community Workshop #1

In late February 2017, the Town held an initial community workshop at the Estes Park Event Center. Over 45 community members attended. A project overview was provided, followed by a short question and answer period. Next, participants engaged in a series of group exercises to identify key assets and critical issues in the Downtown. They then generated ideas for the future of Downtown. At the end, each group shared the highlights of their work.

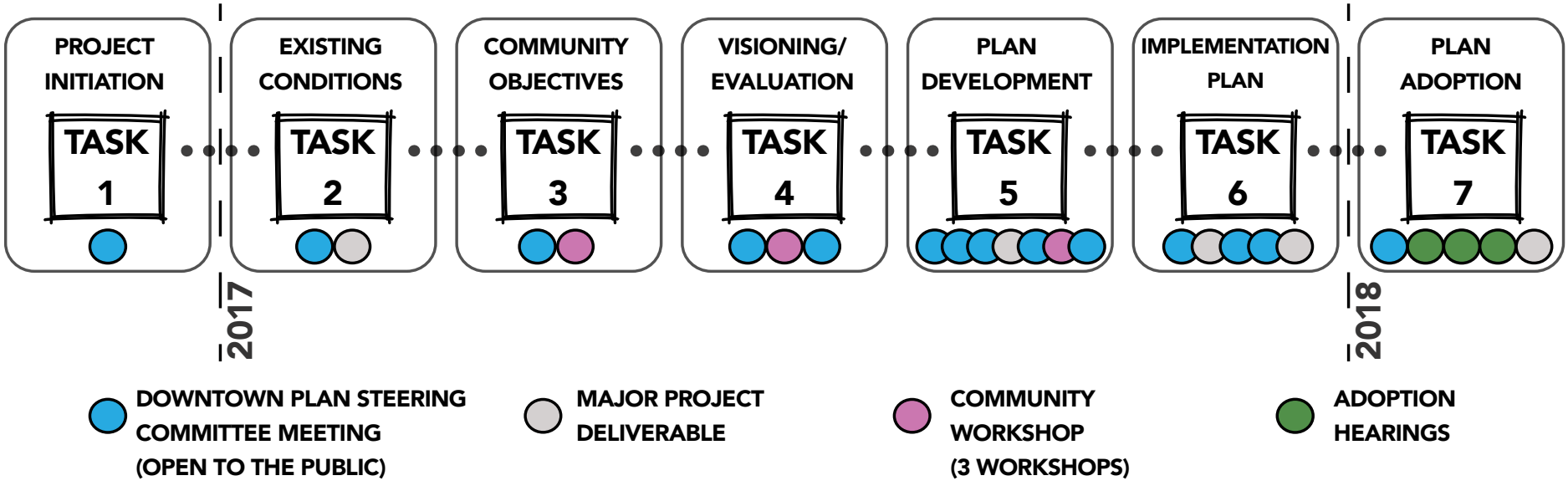


Figure 2.1-Project Schedule

Community Workshop #2

In late April 2017, the Town held a multi-day Community Workshop to review preliminary Downtown policies and concepts generated by Town Staff and the consultant team.

Public Open House - The full-day Open House provided an overview of the project and offered community members an opportunity to review and comment on initial plan concepts. Material was displayed on large-format boards so community members could engage at their desired pace.

Learn & Share Sessions - Learn & Share Sessions included expert presentations and community discussion about architectural design, parking, urban design and implementation/financing.

Stakeholder Interviews - Consultant team members facilitated a series of Focus Group meetings with key stakeholders, including property owners, Downtown business owners and others.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings - TAC members worked with the consultant team on special assignments throughout the event, including:

- Site planning concepts
- Streetscape design concepts
- Bicycle and pedestrian circulation network design
- Flood mitigation alternatives

Community Workshop #3

On September 28, 2017 the Town held an Open House to present the Draft Downtown Plan. About 70 people attended. The workshop began with a brief presentation of the Downtown Plan and then participants reviewed summary posters and shared their feedback with Town Staff and consultant team.

Adoption Process

This Plan was officially adopted by the Town Board on January 23, 2018. This section outlines the process.

Town Board Study Session - The Plan was presented to the Town Board in a study session on December 12, 2017. Town staff and the consultant answered questions and received feedback from Board members. The meeting also included a public comment period.

Town Board Adoption Hearing - The Downtown Plan was adopted by the Town Board on January 23, 2018. Town staff summarized final changes that were to be integrated into the Final Plan. The Town Board adopted the Plan on condition that the identified changes would be made.

PLAN VISION 3

Vision Statement and additional concepts described in this chapter provide the community of Estes Park with an overall vision for the future of Downtown Estes Park. This overall vision informs the recommendations and requirements in the chapters that follow.

A Vision for Estes Park

Envision Downtown as a place with a sustainable economy that is resilient and nimble enough to meet future challenges and capture new opportunities. Downtown Estes Park will be the heart of the community and it will serve residents, visitors and workers with a healthy mix of businesses, civic and cultural facilities. It will be recognized regionally as a desirable place to live and work, and to enjoy the Rocky Mountain lifestyle. It will retain its small-town character while accommodating moderate, compatible growth. Downtown Estes Park will be appreciated internationally for its creativity, energy and resilience. The Downtown Plan lays the groundwork for public and private investments to enhance existing resources and create new places. These investments will make Downtown a destination to be rediscovered each time one visits, a place that is attractive to residents, and an economic engine for the community. Downtown Estes Park will be known as:

A Place Like No Other

Downtown will be valued as a place that is distinct in the design and integration of its built environment within its unique natural, mountain setting.

A Complete Community

Downtown will house a healthy mix of businesses that serve locals and visitors. This will include professionals from the Front Range seeking a mountain lifestyle. Residences in the Downtown and in nearby neighborhoods will offer a range of housing choices and broaden the customer base that will help stabilize economic cycles for local businesses. Existing and new businesses will thrive in this environment.

Where Water is an Asset

Downtown will be known as the best place to experience Rocky Mountain rivers. A wide range of in-stream improvements will reduce flood impacts and establish new opportunities for safely engaging with water in an urban mountain setting.

A Place With its Own Story

The history of the community as the first gateway community to the Rockies will be well-known and its more recent history of resilience will be studied by many towns around the world.

Easy to Access

Downtown will be easily accessible, with a variety of transportation modes. Circulation into and around Downtown will be easy with a network of alternative routes.

One Place with Many Parts

While Downtown is perceived as a cohesive place, it is also recognized as having distinct districts that feature different uses, themes and unique integration with natural resources.

Conceptual rendering of redeveloped Town Hall site

Conceptual rendering of activated Cleave Street

Conceptual rendering of activated Elkhorn Avenue

Overarching Principles

This section provides broad principles for future public and private investments in Downtown.

Economic Vitality

These principles focus on the economic well-being of Downtown and the Town as a whole.

Create a strong and diverse year-round economy.
A mix of businesses should serve local residents and workers as well as visitors. The economy should extend beyond tourism, with a strong segment of region-serving businesses and professionals who work nationally and live in Estes Park. Promote a diverse economy that provides a stable source of jobs and benefits the community as a whole and supports existing and new businesses. Pursue improvements in data coverage, transaction efficiency and telecommunications to strengthen the local economy.

Leverage the strong growth along the Front Range.
The region's growing population will result in more people visiting Estes Park for dining, entertainment and mountain excursions. Take advantage of a growing economy along the Front Range to create opportunities for Downtown.

Strategically invest in infrastructure to incentivize private investment.
Make public investments in infrastructure to attract and leverage private investment. The Town and private development must contribute to improve Downtown.

Create a coordinated management program.
Examine the current organizational structures in place to identify opportunities for collaboration and expansion of services. Partnerships should be coordinated between the Town, County and other existing organizations.

Community Character

These principles focus on establishing a physical character and cultural experience that improves quality of life, makes Downtown unique and keeps visitors coming back.

Celebrate Downtown as the civic center of the community.
Maintain key governmental institutions in Downtown and promote additional ones.

Keep Downtown's character "distinctly Estes Park."
The eclectic nature of buildings, open spaces, goods and activities should be celebrated and continued. The sense of discovery that comes from walking Downtown should remain exciting and interesting. Creative architecture should reinforce the quaint mountain town heritage of Estes Park. The heritage of Estes Park as an early gateway to the Rockies should be celebrated through active cultural programs, interpretive exhibits and historic buildings.

Use land efficiently.
Promote a moderate increase in density and intensity of development to make best use of available land.

Prioritize placemaking.
Encourage a mix of uses that activates pedestrian-oriented streets to create a vibrant Downtown. Great public spaces, parks and plazas complement streets and waterways. Public spaces should be animated with uses and elements that generate activity.

Maintain nature as fundamental to the Downtown experience.
Maintain a sense of connection to the outdoors. Views to rivers, the mountains and other natural attractions should be key features. Residents and visitors should enjoy rivers, trails and overlooks. Everyday encounters with animals, wildflowers and other regional flora and fauna should remain distinctive experiences Downtown. Protect natural wildlife movement patterns and sensitive areas, including through public education and awareness.

Support the arts.
Integrate art throughout Downtown as a part of the quality of life and as an economic development strategy. Use indoor and outdoor places for presentation of art, theater, music, written and visual arts throughout the year. This includes public and private arts facilities. In addition to the more formal arts scene, maintain Downtown as a place for people to meet and engage in conversations that enhance the cultural experience.

Promote mixed use development that is compatible with Downtown.

View arts and culture as an inclusive and diversifying feature in a strong and enduring Downtown economy.

Reinforce major corridors by locating key civic uses, plazas, public art and wayfinding along major streets and pathways.

Circulation and Access

These principles focus on how people move through Downtown, for all modes of travel.

Expand Downtown connectivity and links to abutting neighborhoods.
A network of streets, walkways and trails should provide access within Downtown and to and from nearby neighborhoods. Create convenient access across Downtown, from Elkhorn Lodge in the West to the Visitor Center at the East to Piccadilly Square to the South.

Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian circulation.
Excellent and interconnected pedestrian facilities should connect Downtown destinations, transit facilities and other important features.

Make parking and transit facilities easily accessible.
Residents and visitors should be educated about all options so they can make the right parking choice for their trip. Parking facilities should support access to transit, pedestrian walkways, bike routes and key Downtown destinations. Existing on- and off-street parking assets should be actively managed to maximize efficiency. Shuttle service should be expanded to more effectively serve Downtown.

Create convenient access in Downtown to regional trails.

Emphasize mix-mode access to and through Downtown.

Manage Rocky Mountain National Park visitor traffic.
Public transit, trail access and parking facilities should be designed to accommodate seasonal (and even daily) changes in visitor volumes to the park. Downtown should continue to offer opportunities for those who visit the Park briefly or are unable to enter and must wait.

Create effective wayfinding systems.
Improve wayfinding systems to benefits all modes of circulation. Visitors should be able to quickly and easily navigate Downtown.

Reduce congestion to enhance the user experience.
State-of-the-art telecommunications systems should be developed. Provide improved directions for driving and parking. The street grid should be expanded where possible to provide alternative access routes.

Conceptual rendering of pedestrian and bike connections along Fall River at Moraine Avenue

West Elkhorn Avenue sidewalk expansion concept.

Use landscape and streetscape design to improve the capture and conveyance of storm flows.

Design open space, recreation and transportation infrastructure as an integrated part of the flood control system.

Resilience

These principles focus on Downtown resilience.

Make Downtown more resilient to flooding.
Design critical infrastructure and development to reduce flood risk. Roads, parks, buildings and other features should all further Downtown's ability to prevent, manage, respond to and recover from flood events. Develop flood alert systems using remote sensing and best practice technologies to help protect Downtown.

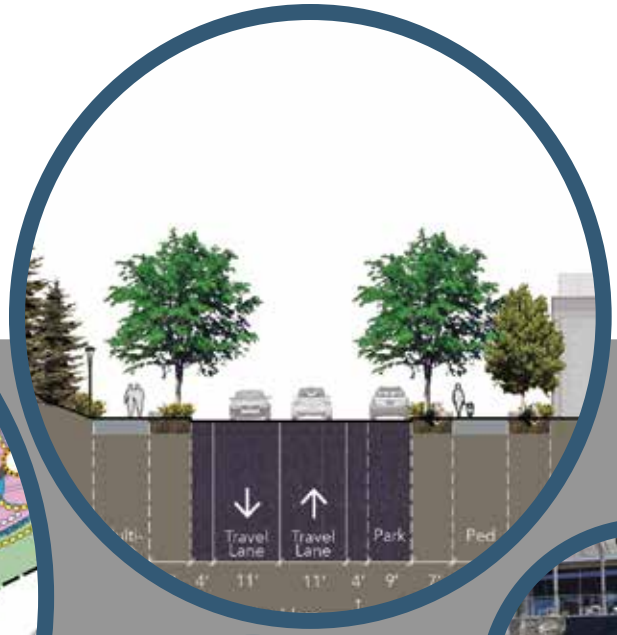
Address resilience in circulation.
Create a circulation system that can adapt to closures due to disasters or disruptions. Downtown's roadways should be viewed as primary links to other critical infrastructure (i.e., hospitals, schools, fire and police stations, commercial services and recreation). Roadway systems should be flexible, redundant and adaptable to closures, while emphasizing mix-mode access to and through Downtown.

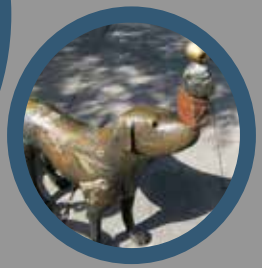
Address resilience in land use.
Promote land uses that make Downtown more resilient to economic shocks. Land use should be viewed as a vital component to placemaking where a mix of complementary uses is the objective.

Address resilience throughout culture and art
Arts and culture should be viewed as an inclusive and diversifying feature in a strong and enduring Downtown economy. Promote and fund business and property owner organizations to build stronger social cohesion among Downtown stakeholders. Artists should be engaged in Downtown resilience efforts.

CONCEPT & FRAMEWORK

4





This chapter sets out a framework for physical design and circulation in Downtown. Concepts and recommendations focus on how people will move around Downtown and the design elements that will define their experience. The ideas mapped and illustrated in this chapter may need to be adjusted somewhat during implementation in response to a variety of future unknown factors, but the overall objectives should be maintained.

Downtown Concept

The Downtown Concept, shown in Figure 4.1, illustrates and describes the primary organizing features for the Plan Area. The Plan should be considered as four subareas, as shown abstractly in grey bubbles on Figure 4.1. Fall River, Big Thompson River and Black Canyon Creek flow through the Plan Area and help define the Downtown experience. A network of roads, multi-use trails and pedestrian paths provide access throughout Downtown.

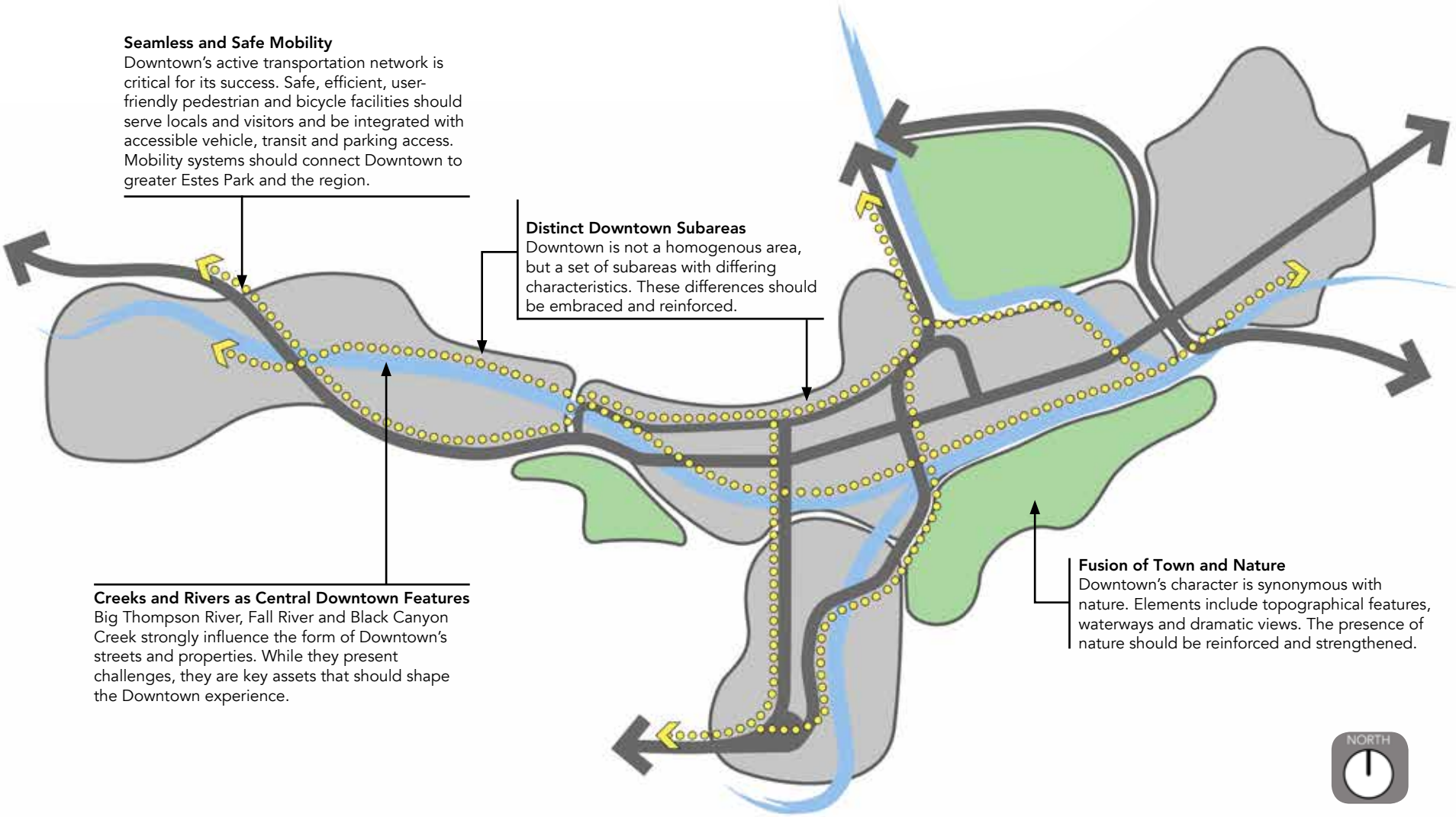


Figure 4.1-Downtown Concept Diagram

Downtown Framework

This section identifies key concepts for improving the built environment in Downtown. It addresses a series of topics, including public realm improvements, placemaking elements, multi-modal connectivity and development character. In addition to the Downtown Framework Map illustrated in Figure 4.2, components of the Downtown Framework are illustrated in Figures 4.3 through 4.7

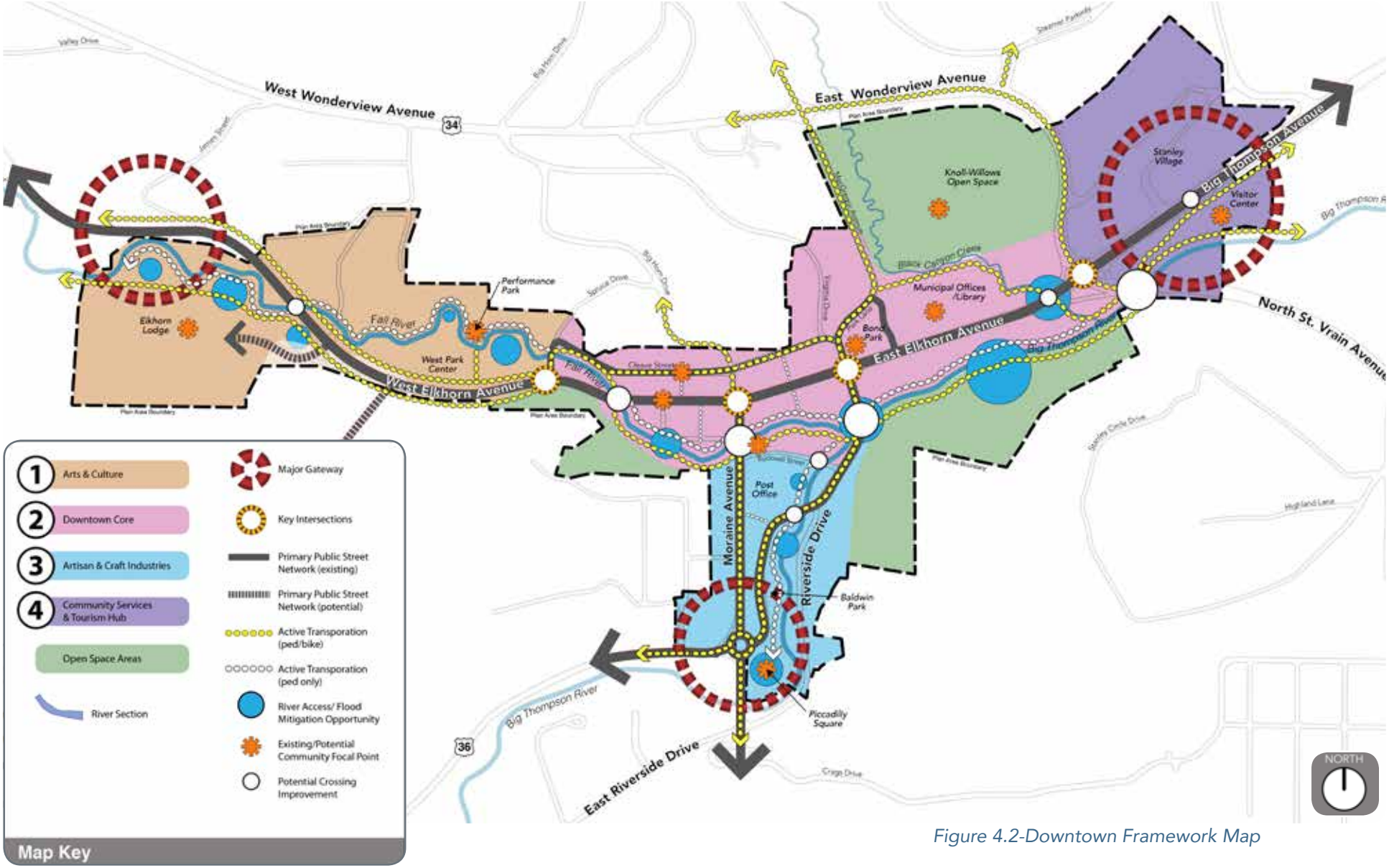


Figure 4.2-Downtown Framework Map

Downtown Character Areas

As discussed above, Downtown is not a homogenous district, but a series of unique subareas, or "Character Areas." As illustrated in Figure 4.2, Downtown should evolve as a series of distinct Character Areas. Each Character Area should have its own tailored vision, and development character, land uses and public infrastructure should reflect it. Design of building sites and the proposed intensity of development are key elements of development character. Character Areas are as follows:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Downtown Core
3. Artisan and Craft Industries
4. Community Services and Tourism Hub

The purpose of the Character Area system is to promote the development of distinctly different neighborhoods, in terms of uses and physical appearance. Please see Chapter 5 for specific recommendations by Character Area.

Streets as Public Space

Downtown streets should be designed to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles. They should provide space for social interaction, special events and, in some locations, a seamless extension of ground floor businesses. As shown in Figure 4.2, parts of West Elkhorn Avenue, Cleave Street and Weist Drive should be redesigned as integral components to complete an exceptional mountain town street grid. Streets like Elkhorn Avenue, Big Thompson Avenue, Moraine and Riverside Drive will continue as key components of Downtown street life.

River Access and Flood Mitigation

The Plan recommends improving waterways as signature public spaces that are also designed to reduce flood risks. Figure 4.2 identifies many locations to consider. Potential improvements for each location are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

In general floodway improvements, including expansion and enlargement of existing conveyance infrastructure should be designed to incorporate additional design elements that improve Downtown, such as:

- Multi-use trails
- Trail underpasses
- Terraces that overlook rivers
- Places to engage the water, including fishing and kayaking

Terraces can serve outdoor recreation during normal flows, but convey water during flood events.

Design a building to provide interest to those walking by and on adjacent sidewalks.

Multi-use trails can aid in flood conveyance.

Pedestrian circulation should be enhanced with crossing improvements. Curb extensions or 'bulb-outs' increase pedestrian visibility and decrease pedestrian crossing time. The 'bulb-out' pictured above also includes a curb-cut to collect water from storm flows and snow melt.

Coordinated Active Transportation

Figure 4.2 identifies a proposed active transportation network for Downtown that accommodates non-motorized circulation. Downtown should be designed to reduce dependence on auto travel by making walking and bicycling more appealing and accessible.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation system improvements should include:

- Expanding sidewalk widths
- Building new multi-use trails shared by pedestrians and bicyclists
- Filling public Riverwalk connectivity gaps throughout Downtown
- Installing on-street bicycle facilities

Crossing Improvements

Improving safety and connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Downtown requires enhanced crossings of roads and rivers. Figure 4.2 shows potential crossing enhancement locations. Options include:

- At-grade crossing improvements
  - » Improved crosswalks
  - » Pedestrian refuge islands
  - » Crossing technology improvements
  - » Bulbouts that shorten crossing distances
- Grade-separated crossings
  - » Underpasses
  - » Pedestrian/bicycle bridges

Gateways

Gateways are locations where physical design elements within the street and/or as part of private development establish a sense of visual entry to Downtown. Three are identified on Figure 4.2. Landscaping, public art, street design elements, wayfinding signage, building design or other elements should be used to establish a gateway.

Community Focal Points

Community Focal Points are nodes of activity within Downtown that contribute to the physical identity of a Character Area. Figure 4.2 shows both existing Focal Points that should be reinforced and enhanced and new Focal Points that should be integral Downtown landmarks and activity nodes. Additional Focal Points should be established at additional Downtown locations as opportunities arise. Future development should respond to and engage community anchors. These include:

- Park Theatre
- Town Hall area
- Elkhorn Lodge
- Bond Park
- Performance Park
- Knoll-Willows Open Space
- Visitor Center Area
- Riverwalk and Riverwalk Plaza

New community focal points identified on Figure 4.2 include:

- West Elkhorn Avenue
- Cleave Street

Landscaping, public art and wayfinding systems help announce arrival into Downtown.

The Park Theatre is a prominent community focal point.

Connectivity

An interconnected and integrated multi-modal circulation network should be established in Downtown as illustrated in Figure 4.3. Transit and vehicle facilities should be designed to complement active transportation facilities. More specifics for each mode are included in Chapter 6.

TRANSIT CIRCULATION

Shuttles should provide round trip access via a Downtown loop that travels through all four Character Areas. Transit service should be coordinated with public parking areas, Community Focal Points and other destinations.

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

This Plan assumes the Loop will be constructed as planned, but also proposes additional enhancements to the existing vehicular network. The vehicular network should maximize connectivity and create alternative options for getting around Downtown. Network expansion should support increased convenience for residents, but also provide alternative routes for use during special events or during emergencies where a route may be unavailable.

This image shows a street that supports a mix of primary circulation modes including bicycles, pedestrians, passenger vehicles and transit.

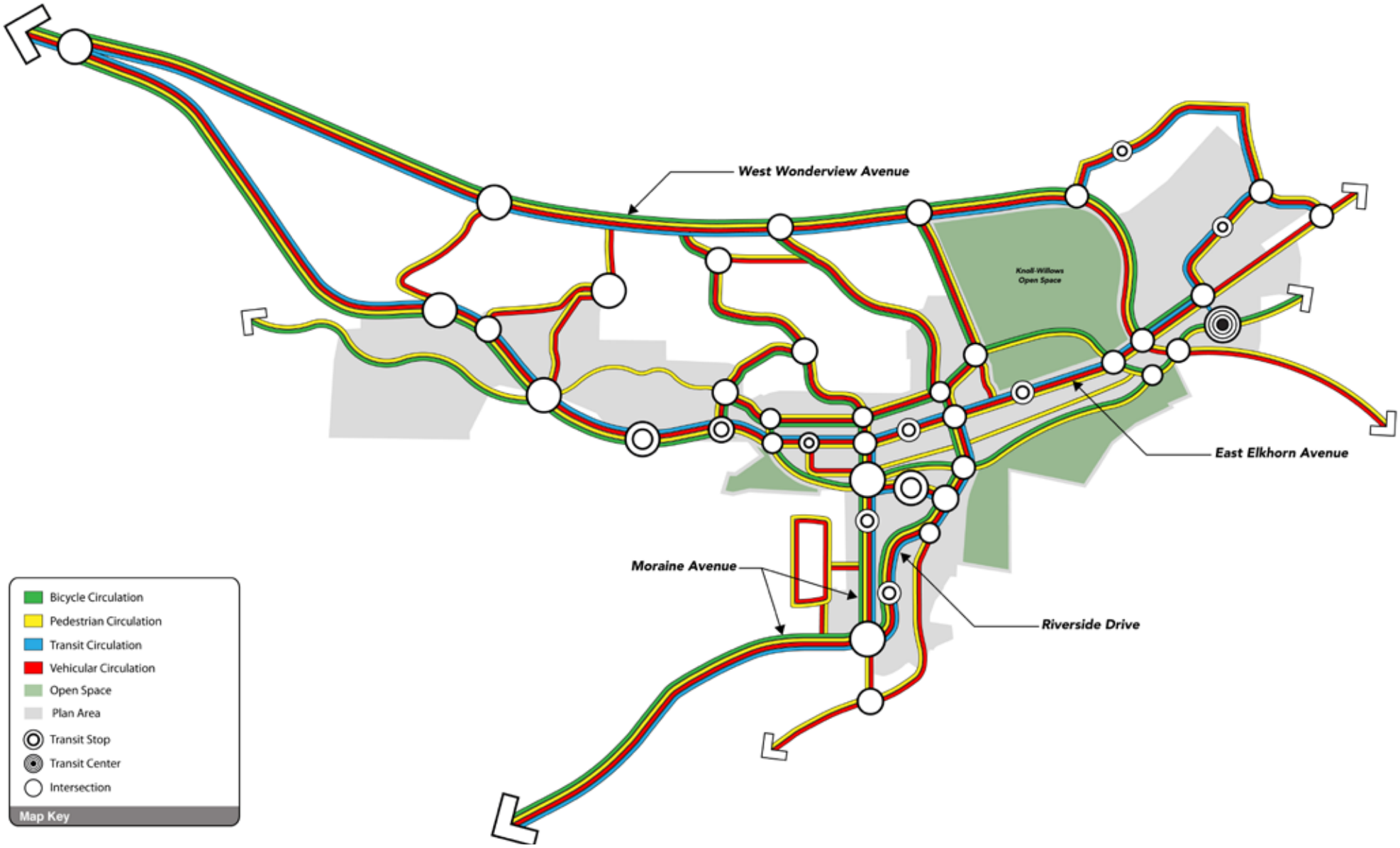


Figure 4.3-Proposed Downtown Connectivity Concept Diagram

On-street bicycle facilities include bike lanes and other facilities that are located within the street right-of-way.

BICYCLE CIRCULATION

Downtown should accommodate continuous and safe bike access for locals and visitors, and riders of different skill levels. As shown on Figure. 4.4, a variety of facilities should be utilized, including:

- **Off-street Facilities** - Multi-use paths or bikeways that are shared with pedestrians and physically separated from vehicular roadways.
- **On-Street Facilities** - Facilities located within the street right-of-way and adjacent to vehicular traffic.
  - » **Bike Lanes -** Bike lanes or other facilities that are located within the street right-of-way, but where striping or a physical separation creates an exclusive space for bikes separate from vehicles.
  - » **Shared Routes** - Streets that are officially designated as bicycle routes and are either signed or striped to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists. Bicycles and automobiles share the street space since no exclusive space or physical separation is provided for bikes. A sharrow is a shared cycle/vehicle lane with markings to warns motorists that this is an important cycle route.

Design circulation to promote walkability and bicycling, while still safely accommodating vehicle access.

Increase connectivity with bicycle facilities, enhanced sidewalks and other facilities.

Expand the existing transportation network to provide additional options for multi-modal circulation.

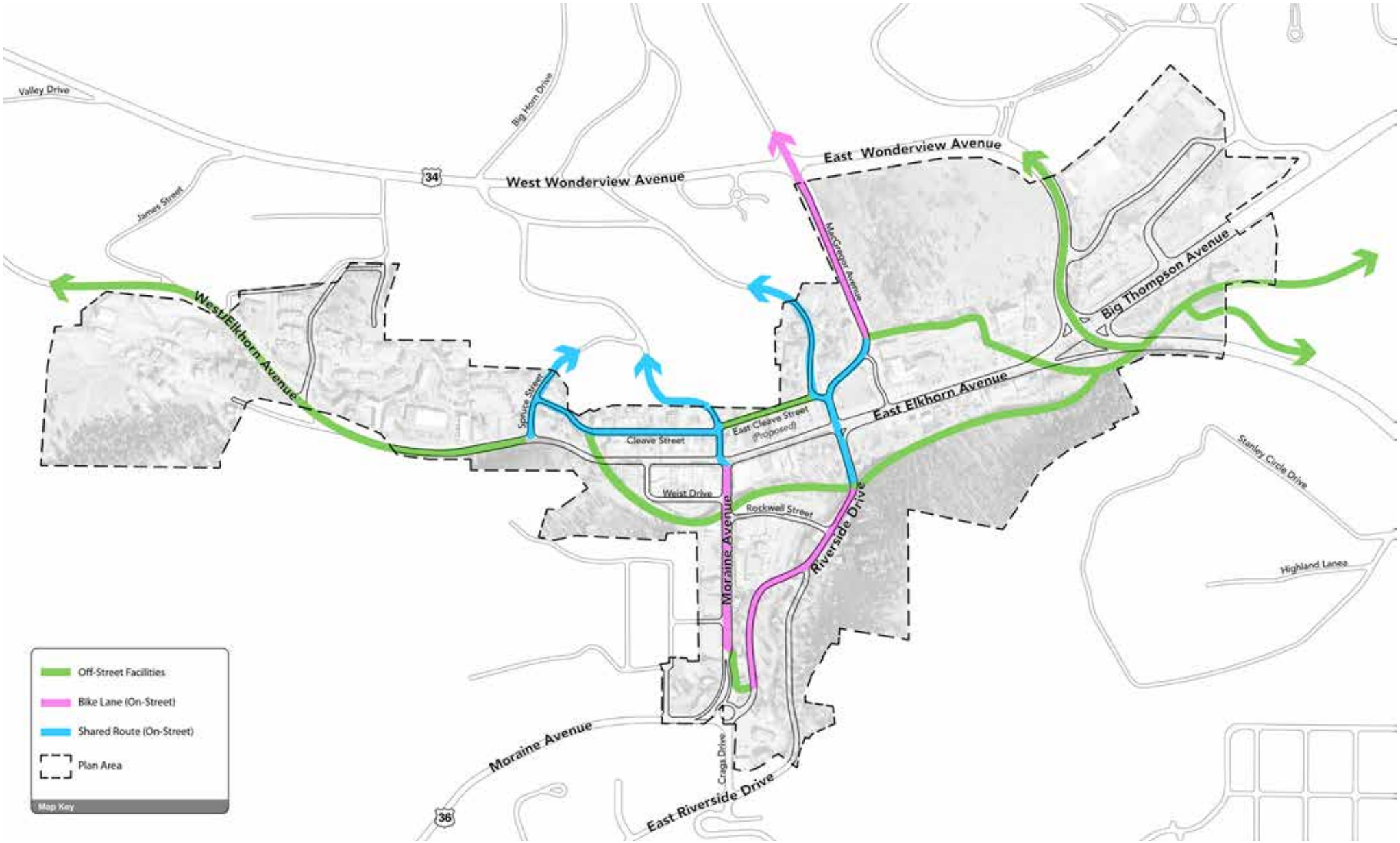


Figure 4.4-Downtown Bicycle Circulation Concept Diagram

Plazas should be incorporated into the Downtown open space system.

Orient outdoor public spaces toward natural amenities.

Open Space System

Downtown should feature a variety of open spaces to promote social gathering, special events and passive activities. Open space is used as a general term in this section to describe outdoor places, including green parkspace, recreational features, pedestrian-oriented streets and hardscaped plazas.

Figure 4.5 shows the proposed Downtown open space system. It includes existing facilities and new open spaces. It does not show smaller open spaces that could occur in a variety of locations throughout Downtown, such as parklets or pocket parks.

- **Plazas -** A confined, hard-surface public space used for passive public gathering and special events.
- **Parks -** A landscaped, soft-surface public open space designed for both active and/or passive recreation.
- **Pocket Parks -** Small public open spaces that are accessible to the general public and are frequently created on a single vacant building lot or small, irregular pieces of land. Pocket parks could include hard surface or soft-scape areas.
- **Linear Open Spaces -** Parkways, greenways or riverwalk segments that follow a linear feature.
- **Natural Open Spaces -** An area that retains and/or respects its natural composition of landform, plants and habitats, such as Knoll-Willows Open Space.
- **Streets as Open Space -** Street adjacent public space, such as enhanced sidewalk areas. Temporary street closures provide opportunities for street festivals, art fairs or farmers markets.
- **Temporary Open Spaces -** Pop-up public gathering spaces that are designed for a limited time and for a specific function, including parklets, which extend sidewalk areas into an on-street parking space.

ENHANCEMENTS TO EXISTING OPEN SPACES

The Downtown Plan recommends that all open spaces be continually evaluated to ensure that they are appropriately programmed for user needs, access is adequate, and lighting and other elements create a safe environment.

NEW OPEN SPACES

New open spaces should be established Downtown that create placemaking amenities and achieve resilience objectives. New open spaces should be safe, inviting and accessible to all.

Links between open space elements should be established or enhanced. Wayfinding improvements should highlight open spaces, such as Bond Park, the Riverwalk and others.

Figure 4.5-Open Space System

Public Art

Downtown's physical character should reinforce Estes Park as an arts center and destination. Public art is a major driver of Downtown's identity and should be integrated where opportunities emerge. Public improvements and private development projects should accommodate and showcase work by local, regional and national artists, when possible. Specific recommendations related to the arts are as follows:

REMOVE REGULATORY BARRIERS TO THE ARTS

Review current zoning and other regulatory requirements to determine if any barriers exist to the display of public art or the incorporation of art in private development. Remove barriers to encourage temporary and permanent display of public art.

ENGAGE LOCAL ARTISTS

Engage Estes Park's artist community in competitions, collaborative projects and the creation of art to be displayed publicly. This could be done in a variety of ways, including through local design competitions or sourcing for murals and temporary public art installations. Engage local artists in planning for Downtown events.

SUPPORT DOWNTOWN ARTS EVENTS

Public improvements, like streetscape designs or enhancements to public open spaces, should accommodate arts-related events, display space and performances.

SUPPORT TEMPORARY ARTS INSTALLATIONS

Encourage display of temporary art installations. This could include art prepared by community members or outside artists. Sculptures, murals or interactive art pieces, such as parklets, are all examples.

INCENTIVIZE THE ARTS

Provide incentives for inclusion of public art in private development projects. The Town's land use code permits public art to count towards a development's landscape requirements. This and other incentives for public art are encouraged.

ENCOURAGE USES AND BUILDING TYPES THAT SUPPORT THE ARTS COMMUNITY

The Town should accommodate and encourage building types and spaces that can house artists, such as commercial condos, live-work space and co-operative artists studio space. This may include allowing flexibility in development standards for arts-supportive projects. For example, "outside the box" building forms, such as those constructed with shipping containers, should be encouraged.

INFUSE ART INTO THE DOWNTOWN FABRIC

Infuse art into the Downtown experience. Public art can take a variety of forms and diversity should be encouraged. The photo matrix on the next page highlights some of the key public art opportunities.

Artwork integrated in infrastructure

Murals

Buildings as public art

Functional sculpture

Artwork integrated in infrastructure

Parklet design and installation

Sculpture

Expansion of performance space

Temporary pop-up installations

It is important that a design employs special features to help articulate the third floor of a building.

Some components of a building can be at a two-story scale with other components at a three-story scale.

Building Height and Scale

Buildings between a maximum of two and three stories are recommended for Downtown. However, upper stories, and in particular the third story of a building, should be modulated to minimize the solar impacts and perceived mass and scale of a building. Maximum heights of two stories are recommended adjacent to rivers, sensitive neighborhood edges and topographic/environmental features. Figure 4.6 shows recommended building heights for Downtown.

Buildings up to four stories may be considered on a case by case basis on sites where the additional height is determined to not significantly impact views, privacy or other factors. The Town should develop a specific list of criteria and guidelines for review of such projects.

UPPER STORY ARTICULATION

Third story articulation should be required for all Downtown projects. A combination of upper floor articulation techniques is appropriate, including:

- **Stepbacks -** The third floor of a building is set back further from the street or another edge than that of the first and second floor.
- **Height Variation -** Some components of a building are at a two story scale with other components at a three-story scale.
- **Strategic Location of Three Story Components** - Depending on the context, it may be possible to locate a third story at a location on the site such that it has no visible impact to the street or adjacent properties. This may include a component of a building at the rear of a site adjacent to a hillside and away from a street.

Upper story articulation is particularly important where there is a need to address:

- **Preserving a Viewshed** - Stepbacks of upper floors along a street or other public way may help to preserve mountain views.
- **Maintaining a Lower Scale along the Street** - Stepbacks and height variation on upper floors can help to preserve the perception of a two story scale at the street edge, which is generally consistent with current Downtown buildings.
- **Sensitive Transitions** -Third story articulation methods may be appropriate when trying to provide a sensitive transition in scale to a lower-scaled adjacent use.
- **Significant Topographic Change Between Properties** - Where topography creates a more intense grade change between two properties, articulation of upper stories may be necessary. This is particularly important when a new building is at a higher grade than its low scale residential neighbor. The juxtaposition of buildings in these two conditions creates a dramatic difference that should be designed sensitively.
- **Maximization of Solar Exposure** - To maximize solar exposure of key outdoor spaces or the sidewalk, height variation and upper floor stepbacks can help to ensure that sunlight shines through. This is particularly important in winter months.

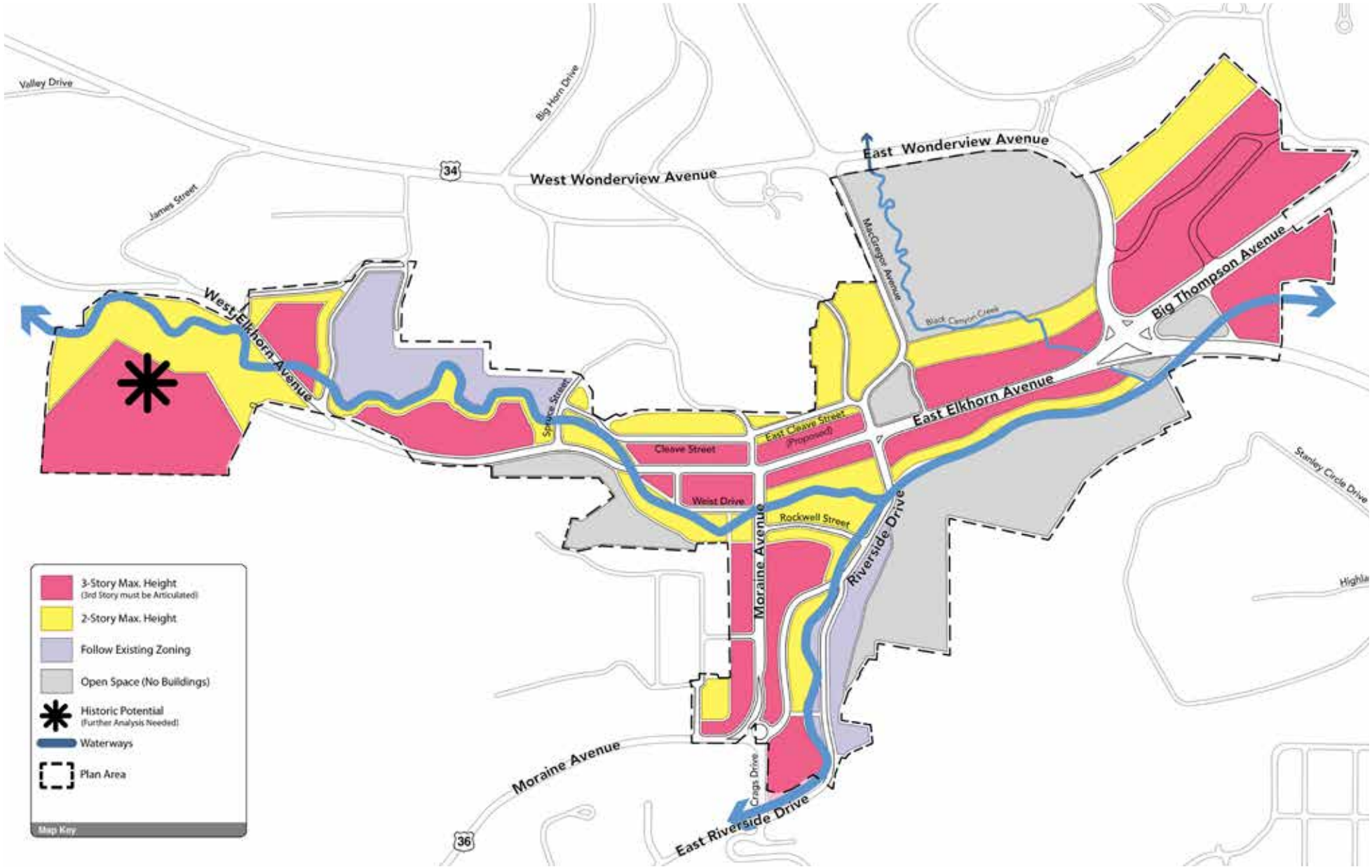


Figure 4.6-Recommended Building Heights

Priority Edges

Public realm elements, including streets, the Riverwalk, parks and plazas, are maximized as social spaces and placemaking elements when they are located next to a feature that keeps them vibrant and in use. Storefronts, building entries and outdoor dining areas are all features that can activate the public realm and provide visual interest. Sites and buildings should be designed to orient toward and activate public spaces. It is especially important to orient toward and activate the edges illustrated on Figure 4.7.

Orient a Development Toward the Public Realm - In some Character Areas, like the Downtown Core and Artisan/Craft Industries Districts, this means locating entries or other primary public building features to directly engage the public realm. In others, it is a matter of simply facing a building entrance toward the street.

Activate the Public Realm - The ground floor of a building is critical to the Downtown pedestrian experience, and particularly so in Character Areas 2 and 3. Where a ground floor feature directly frames a key pedestrian space, it should be designed to create visual interest. Blank, featureless walls should be avoided. Doors, windows, storefronts, outdoor dining spaces, design details, landscaping, public art and other features can all animate the public realm.

Orient a building to face a street, plaza or the Riverwalk. Residential entries and balconies can also help activate the public realm.

Encouraged the private realm to "spill" into the public realm.

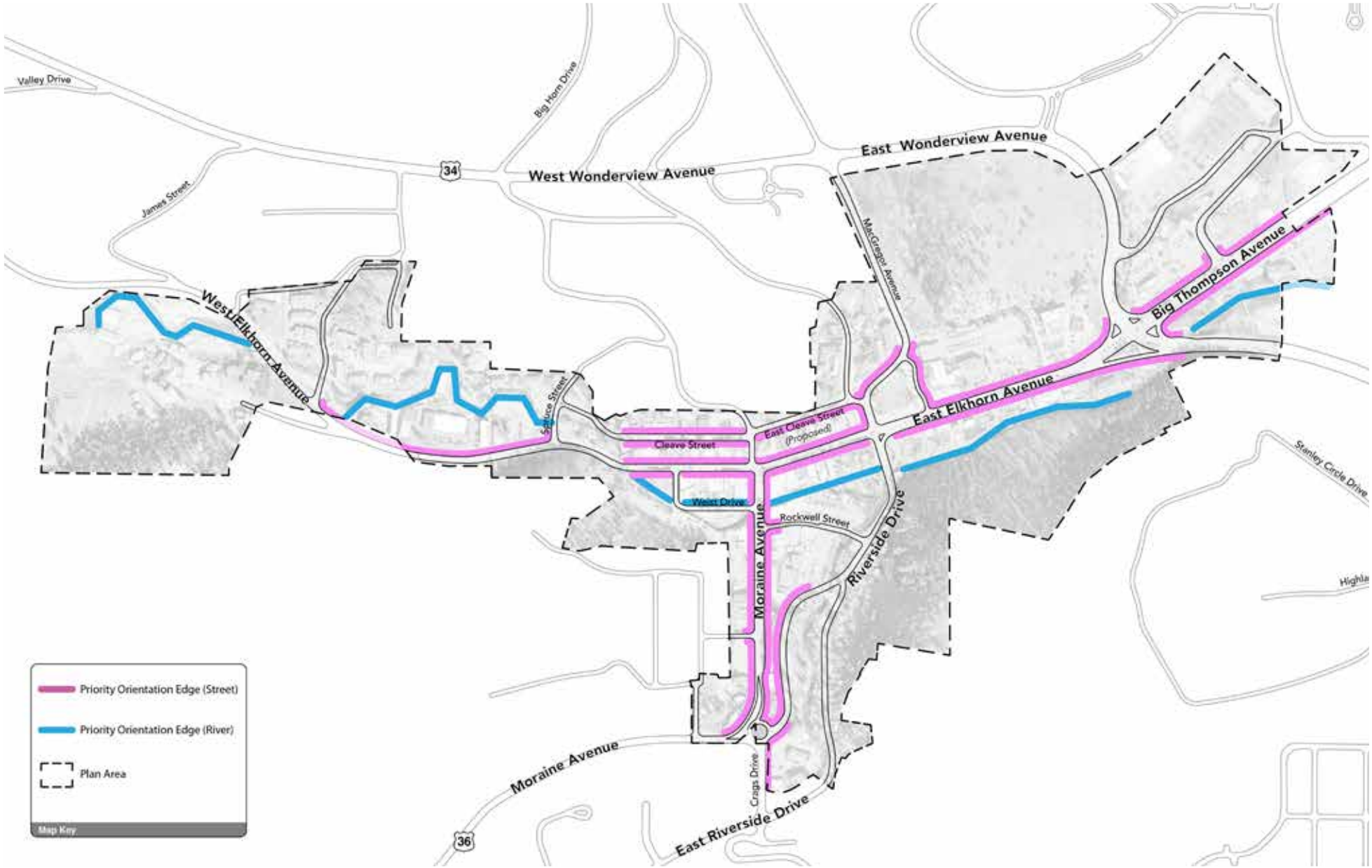


Figure 4.7-Priority Edges

Pedestrian kiosks should incorporate maps and educational material.

Pedestrian signs direct users to key destinations.

Wayfinding

A coordinated wayfinding signage system should be established Downtown to inform and direct pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles and contribute to Town branding and placemaking goals. Wayfinding elements should be designed to reinforce the natural setting of Estes Park while building on the artistic roots and creativity of the Town.

GATEWAY SIGNS

Gateway signs can direct travelers and help establish a sense of entry to Downtown. They should be considered for the three gateways identified in Figure 4.2 and other locations as appropriate.

PEDESTRIAN DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Pedestrian signs direct users to key destinations. These signs should be placed throughout Downtown at highly visible activity nodes such as critical intersections, prominent public open spaces and transit stops.

PEDESTRIAN KIOSKS

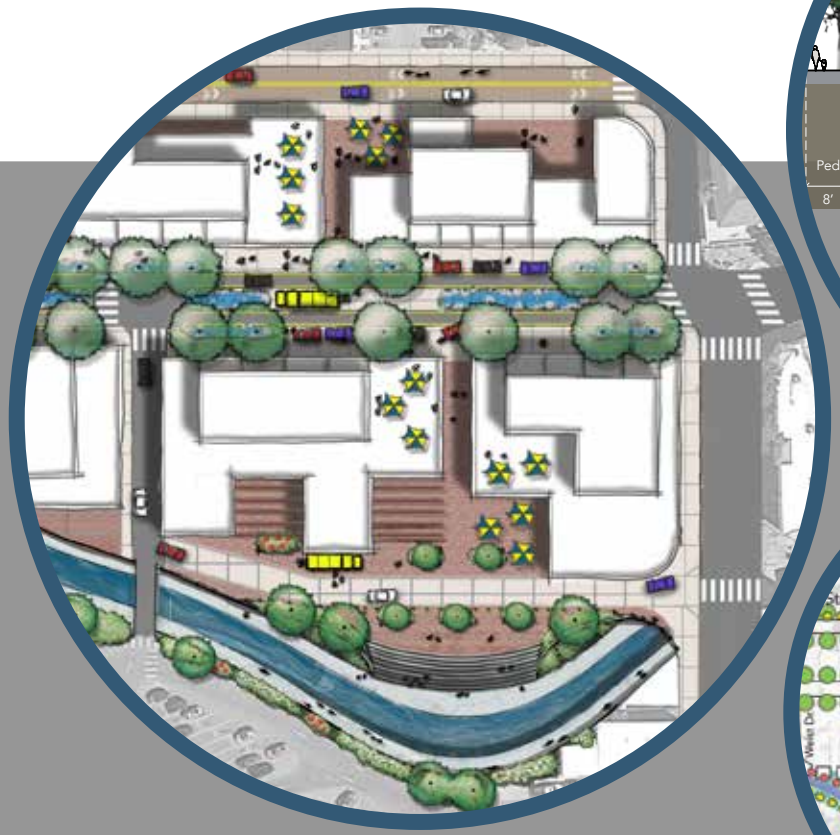
Pedestrian kiosks are structures that provide three or more sides of information. Elements could include maps, interpretive/educational information, Downtown marketing materials, advertising or other content. As with pedestrian directional signs, kiosks should be placed at highly visible activity nodes.

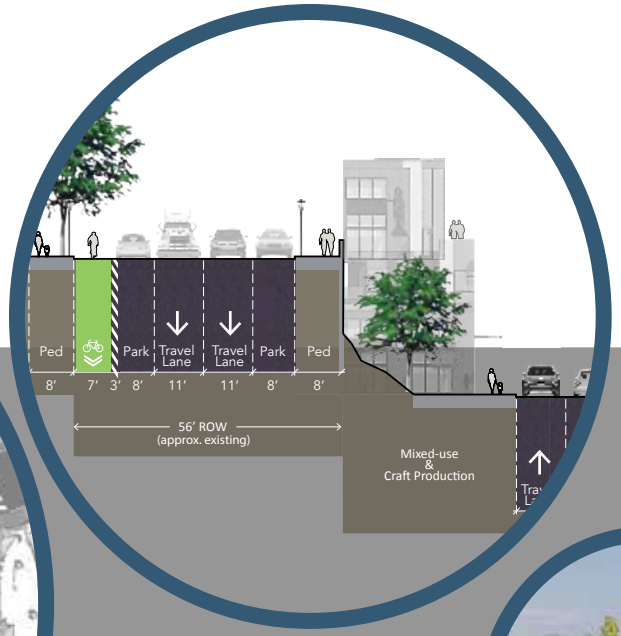
PEDESTRIAN INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

Pedestrian interpretive signs are small signs that educate a pedestrian about a destination or feature within Downtown. Opportunities include locations where significant events have occurred, environmental features or other points that tell Downtown's story.

CHARACTER AREAS

5





5 CHARACTER AREAS

This chapter builds on Chapter 4 by providing more specific land use and design recommendations for each Character Area. It also provides a series of "Resilient Design Studies" that illustrate potential redevelopment concepts and infrastructure improvements. Recommendations for each Character Area are based on an aspiring vision for future function and character. Targeted land uses are identified, but do not represent the only land uses that may be appropriate. Concepts typically show a preliminary idea or a series of design alternatives that meet the objectives of this Plan. Implementation of any of these concepts will require further design study, coordination with property owners and analysis of the potential impacts. The exact locations of concepts are not definite and will depend on landowner choices, available property, market conditions and other factors. Downtown Character Areas are shown on Figure 5.1.

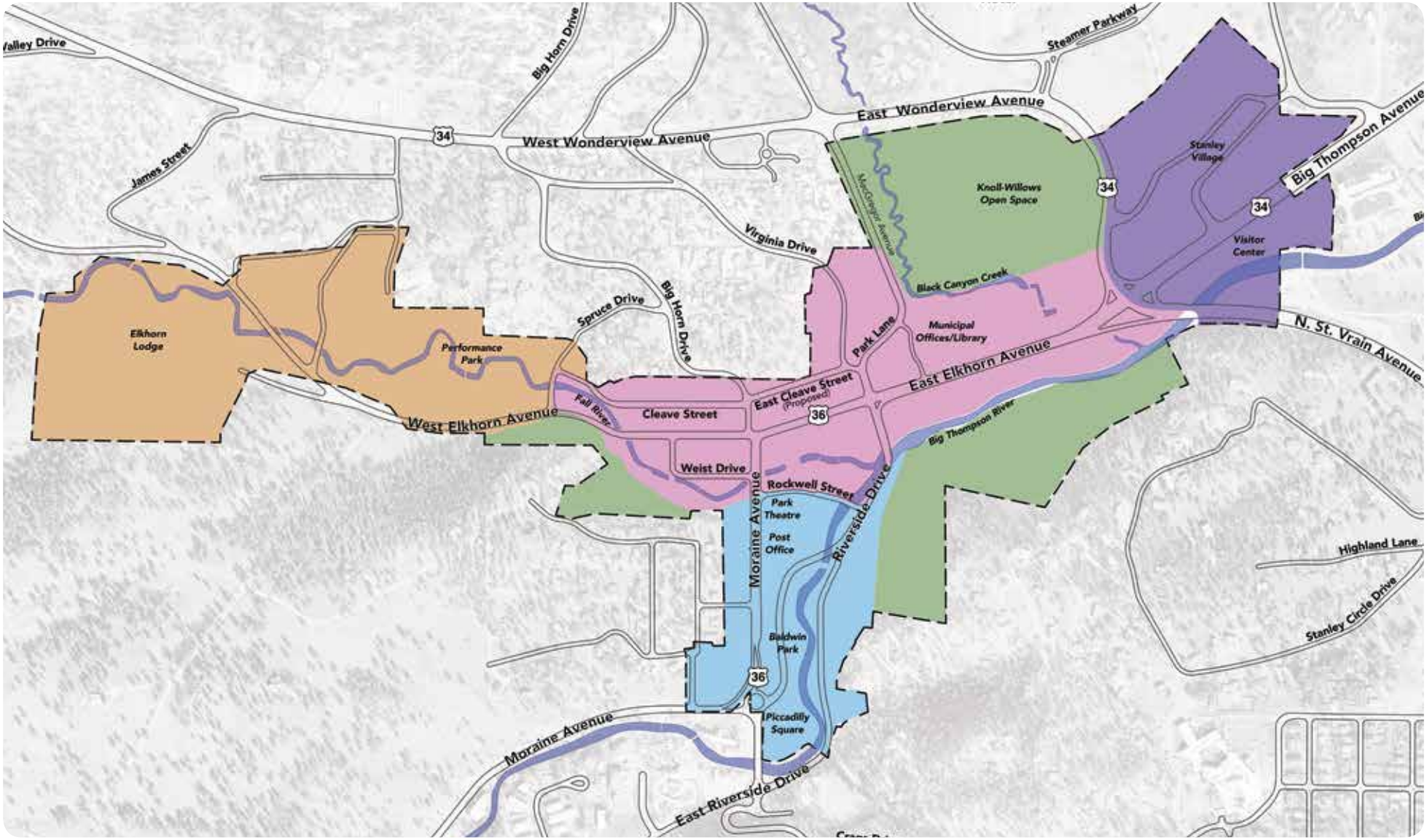


Figure 5.1-Downtown Character Areas Diagram

Character Area 1: Arts & Culture

This section provides a vision statement, specific recommendations and design concepts for Character Area 1. Figure 5.2 identifies the boundaries of Character Area 1. Figure 5.3 illustrates framework concepts and recommendations for physical design and circulation.

Vision Statement

A direct connection with nature remains a key feature in the Arts & Culture Character Area. Striking rock formations, direct access to Fall River and views to surrounding mountains are key assets that will contribute to a distinct identity. Exciting opportunities abound for music, outdoor adventures, housing, shopping and lodging within a refined, naturalistic mountain setting. Character Area 1 will be known for its rich offerings of arts, culture and history. West Elkhorn Avenue provides primary access and serves as a key organizing feature. Development in this area will be strongly linked to the Downtown Core and abutting neighborhoods with an enhanced Riverwalk and West Elkhorn Avenue streetscape. Safe crossings and high quality bicycle and pedestrian facilities will facilitate mobility. Buildings along West Elkhorn Avenue will define the street edge, but in an informal way with some located close to the street and others set back. Walkways between buildings will invite exploration of shops, galleries and riverside plazas and parks. New housing, artists studios, galleries and other creative space will complement commercial activities and inviting civic open spaces. Elkhorn Lodge and Performance Park remain as Character Area landmarks, but their role as Downtown activity nodes is expanded.

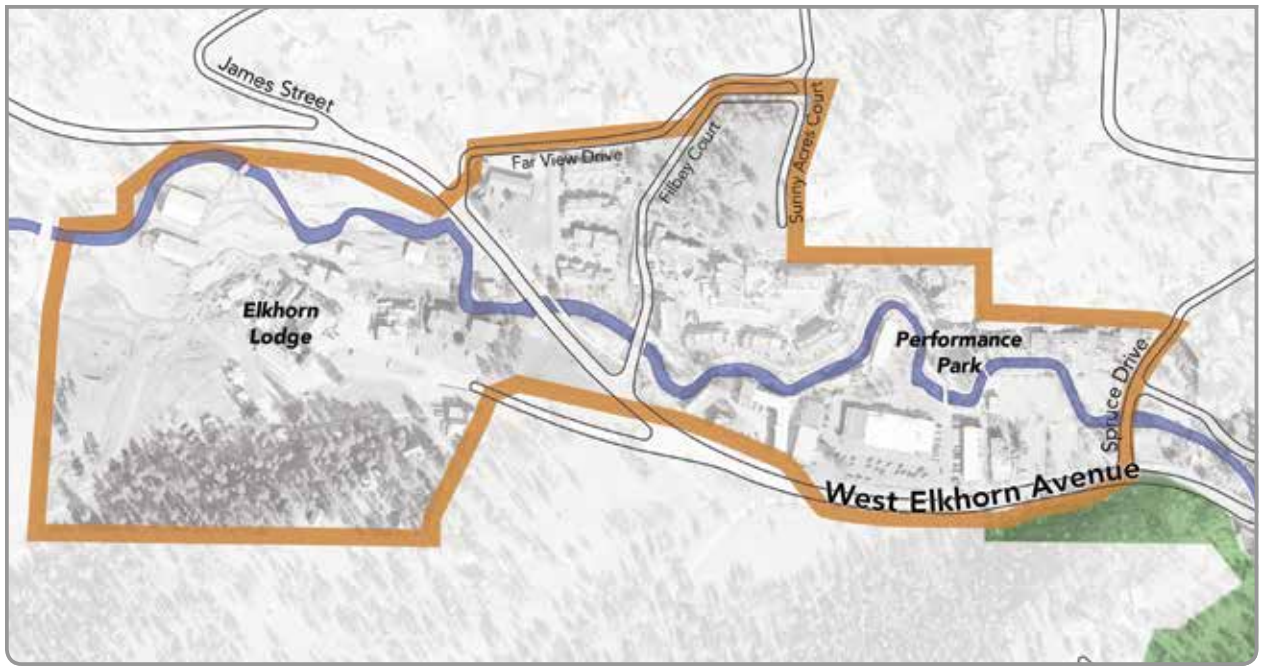


Figure 5.2-Character Area 1

Key Objectives:

- Promote redevelopment along river edges and along Elkhorn Avenue.
- Define a western gateway to Downtown Estes Park.
- Enhance Performance Park by highlighting its visibility and expanding its programming.
- Enhance the Elkhorn Avenue streetscape
- Expand and improve multi-modal circulation.
- Preserve and enhance the Elkhorn Lodge with new uses and activities.
- Design Fall River improvements to mitigate flooding and promote an enhanced and extended Riverwalk.

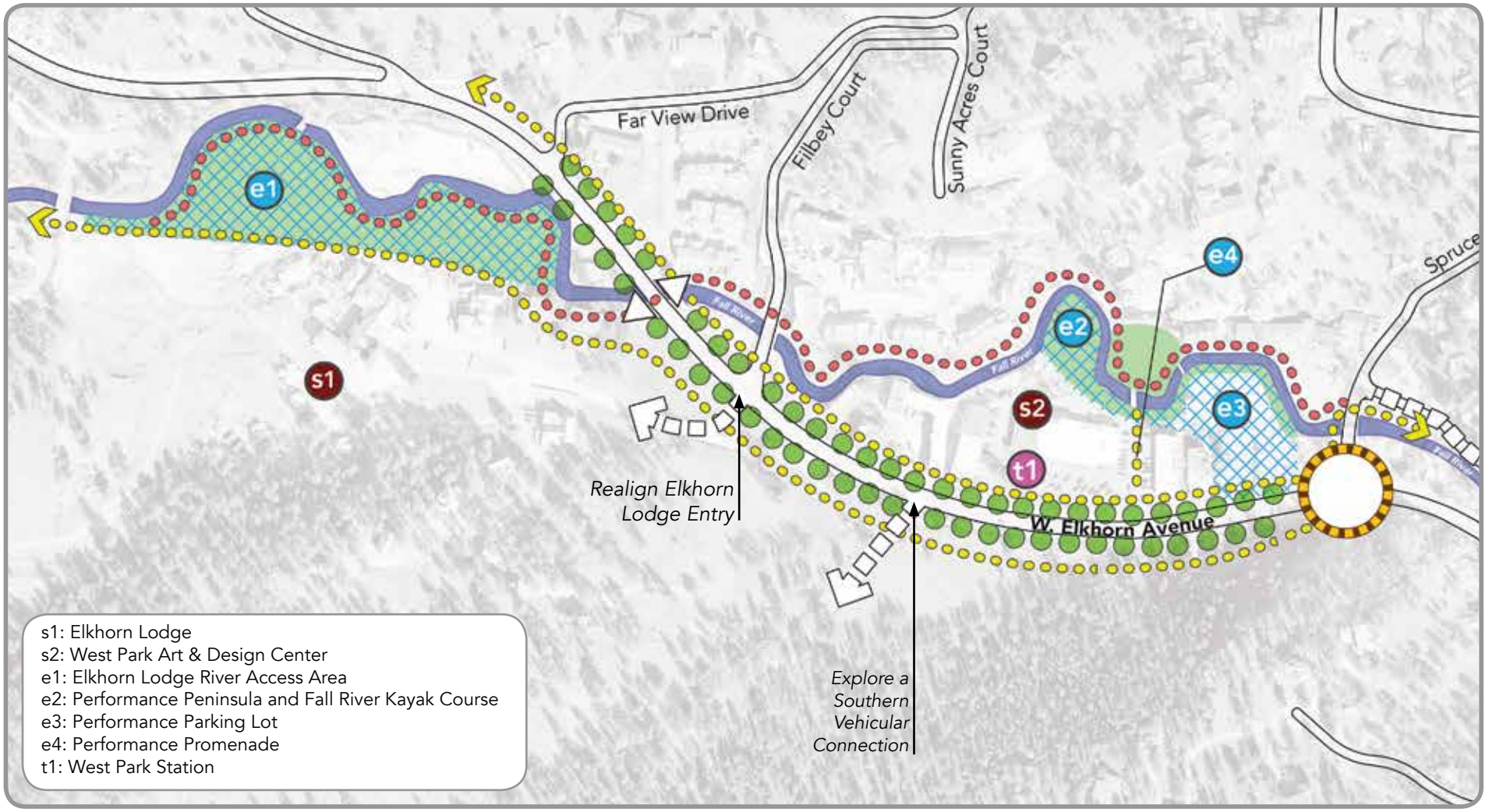


Figure 5.3-Character Area 1 Framework

Public Realm

This section identifies design concepts and recommendations for the public realm.

West Elkhorn Avenue Streetscape Design

West Elkhorn Avenue's vehicular travel lanes should be shifted to provide accessible on-street parking along the north side of the street. A curb-less road edge is recommended in lieu of curb and gutter to reinforce the naturalistic setting that is envisioned. Planted swales should be integrated to capture, convey and clean water flows. Landscape buffer areas should be designed to respond to the natural topography. Buffers should integrate berms and swales with an irregular arrangement of boulders and planting pockets. A curvilinear multi-use trail should integrate with clusters of streetscape furnishings, street trees and understory plants. Lighting should be designed to facilitate safe nighttime multi-modal circulation and visually draw users near Spruce Drive into Character Area 1. Figure 5.4 and 5.5 illustrate a conceptual street cross-section for 65-foot and 80-foot rights-of-way, respectively.

Rolling topography, with accent boulders will create a natural, mountain feel to the landscape.

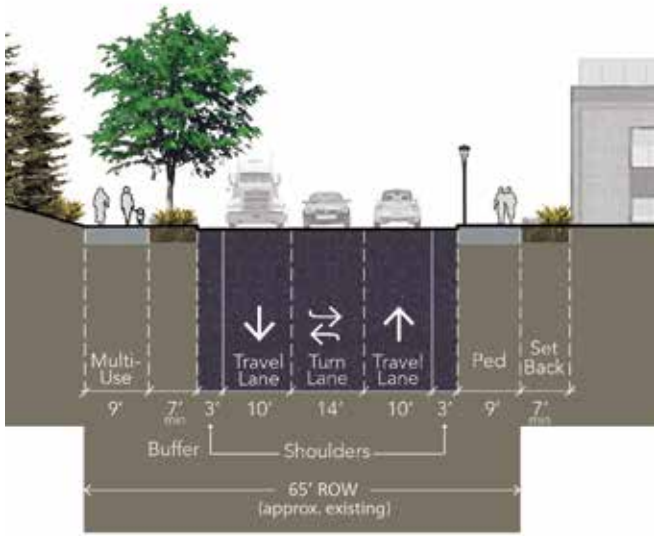


Figure 5.4-West Elkhorn Avenue (existing 65' ROW)

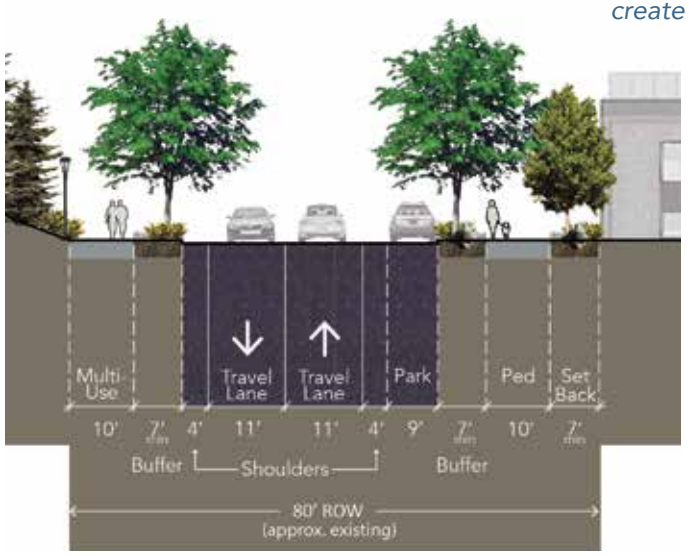


Figure 5.5-West Elkhorn Avenue (existing 80' ROW)

Landscape treatments in Character Area 1 should blend with the naturalistic setting of the area.

Flood Mitigation Opportunities

Key flood mitigation opportunities in Character Area 1 are identified on Figure 5.3 and include:

- **Elkhorn Lodge River Access Area (e1)** - Pursue development of a signature park and river access amenity near the Elkhorn Lodge that helps to withstand, capture and divert flood flows. This amenity could be developed as a public project in partnership with redevelopment efforts at the Elkhorn Lodge or through other agreements.
- **Performance Peninsula and Fall River Kayak Course (e2)** - This concept calls for a new signature Downtown open space and recreational node that would expand Performance Park. This design concept assumes the new FEMA flood maps will render the land unbuildable and therefore could be purchased by the Town. As shown in Figure 5.3, this property also provides an opportunity for flood mitigation. More details about this design concept are provided on Resilient Design Study #1 on pages 50-51.
- **Performance Parking Lot (e3)** - The existing surface parking lot at the east end of Character Area 1 should be redesigned to capture and detain flows by lowering its elevation. It could be used for snow storage and melt during winter months.

Private Realm

This section provides design concepts and recommendations for the private realm.

General Development Character

Development should be designed to convey an informal, natural character. Landscape treatments should blend with the naturalistic setting of the area through the use of curvilinear paths, native plant palettes, boulders and a mix of berms and swales. Development should be a mix of traditional and contemporary structures that reinforce and reference the surrounding natural environment through inclusion of materials such as wood and stone.

Land Use

Target land uses for Character Area 1 include:

- Lodging
- Multi-family housing (workforce and market rate)
- Offices
- Artists studios
- Commercial condos or other creative space
- Retail
- Recreation

Elkhorn Lodge

The Elkhorn Lodge site (s1) should be redeveloped in a manner that celebrates its historic significance and creates a major activity center and destination for Character Area 1 and the Town. Housing, lodging, entertainment, retail and other activities should be combined in a landmark project that engages the Fall River. Access to Elkhorn Lodge should be realigned to create a perpendicular entry across from Filby Court. A formal intersection will create a safer environment for vehicles and pedestrians, while also enhancing awareness and visibility of the Lodge.

West Park Art & Design Center

The West Park Center should be redeveloped with a focus on the arts and housing and rebranded as the West Park Art & Design Center (s2). This effort should improve the appeal of the area in coordination with public infrastructure enhancements, including a new formal promenade connecting pedestrians from Elkhorn Avenue to Performance Park (e4) and an enhanced transit stop (t1). More details about the design concept for this site and its surroundings are provided on Resilient Design Study #1 on pages 50-51.

The Elkhorn Lodge site should be redeveloped in a manner that celebrates its historic signficance

Redevelopment of the Elkhorn Lodge site should consider opportunities to combine river side park space with flood mitigation improvements, such as channel benching as seen in this image.

Character AREA 1

Resilient Design Study #1: West Park Art & Design Center

In this conceptual Resilient Design Study, redevelopment of the West Park Center and public improvements establish a major destination and focal point for Character Area 1. Site and building improvements, flood retention and conveyance and a state-of-the-art park and recreation area expand Performance Park as an activity node.

Key Concepts

- Redevelop West Park Center as a mixed-use node.
- Create outdoor amenity space along the south side of Fall River.
- Redevelop the peninsula and oxbow as a public green space.
- Extend the Riverwalk on north side of Fall River.

Design Elements

1. West Park Development
   - a. RiverFest Plaza
   - b. Mixed-use development
   - c. Performance Promenade
2. Performance Peninsula
   - d. Park space
   - e. "Pull-out" Beach
   - f. Whitewater Course
3. Enhanced Street Edge
4. Extended Riverwalk
5. Parking

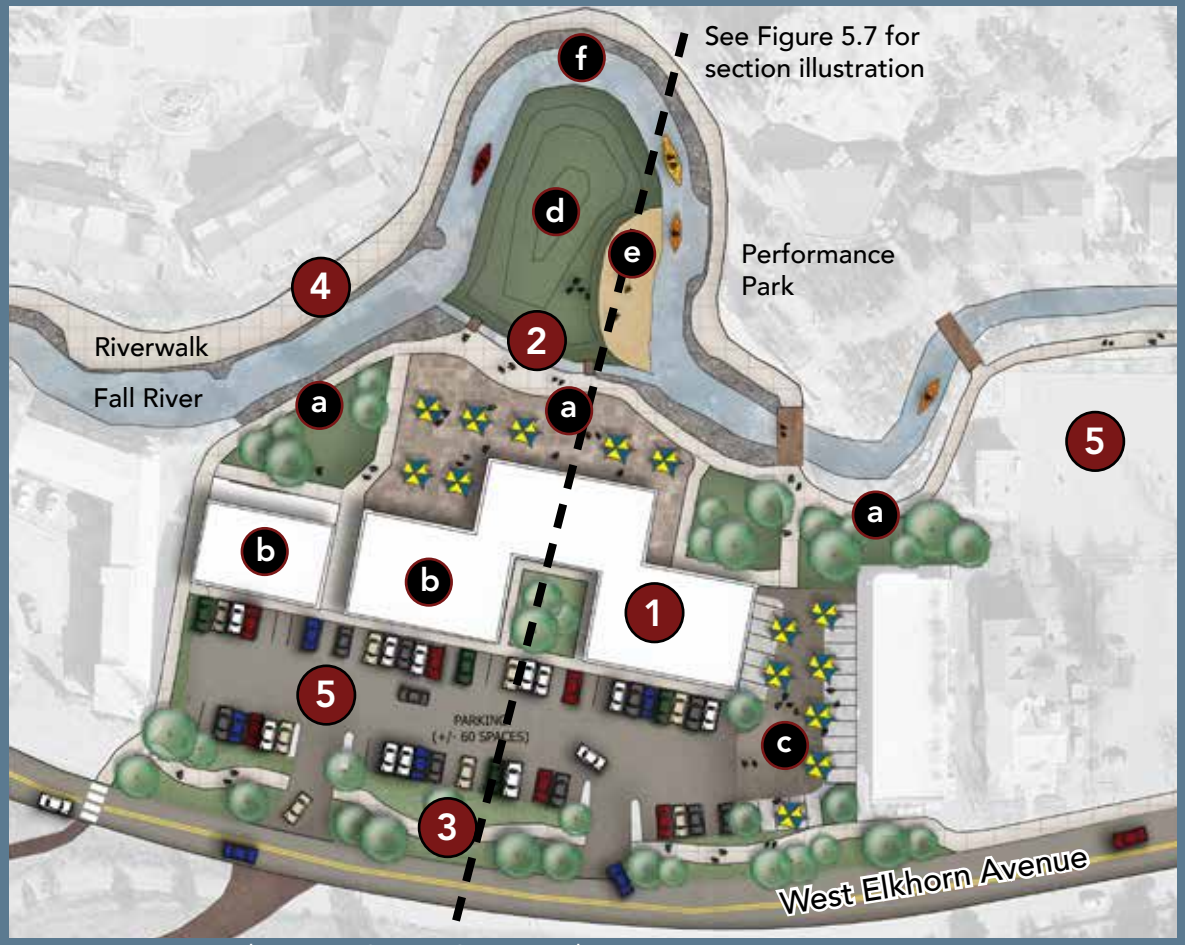


Figure 5.6-West Park Design Center Concept Plan

Concept Overview

The West Park Center is reinvented as an "Art and Design Center." Two- and three-story mixed-use buildings engage West Elkhorn and Fall River. Ground floor retail and office spaces, upper floor residential and activated roof-tops create a vibrant and dynamic riverside activity node. The naturalistic streetscape experience on Elkhorn Avenue provides a foreground element between the road and parking area.

A new signature open space, RiverFest Plaza, provides a flexible, linear amenity on the south side of the Fall River that can be used for passive-use, festivals and events. The redesigned river edge aids in flood control and conveyance.

Performance Peninsula provides an active park space and riverside beach that can double as a concert overflow and river event viewing area. A kayak course is designed on this segment of Fall River.

The Riverwalk and area surrounding Performance Park are enhanced with a new multi-use trail, climbing area, improved pedestrian connections and a stronger river connection. "Performance Promenade" provides a parking area designed to quickly transform into a flexible outdoor space.

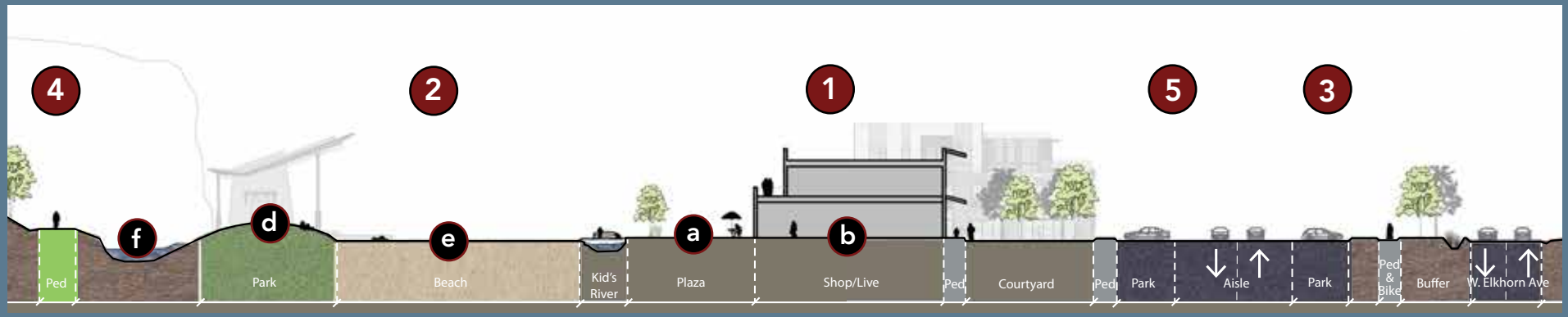


Figure 5.7-West Park Art & Design Center Section

Character Area 2: Downtown Core

This section provides a vision statement, specific recommendations and design concepts for Character Area 2. Figure 5.8 identifies the boundaries of Character Area 2. Figure 5.9 illustrates framework concepts and recommendations for physical design and circulation.

Key Objectives:

- Extend the Downtown feel east to the intersection of Highway 34 and Highway 36.
- Redesign the Riverwalk with flood mitigation infrastructure that doubles as amenities.
- Activate the Riverwalk with new buildings that orient to it.
- Accommodate a moderate increase in density and building height to promote housing development and Downtown activity.
- Re-imagine the Town Hall site to include civic, commercial, residential and parking uses.
- Maintain views to natural features, including mountains and rivers.

Vision Statement

The Downtown Core is the cultural and civic heart of the Plan Area. It offers an exciting variety of activities, restaurants, and shops for residents and visitors. An eclectic mix of older commercial buildings and contemporary mixed-use buildings tightly frame an unforgettable "main street" experience on Elkhorn Avenue. A reinvented Town Hall site with a mix of civic uses, active retail, housing, public parking and other uses create a signature activity node. This project extends the Downtown Core's energy east from Bond Park along the north side of Elkhorn Avenue. Cleave Street is a destination with artists studios, housing and small format shops and dining. New and renovated buildings located close to the street edge create an urban mountain town feel. Outdoor places, like plazas, decks, terraces, outdoor dining areas and small parks, are ubiquitous and anchored by Bond Park and two nearby expanded open spaces. West Elkhorn Avenue is redesigned as a state-of-the-art complete street and festival space. The Downtown Core is strongly linked to other Character Areas and to abutting neighborhoods with an enhanced Riverwalk, improved crosswalks and inviting sidewalks. Getting around the Downtown Core by foot is easy and interesting. Shops and services serve locals and visitors and together with new development help establish a stronger year round economy.

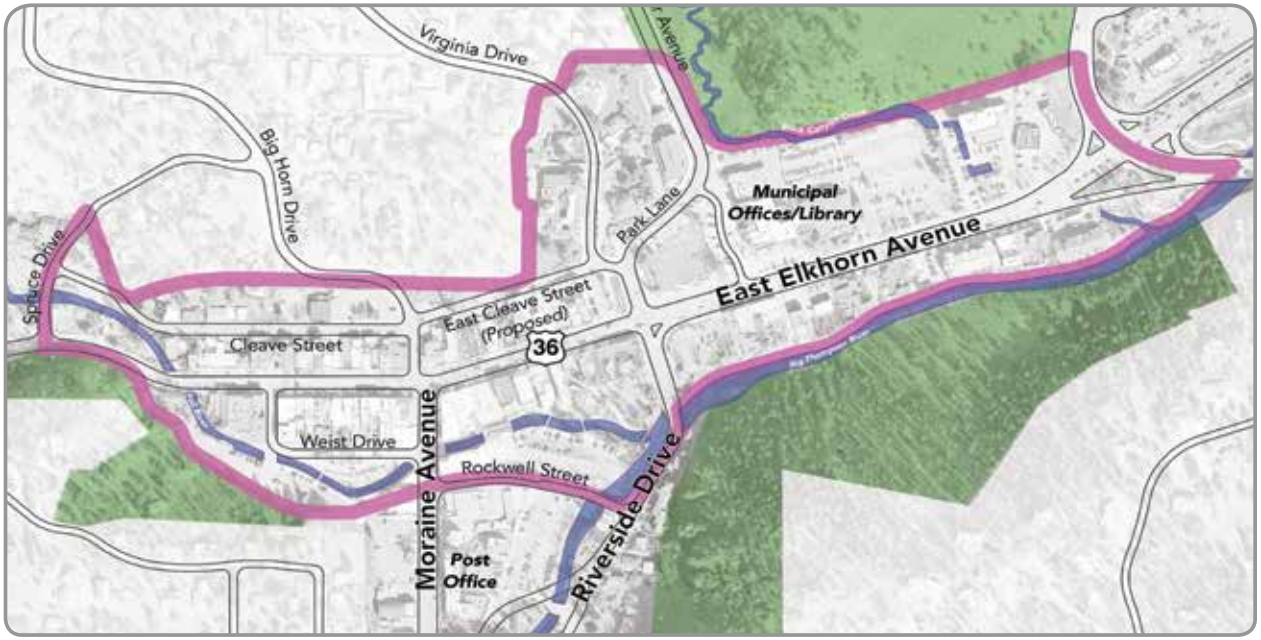


Figure 5.8-Character Area 2

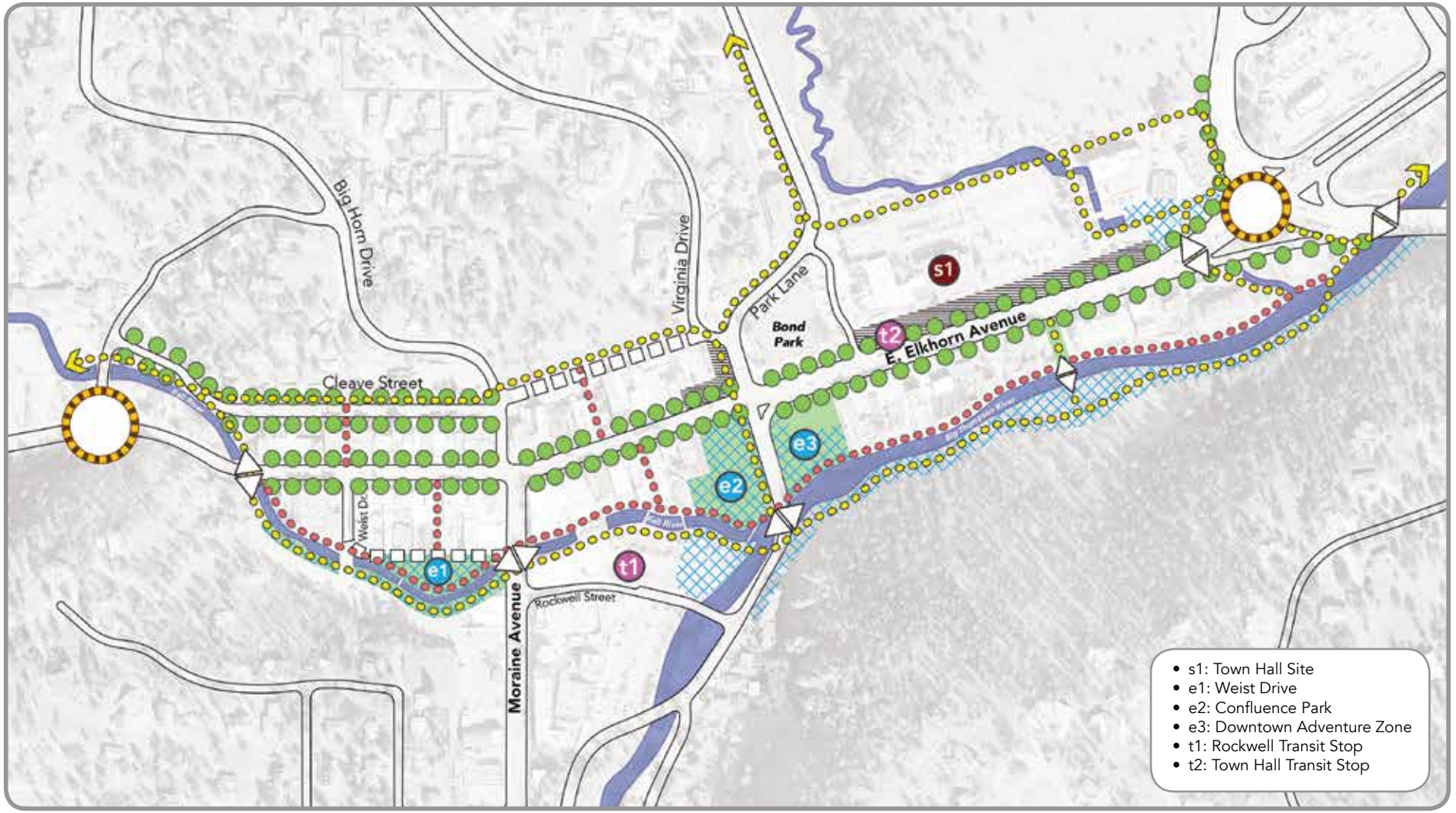


Figure 5.9-Character Area 2 Framework

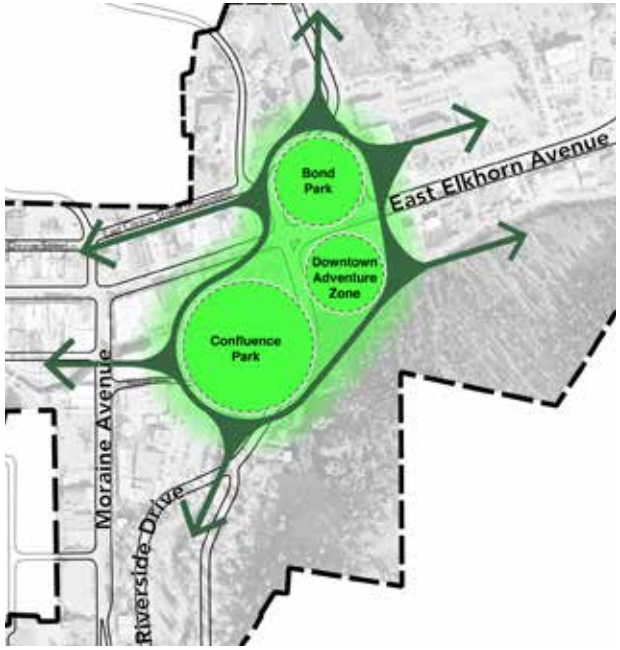


Figure 5.10-"Civic Green"

Public Realm

This section identifies design concepts and recommendations for the public realm.

Civic Green

Bond Park and a new Confluence Park and Estes Adventure Zone will collectively create an expanded outdoor "Civic Green" for Downtown. The Town should work with landowners to create a signature open space that accommodates festivals, art fairs, farmers markets, ice sculptures and many other activities at an exciting central location. This combination of civic spaces will serve as an integrated component of flood mitigation infrastructure by expanding the Big Thompson River's floodway capacity. The Civic Green will be a regional and nationwide model for communities facing flooding challenges.

- **Confluence Park.** Confluence Park will function as a storm detention area and world-class gathering space. It will integrate with Downtown buildings and support adjacent businesses. Confluence Park will open up a prominent view to the Riverwalk from Elkhorn Avenue. An enhanced connection to Bond Park will be established to develop a symbiotic relationship between the two features. Grade-separated connections to the east will be possible due to the adjusted layout of the new park and the redesign of Riverside Bridge. This project would require coordination with private landowners, potentially including purchase of properties, a land swap agreement or some other arrangement.

- **Downtown Adventure Zone.** Development opportunities are expected to be limited in this area in the future due to flood risk. As a response, the Downtown Adventure Zone is proposed to expand the current playground in the same location. It will provide an area for families and kids to enjoy a state-of-the-art Downtown playground with activities that highlight the adventurous Colorado lifestyle. Zip-lines, climbing boulders and modern playground structures could all be included.

The Downtown Adventure Zone will provide an area for families and kids to enjoy a state-of-the-art Downtown playground.

West Elkhorn Avenue

West Elkhorn Avenue should be improved west of Moraine Avenue as a multi-beneficial street that is a highly pedestrian-oriented civic amenity that can easily transform to a closed pedestrian-only festival space. It should complement the Civic Green as a world class "complete" and "green" street that acts as a western anchor for the Downtown Core. Its design should accommodate parklets and pop-up cafes, and be engineered to capture, convey and clean storm flows, reducing flood risk for Elkhorn Avenue properties. Its unique design and pedestrian activity levels will draw the eye of travelers headed south on the Downtown Loop toward Rocky Mountain National Park, compelling them to consider a stop. More details about the West Elkhorn Avenue streetscape design concept are provided in Resilient Design Study #2 on pages 60-61.

Weist Drive

Weist Drive should be redesigned as a dynamic open space amenity that provides social, economic, transportation and flood resilience benefits. Straighten the east-west section of Weist Drive to create a perpendicular connection to Moraine Avenue. This will provide space for an entirely new riverfront experience. A new pedestrian plaza, business interface area and slow traffic street should be integrated with a widened Fall River with improved pedestrian and bike trails. More details about the Weist Drive design concept are provided in Resilient Design Study #3 on pages 62-63.

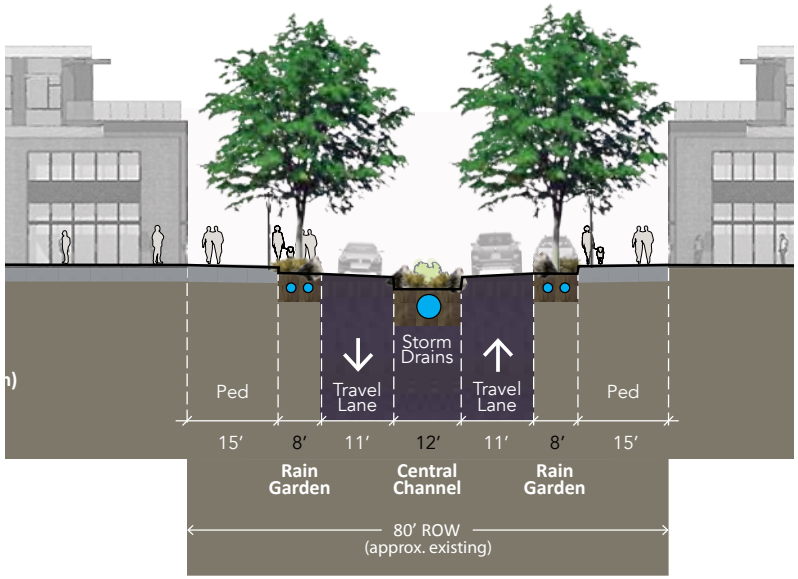


Figure 5.11-West Elkhorn Avenue Section

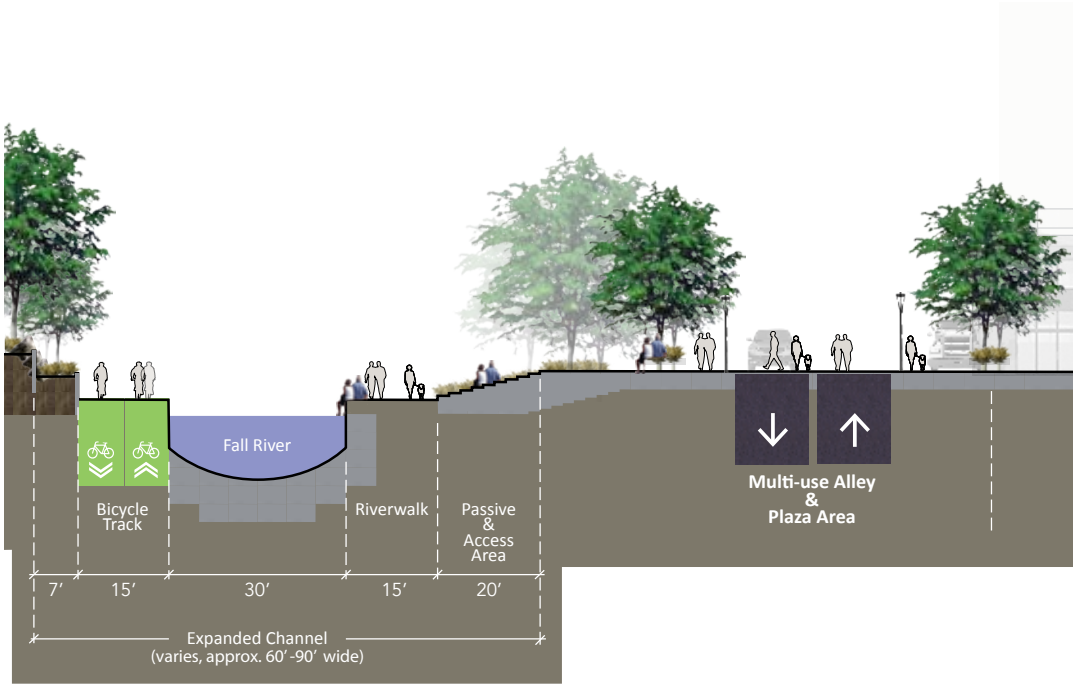


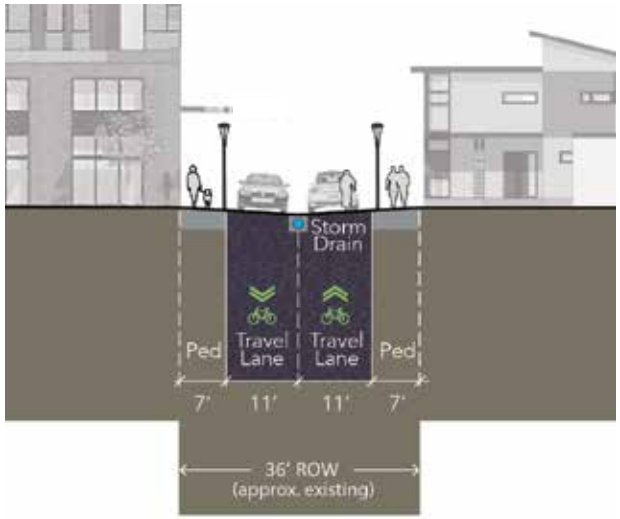
Figure 5.12-Weist Drive Section

Existing outcropping blocking the proposed Cleave Street extension (from reverse angle as shown above in Figures 5.14 and 5.15).

Cleave Street

Cleave Street should be redesigned to serve as an integral layer to the Downtown Core. Currently, Cleave Street is in need of repair. Its condition is unsafe for pedestrians and it is only minimally activated by adjacent buildings and uses. The Cleave Street design concept has two components and is illustrated in Figures 5.14 and 5.15.

- **Improve Existing Section of Cleave Street** - Enhance Cleave Street between Spruce Street and Big Horn Drive to improve the pedestrian experience and support a mix of travel modes. Redesign it to safely support pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles using an inverted woonerf or "shared" street design. As shown in Figure 5.13, a curbless street should employ traffic calming devices to slow vehicles and support pedestrian and low speed bicycle circulation. Special paving should be used to delineate the narrow travel lanes from the primary pedestrian space. Markings on the roadways, or "sharrows," should be used to alert drivers of frequent bicycle use. An inverted configuration and linear drain at the center of the street convey stormwater and snowmelt downstream.
- **Extend Cleave Street to the East** - Extend Cleave Street to connect with Park Lane and Virginia Drive. This extension will support a mix of travel modes, create opportunities for an active street experience and facilitate an alternative route to Elkhorn Avenue. The street extension would require partial removal of a rock outcropping. As shown in Figure 5.14, it should include two vehicle lanes, a protected two-way cycle track and sidewalks on each side of the street. Artists studios and galleries, residential space, restaurants and shops could face this new street segment from the south side. As shown in Figure 5.15, a design alternative could be considered that provides access for emergency vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles only.



Above: Figure 5.13-Cleave Street enhancement

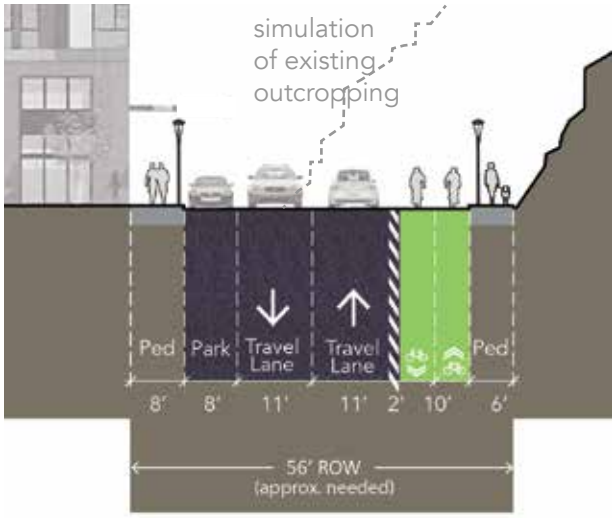


Figure 5.14-Cleave Street Extension (Option 1: vehicular traffic included)

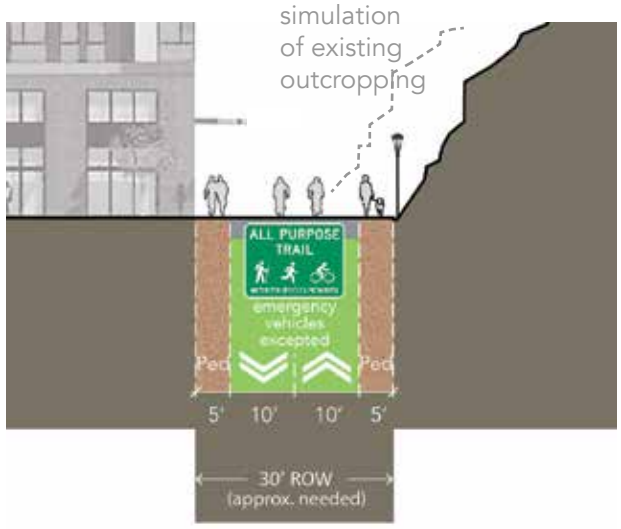


Figure 5.15-Cleave Street extension (Option 2: no vehicular traffic)

Downtown Core Ped-Bike Loop

A formal 1.25 mile Ped-Bike Loop that is signed and branded should be integrated into the Downtown Core's non-motorized circulation system. It should be consistently branded in wayfinding signage, but its individual components should include a variety of experiences and facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian access should be directed along all designated trail sections as part of the Town's recommended wayfinding system. The Downtown Core Ped-Bike Loop will provide an integrated feature and experience with access to all the primary destinations in the Downtown Core. The Downtown Core Ped-Bike Loop is diagrammed in Figure 5.16.

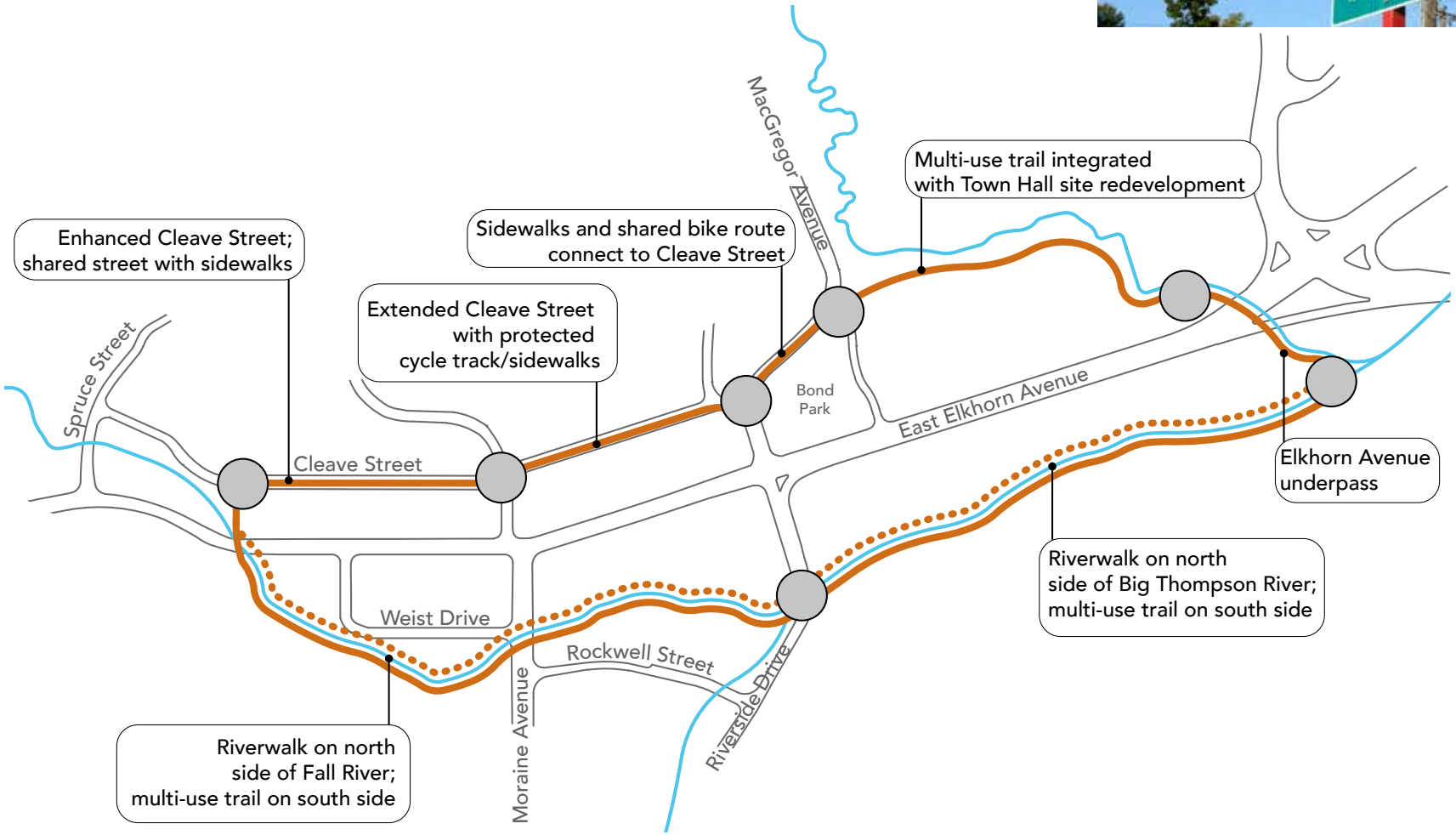


Figure 5.16-Downtown Core Pedestrian-Bike Loop Diagram

An eclectic mix of traditional and contemporary buildings should mix with existing ones along Elkhorn Avenue.

Development in CA-2 should provide an active street edge.

Private Realm

This section provides recommendations and concepts for private development.

General Development Character

Development in CA-2 should provide an active street edge, new residential housing and an architecturally diverse combination of new and renovated buildings along Elkhorn Avenue, Cleave Street and the river interface. When feasible, development should be double-fronted to engage multiple public spaces.

Buildings should be placed close to the back of the sidewalk. Larger buildings should be well articulated to establish a pedestrian-friendly scale. Upper floors should be modulated to reduce the perceived mass of a building. An eclectic mix of traditional and contemporary buildings should mix with existing ones along Elkhorn Avenue. The architectural mix will reinforce the quaint, mountain experience of the Town. Wood and stone should be primary elements, but contemporary accent materials are also appropriate.

Land Use

A wide variety of land uses should be targeted in the Downtown Core, including:

- Retail
- Office
- Residential
- Hotel
- Studios/creative space
- Institutional/civic
- Recreation/open space

Town Hall Site

The Town Hall site represents perhaps the best catalyst redevelopment site in Downtown. The site, which is under Town ownership, should be leveraged to spark Downtown investment. Redevelopment of the current Town buildings and parking lots with a mixed-use development is strongly encouraged. More details about this potential redevelopment opportunity are provided in Resilient Design Study #4 on pages 64-65.

Incremental Elkhorn Avenue, Cleave Street and Riverfront Development

Small-scale and incremental redevelopment opportunities are encouraged in Character Area 2, and especially on properties fronting Elkhorn Avenue, Cleave Street and the river edges. This could take many forms, including renovations and additions to existing properties, removal of existing buildings to create new ones or new buildings on vacant land or surface parking areas.

When feasible, development should be double-fronted to engage multiple public spaces.

Larger buildings should be well articulated to establish a pedestrian-friendly scale.

Redevelopment of the Town Hall site should include civic uses.

Character AREA 2

Resilient Design Study #2: West Elkhorn Avenue

In this conceptual Resilient Design Study, West Elkhorn Avenue is re-engineered and redesigned to convey storm flows and provide a dynamic pedestrian-oriented festival street.

Key Concepts

- Convert West Elkhorn into a signature complete street and civic node that supports temporary festival activity and conveys storm flows.
- Increase density with new mixed-use residential buildings.
- Establish mid-block connections to Cleave Street, Weist Drive and Fall River.

Design Elements

1. West Elkhorn Avenue Festival Street
   a. Central storm channel
   b. Loading/unloading area
2. Parking & pop-up flex-spaces
3. Raingardens
4. Mid-block paseo
5. Rooftop activation
   c. Residential balconies
   d. Commercial rooftop space
6. Cleave Street Enhancement

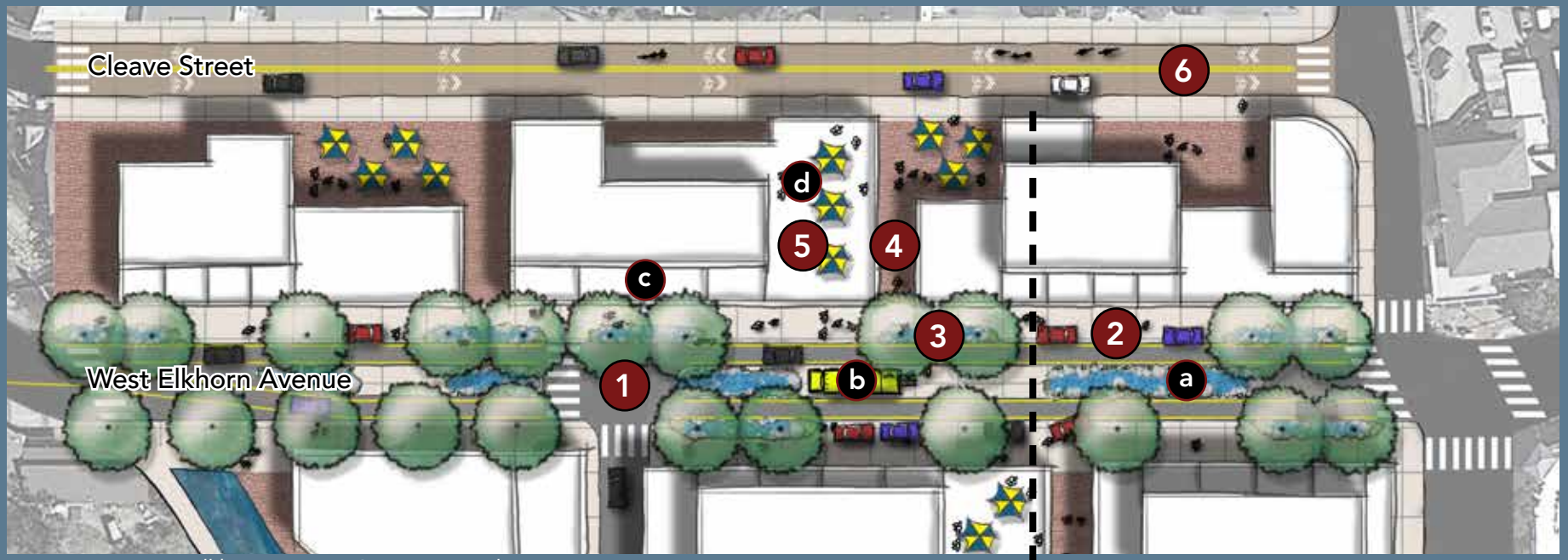


Figure 5.17-West Elkhorn Avenue Streetscape Plan

See Figure 5.18 for section illustration

Concept Overview

A curbless (woonerf), inverted street directs storm water toward a central channel, keeping flows away from adjacent buildings. The open channel located in the center of the street captures and diverts piped flows downstream. The interior of the naturalized channel is landscaped with boulders, a designed stream bed, and a mix of native and phytoremediative plants to clean runoff of debris and toxins. The channel is bordered with bollards and select areas of curb-and-gutter for safety. Storm flows are released through an underground conveyance process to minimize downstream inundation.

A sequence of raingardens at the outer street edges provide a second level of storm flow capture and containment. Raingarden areas are designed with a similar plant and rock palette to the central channel. Flexible on-street parking spaces are located between raingardens.

A curb-less street seamlessly connects to West Elkhorn Avenue sidewalks, which are widened to accommodate a more comfortable pedestrian experience. Businesses can now "spill" onto the sidewalk with cafe seating, merchandise carts and other activities. The curbless street design allows restaurants to easily extend outdoor dining areas when the street is closed to vehicular traffic and provide space for street market stands, performance areas and other festival needs. Built-in adapters/sleeves for bollards allow for quick installation/removal and can also be used for flood barrier walls.

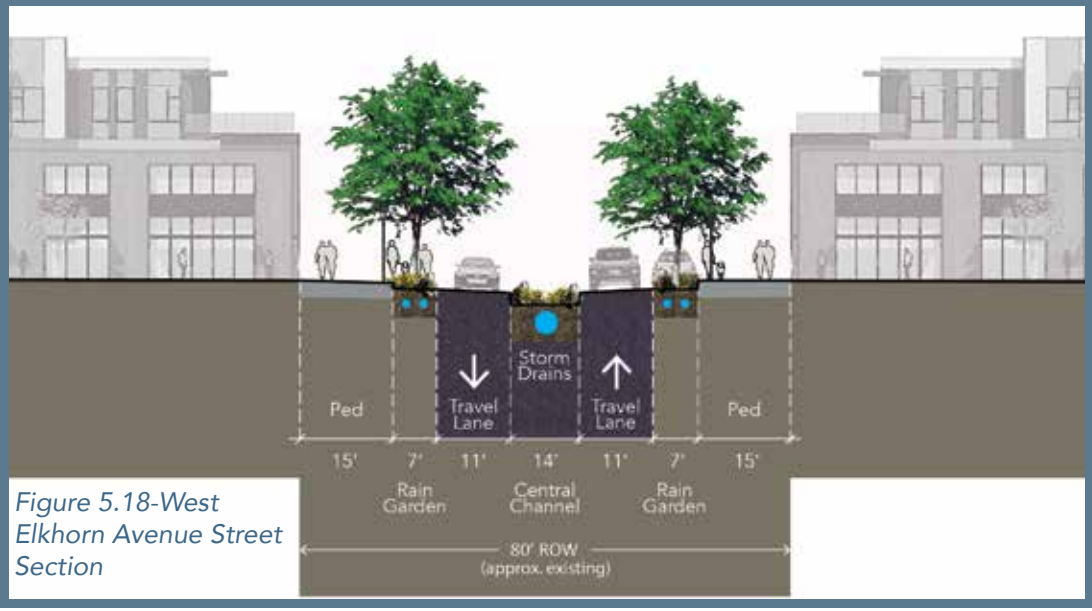


Figure 5.18-West Elkhorn Avenue Street Section

A central open channel collects and conveys storm flows away from buildings.

Character AREA 2

Resilient Design Study #3: Weist Drive Realignment/Fall River Widening

In this conceptual Resilient Design Study, realignment and redesign of Weist Drive provides space to widen the Fall River as it enters the Downtown Core. The widened section of Fall River improves flood conveyance while also supporting active and passive uses. Weist Drive becomes a pedestrian-oriented amenity street and plaza activated by adjacent businesses.

Key Concepts

- Realign Weist Drive.
- Expand the Fall River channel.
- Redevelop Weist Drive into a multi-modal plaza and outdoor amenity area.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation along the river edge.
- Establish a connection between Elkhorn Avenue and Fall River.

Design Elements

1 Weist Drive Realignment
- a. Improved stream conveyance (widened channel)
- b. Multi-modal slow-speed street
- c. Plaza
- d. Terraced walls

2 River Edge Trail
- e. Grade-separated Moraine Avenue crossing
- f. Stepped plaza access

3 Double-fronted Development
- g. Rooftop activation
- h. Paseo connections to West Elkhorn
- i. Outdoor dining and retail "spill"

See Figure 5.18 for section illustration

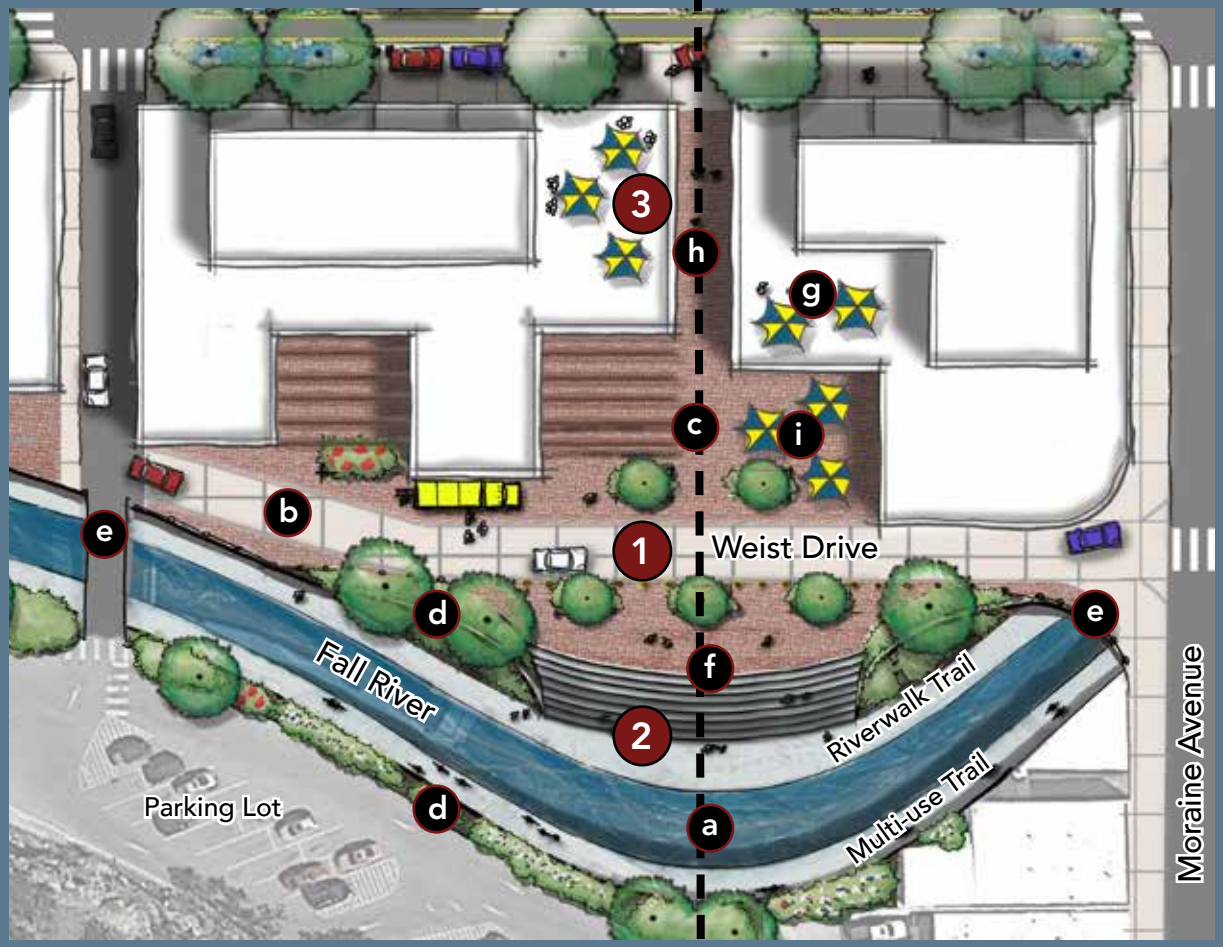


Figure 5.19-Weist Drive Realignment/Fall River Widening Concept Plan

Concept Overview

The Fall River channel is widened along Weist Drive to offer improved carrying capacity of peak storm flows. Realigning (straightening) Weist Drive to create a perpendicular connection with Moraine Avenue creates an opportunity to widen and terrace the existing channel walls. The resulting street and amenity space provides a reinvigorated pedestrian street experience and connection to the Fall River.

A combination of new connections and amenity space encourages adjacent businesses to respond. Restaurant patio spaces, galleries and shops engage Weist Drive. Upper-story residential brings additional life and energy Downtown.

Figure 5.20-Weist Drive Realignment/Fall River Widening Concept Perspective

Figure 5.21-Weist Drive Realignment/Fall River Widening Concept Section

Character AREA 2

Resilient Design Study #4: Town Hall Site (Alternative 1)

In this conceptual Resilient Design Study, the Town Hall site is redeveloped with a mix of public parking, commercial, civic and residential uses within a new primary building and a series of additions to the existing facilities.

Key Concepts

- Increase Downtown parking with a new parking structure
- Energize East Elkhorn Avenue with a new active ground floor edge
- Provide a visual and physical connection to the Riverwalk from Elkhorn Avenue

Design Elements

1. Parking Structure
   - a. Plaza adjacent to library
   - b. Multi-use trail
2. Mixed-use/civic development
   - c. Barlow Plaza
   - d. Mid-block crossing

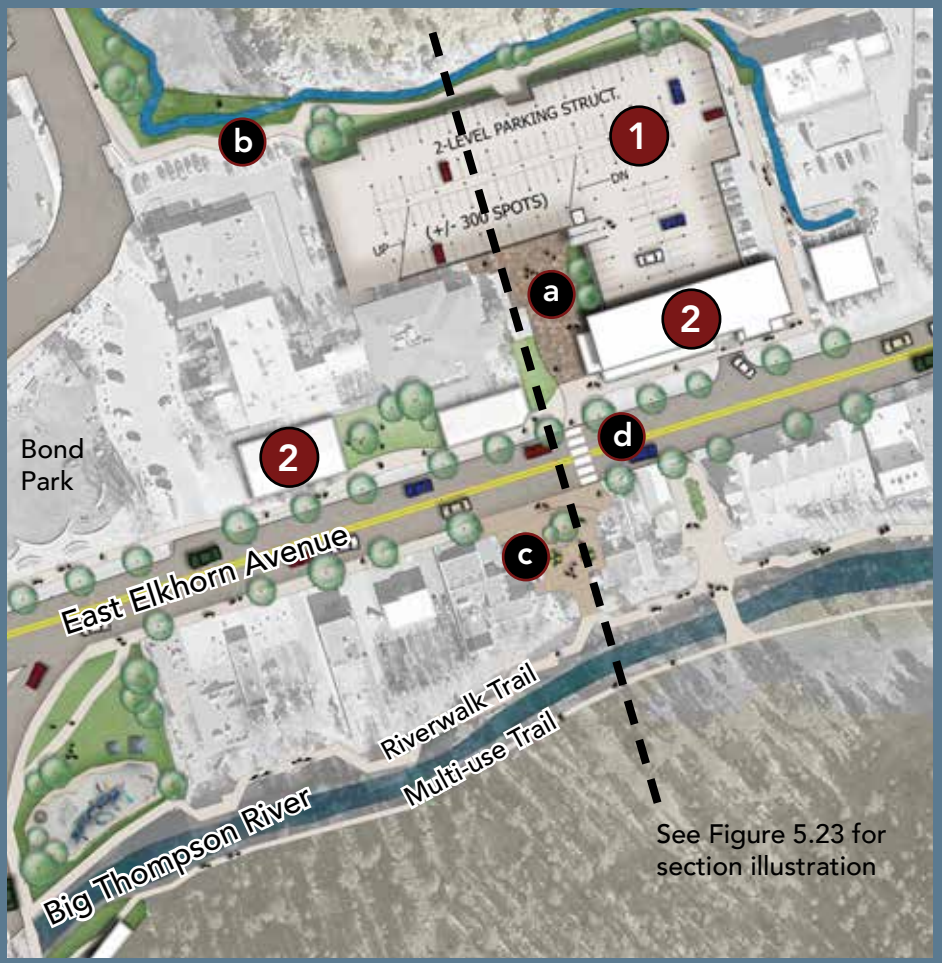


Figure 5.22-Town Hall Site Concept Plan - Alternative 1

Concept Overview

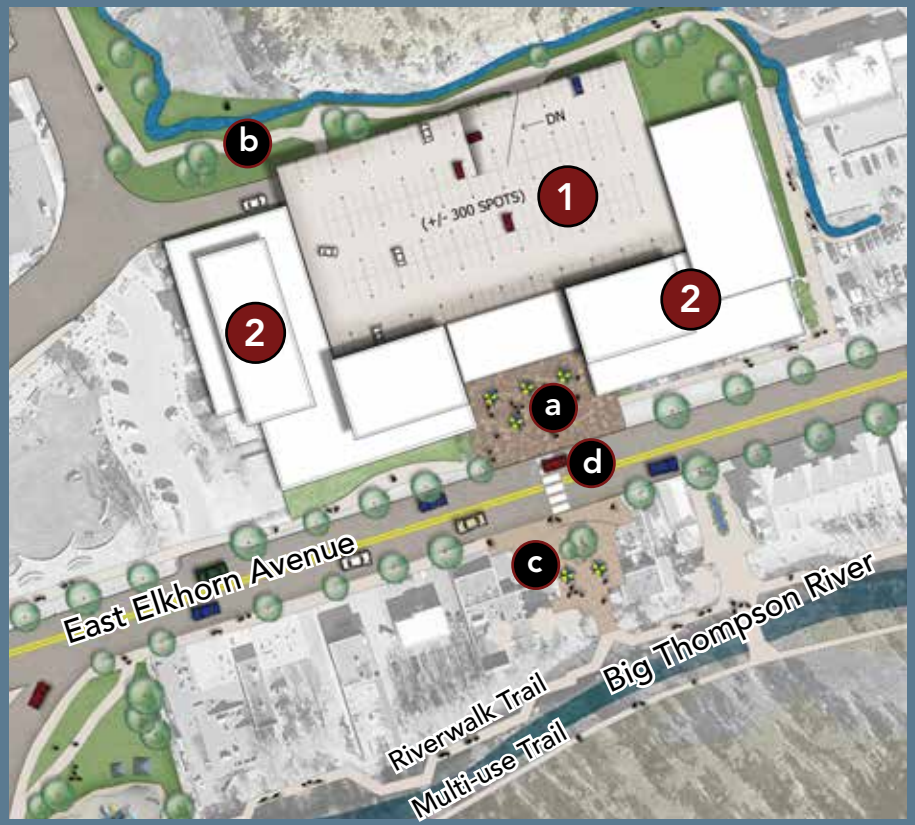
The Town facilities remain as a central Downtown feature and community anchor. A structured parking facility is constructed on the existing parking lot and a sequence of new liner buildings are included along Elkhorn Avenue. Plaza spaces and multi-use paths are integrated into the site to encourage access and connectivity. A new entry plaza is provided east of the library and is linked to Elkhorn Avenue and Barlow Plaza with a new mid-block crossing.

Figure 5.23-Town Hall Site Section

Character AREA 2

Resilient Design Study #4: Town Hall Site (Alternative 2)

Shown as an alternative below, the Town Hall site is completely redeveloped with the existing buildings replaced with a new mixed-use project that includes a parking structure.



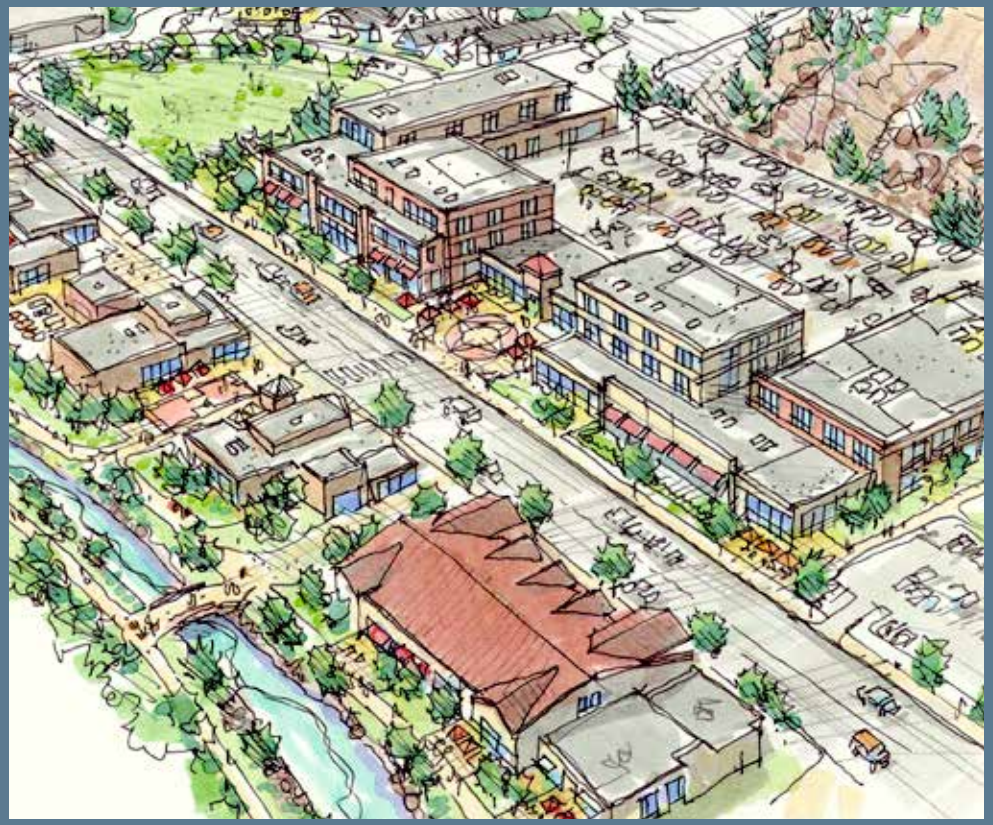


Figure 5.24-Town Hall Site Concept Plan and Rendering - Alternative 2

Character Area 3: Artisan & Craft Industries

This section provides a vision statement, specific recommendations and design concepts for Character Area 3. Figure 5.25 identifies the boundaries of Character Area 3. Figure 5.26 illustrates framework concepts and recommendations for physical design and circulation.

Character Area 3 is its own destination, offering live-work opportunities, light industrial space and small format craft production facilities.

Vision Statement

Reconfigured by the new Downtown Loop, the Artisan & Craft Industries Character Area extends the activity of the Downtown Core south along Moraine Avenue and the Big Thompson River. A redefined entry element at the planned roundabout in the south provides a strong sense of arrival to Downtown. A revitalized Piccadilly Square, a new signature mixed use building at the Post Office site and other new commercial and mixed-use buildings front a redesigned Moraine Avenue streetscape. Character Area 3 is its own destination, offering live-work opportunities, light industrial space and small format craft production facilities. Pedestrians and bicyclists can explore shops and businesses while sampling local wines and beer. Galleries, dining and entertainment venues are intermixed and provided in association with production businesses. A string of outdoor performance spaces enhance Baldwin Park. Character Area 3 is connected to the rest of Downtown with new pedestrian and bicycle facilities on Moraine Avenue, Riverside Drive and along the river's edge. Views to the mountains and a strong sense of the Big Thompson River help define this area's character. As a job center and sales tax generator, Character Area 3 enhances the local economy.

Figure 5.25-Character Area 3 Character Area Map

Key Objectives:

- Define the southern entry to Downtown.
- Extend activity from Elkhorn Avenue south along Moraine Avenue with new development and active uses.
- Encourage creative industries, services and businesses alongside shopping and dining.
- Provide safe and well-connected bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Moraine Avenue, Riverside Drive and the Big Thompson River.
- Highlight views, especially from Moraine Avenue to Long's Peak.

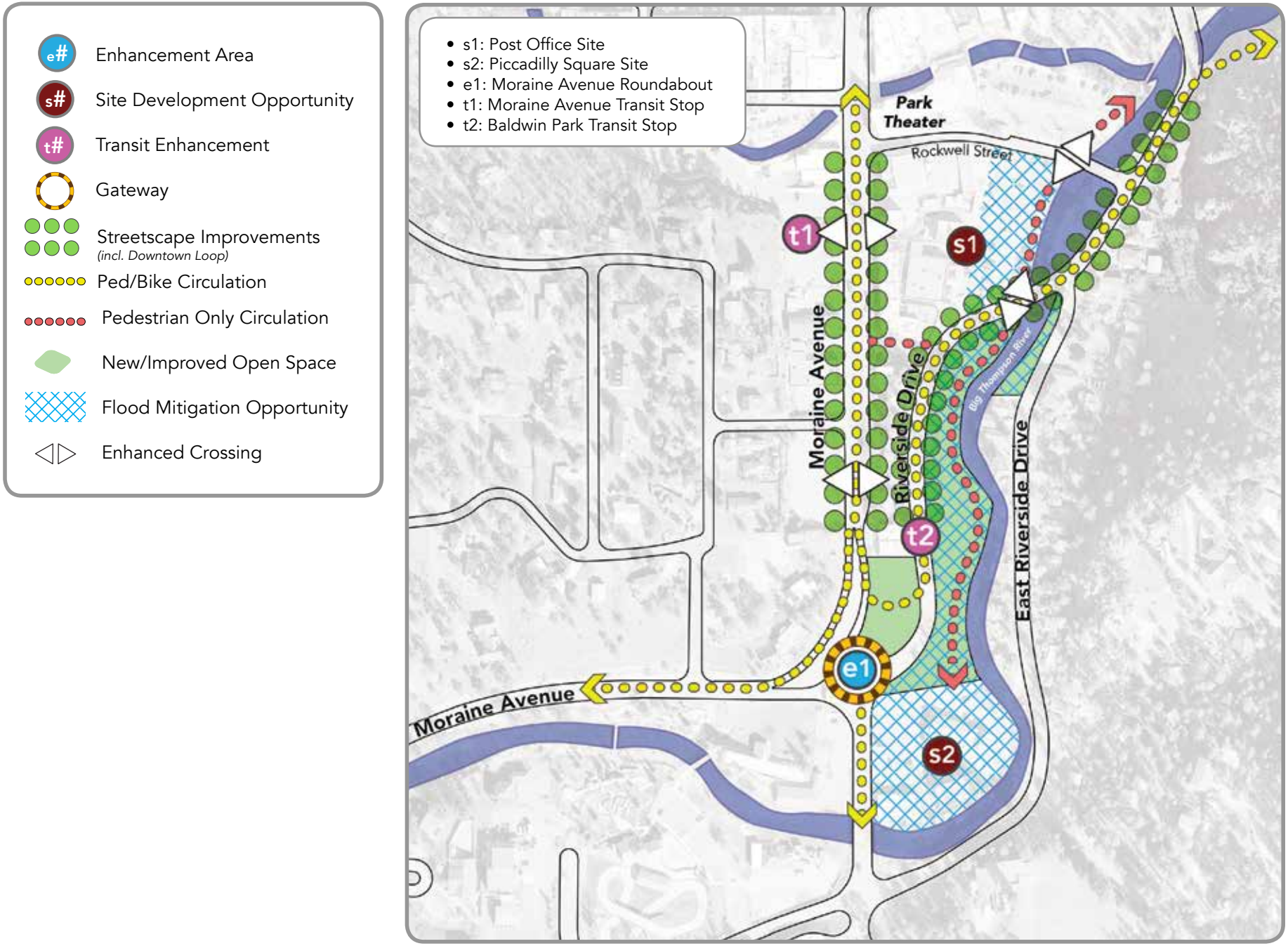


Figure 5.26-Character Area 3 Framework

Public Realm

This section identifies design concepts and recommendations for the public realm.

Baldwin Park

As shown in Figure 5.27, the Big Thompson River edge should be redesigned with a lowered 'benched' area that increases floodway capacity, but is generally dry between flood events. This benched area could include civic features such as performance 'pods', or small stage areas that are used and programmed for Town or private events. Picnic and playground facilities should be interspersed to encourage activity and use. Terracing or concrete steps should be included to enhance river access.

Terracing or stepping up the grade of the landform along the river edge can provide opportunities for all to enjoy river access.

Moraine Avenue/Riverside Drive Couplet

Moraine Avenue and Riverside Drive should be redesigned with the Downtown Loop to include buffered and/or protected bike lanes, widened sidewalks, street trees and updated landscape treatments.

- **Moraine Avenue.** Two bike lane configuration options are shown in Figures 5.27 and 5.28. Option 1 shows a buffered bike lane with extra striping to separate cyclists from parked cars. Option 2 shows a protected bike lane where parked cars separate the cyclist from moving traffic.
- **Riverside Drive.** Riverside Drive should be redesigned to integrate two north-bound lanes, a buffered bicycle lane, on-street parking and widened sidewalks. Connections to Baldwin Park and the Big Thompson River should be established. The Riverside Drive streetscape concept is illustrated in Figure 5.29.

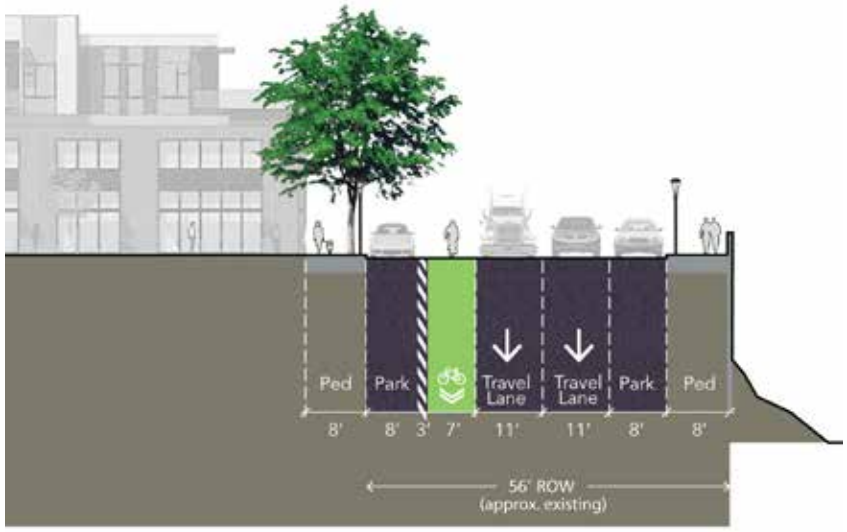


Figure 5.27-Moraine Avenue Streetscape (option 1)

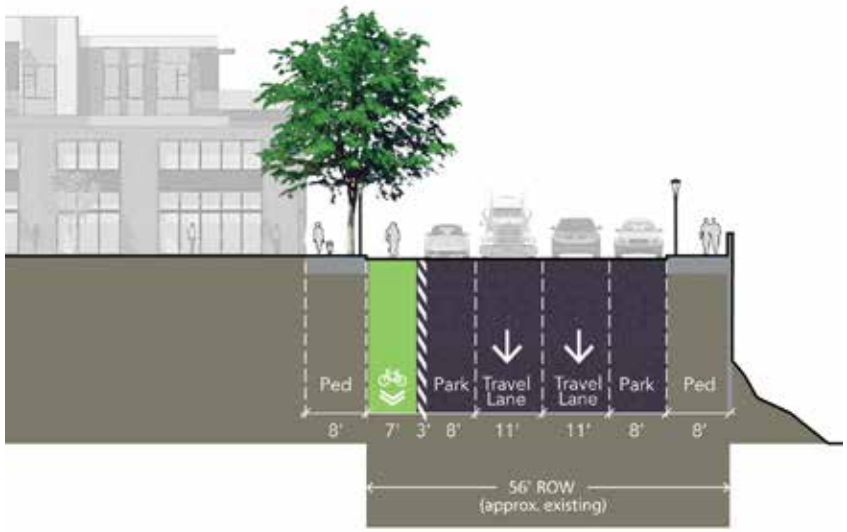


Figure 5.28-Moraine Avenue Streetscape (option 2)

Big Thompson River Edge Enhancements

The Big Thompson River should be re-engineered to expand floodway capacity with features that enhance access and provide amenities. A combination of channel widening, benching of adjacent open spaces and lowering Baldwin Park to provide a detention zone will all help decrease flows and increase flood capacity. These concepts are illustrated in Figure 5.29 and detailed in Resilient Design Studies 5 and 6 on pages 74-77.

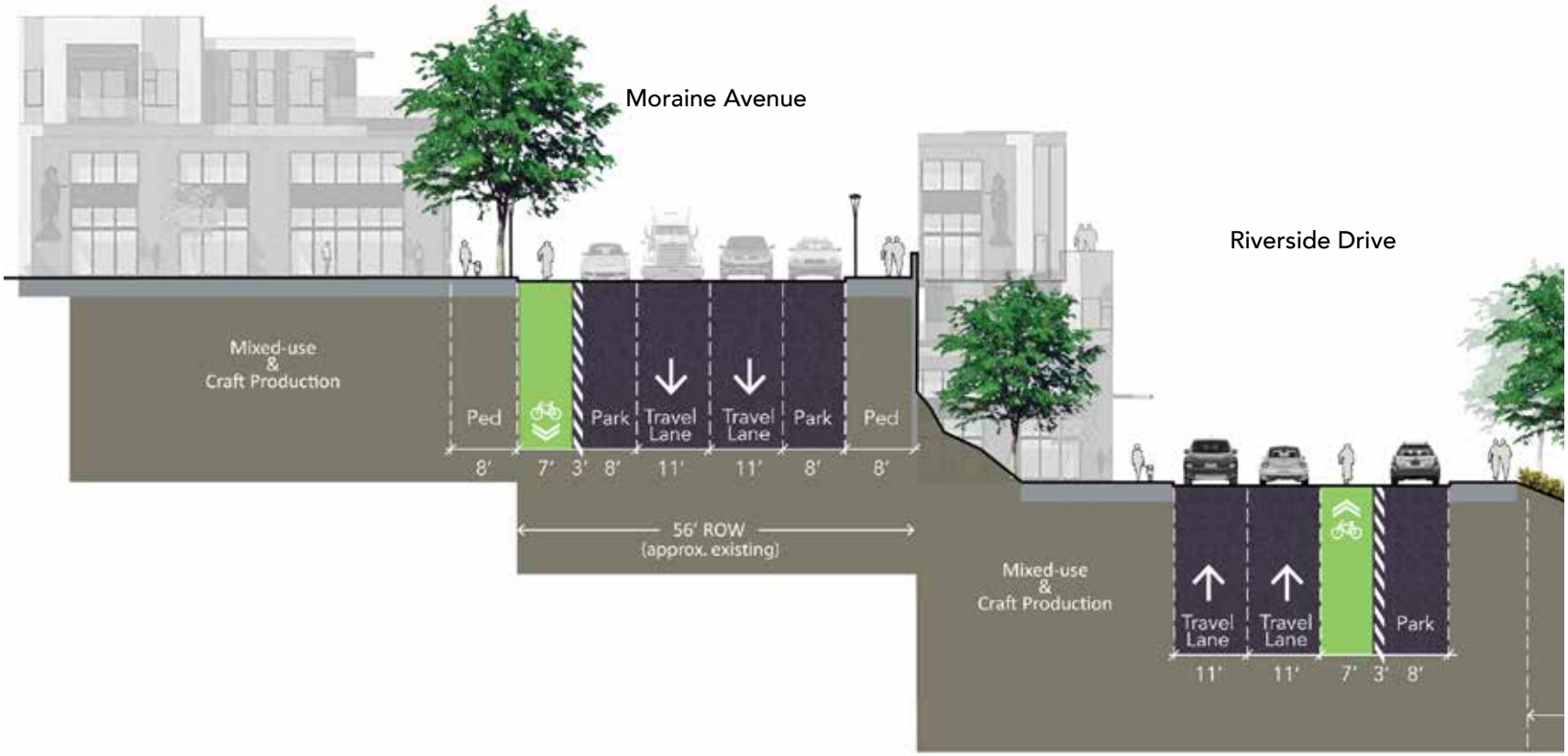
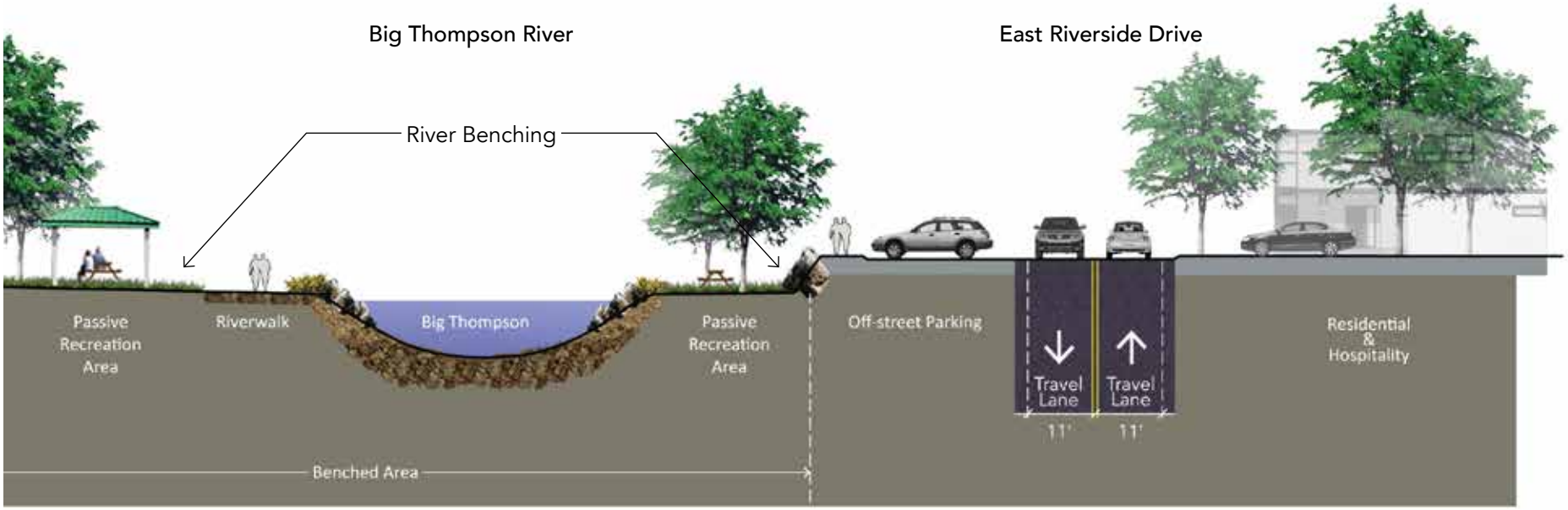


Figure 5.29-Moraine Avenue to East Riverside Drive.


Big Thompson River
East Riverside Drive
River Benching
Passive Recreation Area
Riverwalk
Big Thompson
Passive Recreation Area
Off-street Parking
Travel Lane
Travel Lane
11'
11'
Residential & Hospitality
Benched Area

Encourage creative industries, services and businesses alongside shopping and dining.

Private Realm

Development should support small-scale craft production alongside retail, housing, office and other uses in mixed-use and single-use buildings.

General Development Character

Buildings in CA-3 should range from 1 to 3 stories. A mix of traditional and contemporary building forms will support the requirements for mixed-use and craft production. An active building wall along Moraine Avenue should be developed to extend the energy from the Downtown Core southward. Buildings are encouraged to be built to the back of the sidewalk. Upper-floor residential or office space is encouraged for mixed-use buildings. Small forecourts and plazas should be encouraged along Moraine Avenue to provide space for rest, photographs of Longs Peak, outdoor seating or entry areas for businesses. A wide range of building types and materials should be encouraged in keeping with the vision for a creative district.

A wide range of building types and materials should be encouraged in keeping with the vision for a creative district.

Piccadilly Square

The Piccadilly Square site presents an outstanding redevelopment opportunity for Character Area 3. A new mixed-use project that incorporates flood resilience features, public parking and well-designed outdoor spaces should welcome travelers to Downtown from Rocky Mountain National Park. More details about the redevelopment design concept for this site are provided in Resilient Design Study #5 on pages 74-75.

Post Office Site

The existing post office site should be redeveloped with a public parking structure and mixed-use development. In coordination with redevelopment, a public plaza space and flood control improvements should be provided. More details about the post office redevelopment design concept are provided in Resilient Design Study #6 on pages 76-77.

Incremental Moraine Avenue Development

Small-scale and incremental redevelopment opportunities are encouraged in Character Area 3, and especially on properties fronting Moraine Avenue. This could take many forms, including renovations and additions to existing properties, removal of existing buildings to create new ones or new buildings on vacant land or surface parking areas. Where feasible, new development is encouraged to front Riverside Drive in addition to Moraine Avenue. Given the topographic change between these two streets and as shown in Figure 5.29, creative architectural solutions will be required to successfully execute this concept.

Character AREA 3

Resilient Design Study #5: Piccadilly Square

In this conceptual Resilient Design Study, a flood-resilient parking structure supports three mixed-use buildings at Downtown's southern gateway. The development is integrated with area trails and the vehicular configuration of the Loop and its associated roundabout. A mix of uses are contained in buildings strategically sited to take advantage of views to Long's Peak.

Key Concepts

- Enhance the southern gateway to Downtown.
- Develop a signature catalyst project and destination for Character Area 3.
- Develop a flood-resilient first floor parking structure that takes advantage of topography.
- Provide housing and commercial space in a new mixed use development.

Design Elements

1 Southern Gateway Mixed-use Development
- a. Garage access (level 1)
- b. Central plaza (level 2)
- c. Entry element from Moraine Avenue
- d. Overlook areas (levels 2 and 3)
- e. Stepped Plaza Access to Street Edge
- f. Roundabout with gateway element

Figure 5.30-Piccadilly Square Concept Plan

Concept Overview

This area is redeveloped to offer a first Downtown stop for visitors entering Town from Rocky Mountain National Park. A major terrace area and open space on the project's second level offers exceptional views of nearby mountains, wildlife and the Big Thompson River. Buildings with active uses engage this area with outdoor dining and other activities. The sloping topography of the site provides an excellent opportunity for a partially sub-grade parking garage. The parking level serves as a podium for upper-story building components and is designed to withstand water infiltration during significant flood events.

The upper deck supports a dynamic mixed-use development. Restaurants, lodging, offices and residences would all benefit from the views and energetic location. A semi-private civic space is located in a central location on the site, protected from the traffic of the Loop, but still highly visible to those passing by. The space is used for festivals, markets, music, retail activities or unprogrammed social space.

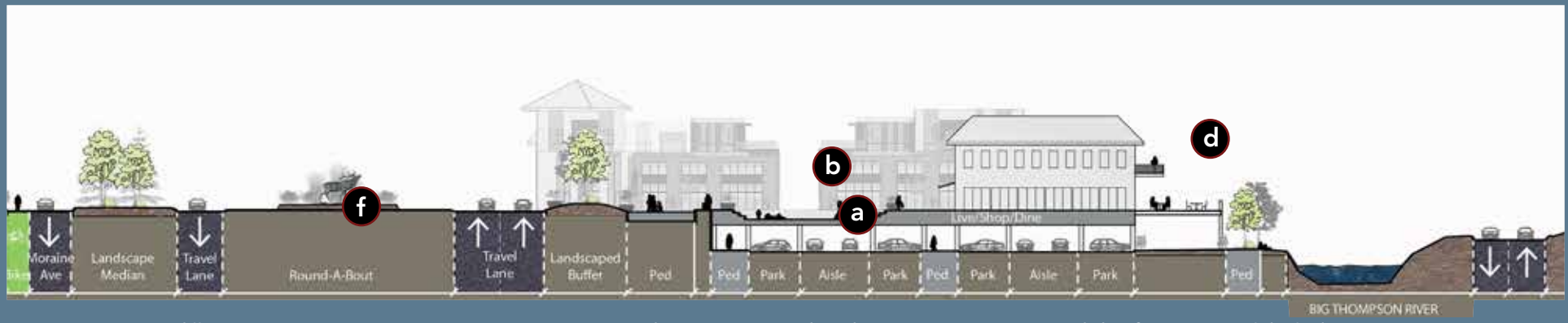


Figure 5.31-Piccadilly Square Concept Section (note: items "c" and "e" are not within the cross-section cut and therfore are not labeled)

Character AREA 3

Resilient Design Study #6: Post Office Parking Lot

In this conceptual Resilient Design Study, a flood-resilient public parking structure is connected to a mixed-use development along Moraine Avenue. Plaza space and integrated pathways connect people from Moraine Avenue to the Big Thompson River edge.

Key Concepts

- Create a central public parking garage.
- Redevelop the area between Moraine Avenue and Riverside Drive.
- Improve pedestrian connections between Moraine Avenue and Riverside Drive.
- Energize Moraine Avenue and create a new catalyst project and activity node.
- Reduce flood risk.

Design Elements

1. Parking Garage
   - a. Upper Moraine Avenue connection
   - b. Lower Riverside Drive plaza
   - c. Riverwalk connections
2. Mixed-use building
3. Expanded Big Thompson River
   - d. Reinforced river walls
   - e. Benched areas
4. Riverwalk Trail

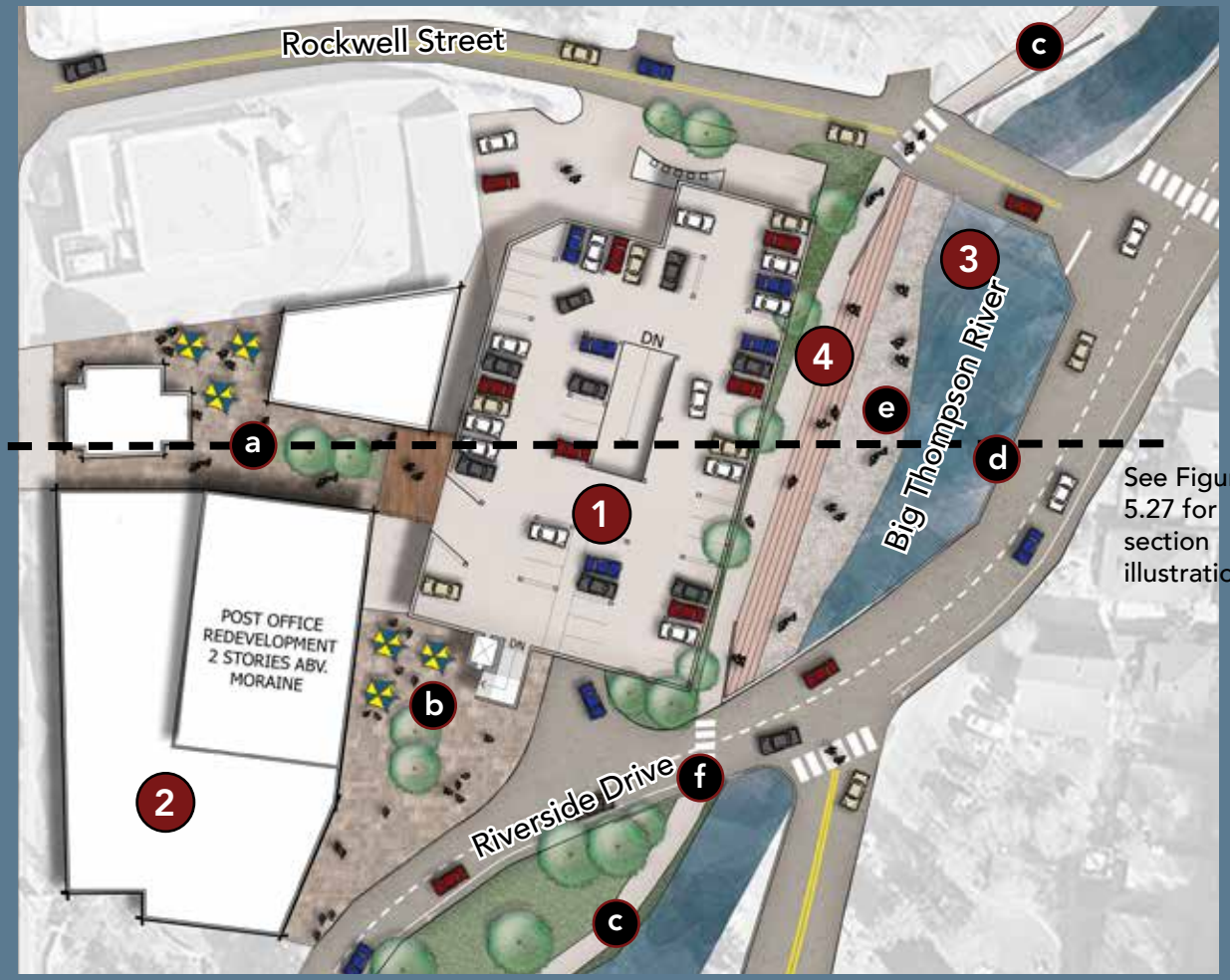


Figure 5.32-Post Office Parking Lot Concept Plan

Concept Overview

The existing Post Office parking lot and adjacent areas are redeveloped with a two- to three-story parking structure that is accessed by vehicles from Riverside Drive. The parking structure walls channelize flood flows and protect buildings to the west.

Commercial, lodging and residential space are provided in one large building and two smaller stand-alone structures all of which are up to three or four stories tall . Buildings are designed to transition in scale with grade changes from Moraine Avenue to Riverside Drive, minimizing building heights at the street level. A pedestrian plaza and link provides an animated connection between Moraine Avenue, the parking structure and the Big Thompson River.

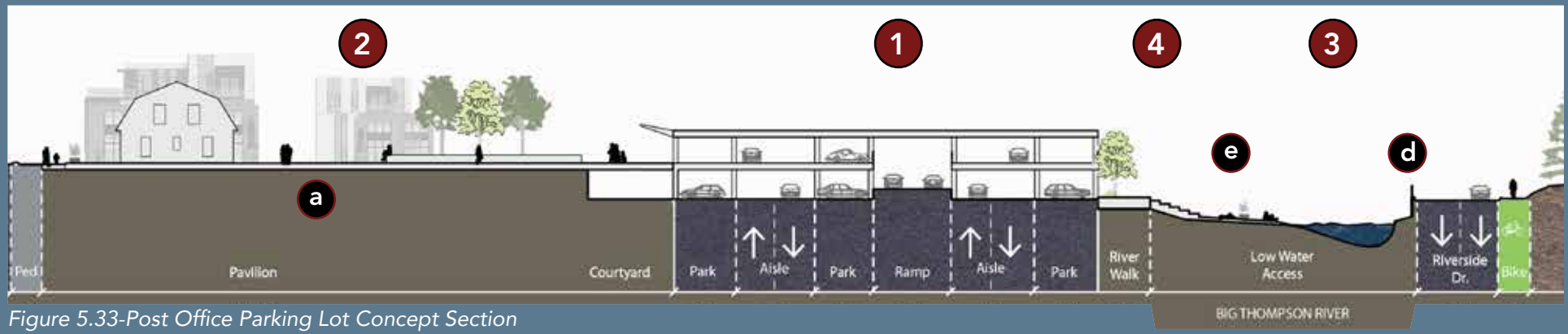


Figure 5.33-Post Office Parking Lot Concept Section

Buildings between 1-3 stories are appropriate in Character Area 4.

Character Area 4: Community Services & Tourism Hub

This section provides a vision statement, specific recommendations and design concepts for Character Area 4. Figure 5.34 identifies the boundaries of Character Area 4. Figure 5.35 illustrates framework concepts and recommendations for physical design and circulation.

Vision Statement

Character Area 4 is an eastern anchor for and gateway to Downtown. Big Thompson Avenue is redesigned as a landmark entry boulevard with a landscaped median leading to the excitement of the Downtown Core and views to the high Rocky Mountains. New commercial buildings line the northern edge of Big Thompson Avenue, activating the street edge and minimizing the visual presence of surface parking. On St. Vrain Avenue, a public parking structure welcomes visitors and acts as a transit and active transportation hub. Stanley Village and the Visitor Center combine to provide a mixed-use services hub and starting point for Downtown exploration, with everything from groceries, gas, tourist guidance, retail and large format entertainment uses like the cinema available. Character Area 4 is expanded as a job center and continues to be a key sales tax generator. The visual and physical barrier presented by Highway 34/36 is reduced by intersection design interventions and an enhanced underpass, creating seamless multi-modal connections to the Downtown Core.

Key Objectives:

- Encourage incremental redevelopment of Stanley Village.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections from the Visitor Center to Stanley Village and the Stanley Hotel.
- Increase safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Reduce the Highway 36/34 barrier effect to stitch this Character Area 4 with the Downtown Core.
- Create an attractive sense of entry to Downtown.

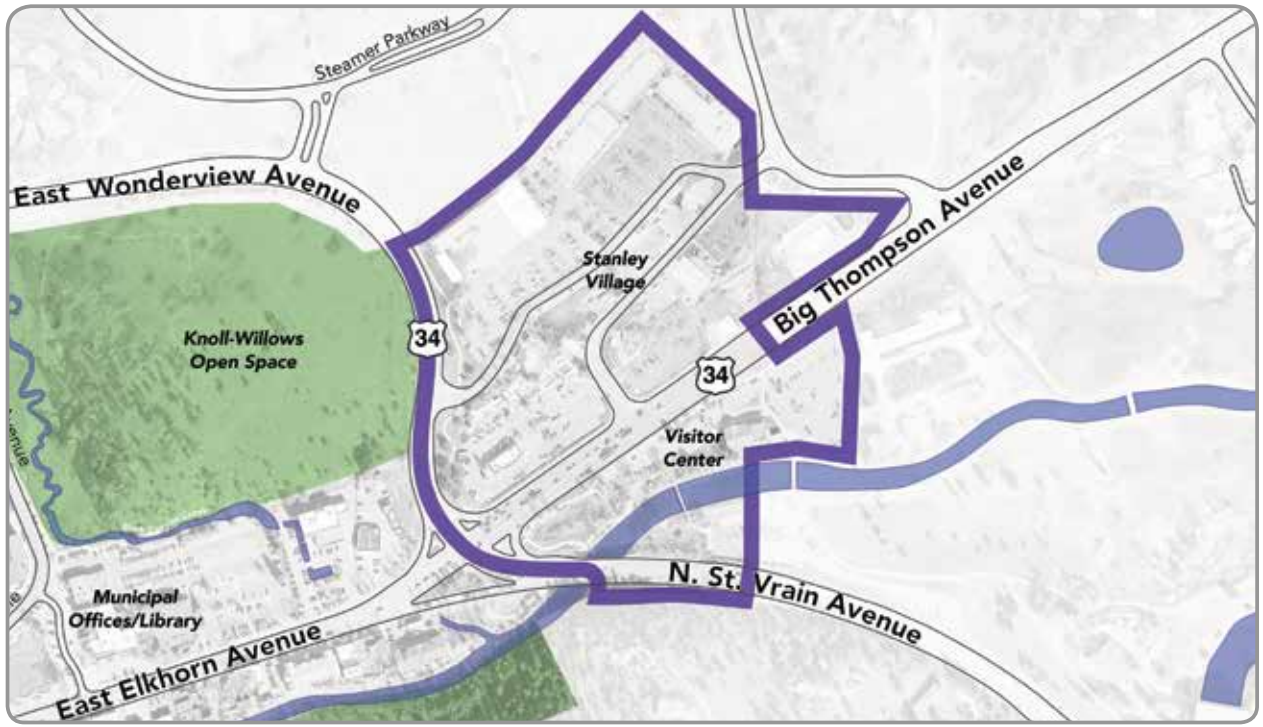
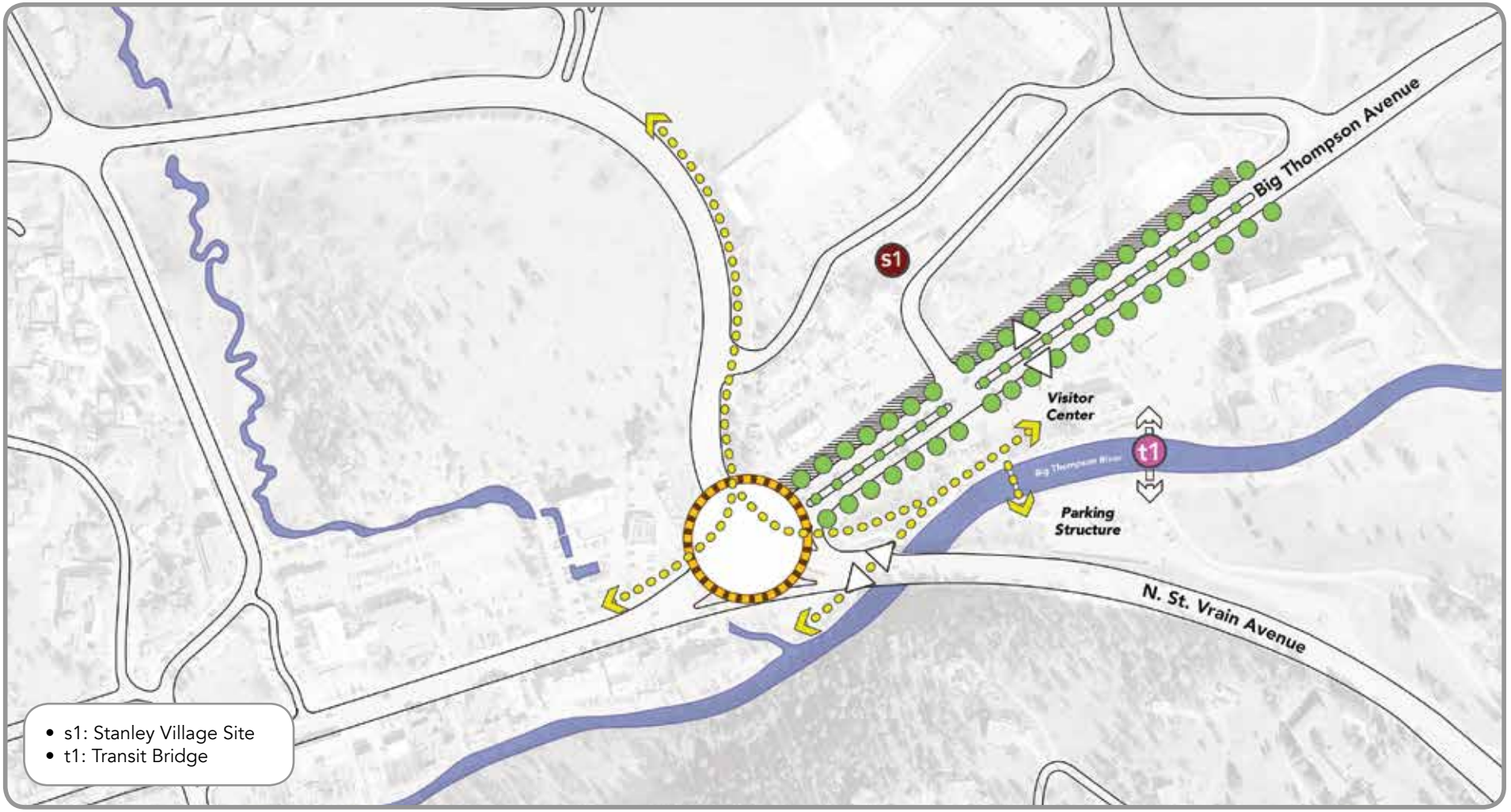


Figure 5.34-Character Area 4



e# Enhancement Area
s# Site Development Opportunity
t# Transit Enhancement
Minor Gateway
New/Improved Street/Entry
Streetscape Improvements
Ped/Bike Circulation
Pedestrian Only Circulation
New/Improved Open Space
Enhanced Crossing
New Buildings as Street Edge

Figure 5.35-Character Area 4 Framework

New "liner" buildings should be located along Big Thompson Avenue in place of what is surface parking today.

Public Realm

This section identifies key concepts and recommendations for the public realm.

Big Thompson Avenue

Streetscape improvements should establish a grand sense of entry to Downtown on Big Thompson Avenue. As shown in Figure 5.33, two narrowed vehicular travel lanes in either direction are separated by a center planted median that accommodates a crossing from the Visitor Center to Stanley Village and strategically placed left turn pockets. Generous sidewalks are separated from the street by planting buffers.

Private Realm

Private Development in CA-4 is most likely to occur at Stanley Village. This section describes private development recommendations for this area.

General Development Character

Buildings in CA-4 should range from 1 to 3 stories. Contemporary and traditional architectural character is appropriate. New "liner" buildings should be located along Big Thompson Avenue in place of what is surface parking today.

Stanley Village Incremental Redevelopment

Stanley Village should be redeveloped incrementally over time to provide enhanced placemaking features. This will likely require replacement of existing buildings with new ones or new buildings constructed on existing surface parking areas. Promote incremental redevelopment of the site, but ensure parking and circulation remain adequate and efficient.

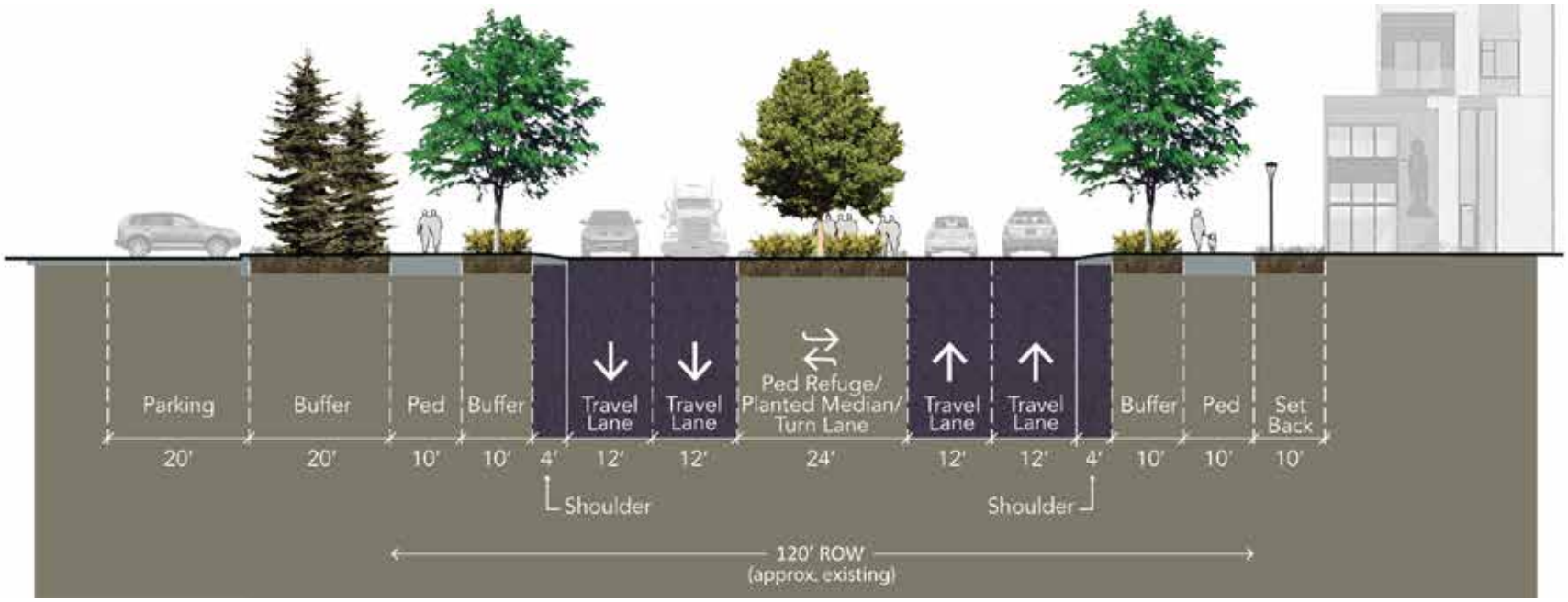


Figure 5.36-Big Thompson Avenue Streetscape

CIRCULATION

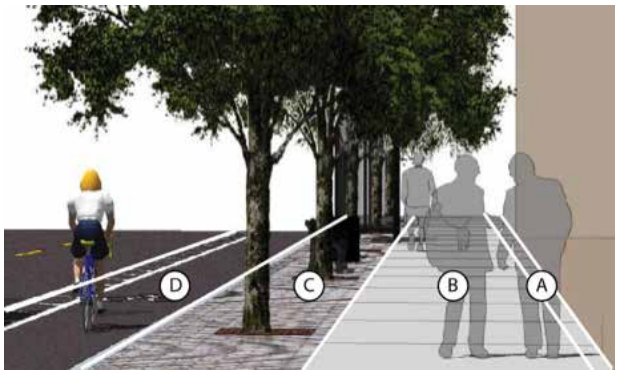
6

This chapter provides recommendations and concepts for circulation. It addresses all modes of travel, including pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and transit. Please also see Appendix A for additional guidelines for transportation-related infrastructure and facilities.

Protected bike lanes provide a safe and comfortable experience.

Shared-use path facilities serve transportation and recreation bicycling purposes.

Landscaping, storefronts, signage, benches and bicycle parking create an inviting experience for pedestrians and bicyclists in Telluride, CO. (Source: www.terragalleria.com)



Sidewalk zones

Active Transportation (Pedestrians and Bicycles)

This section focuses on active, or pedestrian and bicycle, circulation. Please note that many of the Plan's active transportation recommendations are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Downtown currently has walking and bicycling demands that are not being met. Some residents and visitors are not comfortable making trips on foot or by bike for fear of potential conflicts with motor vehicles. Strategic improvements coupled with wayfinding enhancements can increase the number of people walking and bicycling in the Town, which in turn will raise awareness of drivers.

Technical Recommendations

Moraine Avenue Design

Chapter 5 recommends a Moraine Avenue street design concept that differs somewhat from the current proposal as indicated in the Downtown Loop documentation. Two alternative design options are shown in Figures 6.1 and 6.2. The first option is similar to the Downtown Loop design, but with some modifications to allow a more substantial buffer from parked cars. The second option shows an alternative that places the bicycle lane between on-street parking and the curb edge. This option would provide a "protected bike lane" that can increase safety for bicyclists and automobile operators since the two are not forced to travel directly alongside one another.

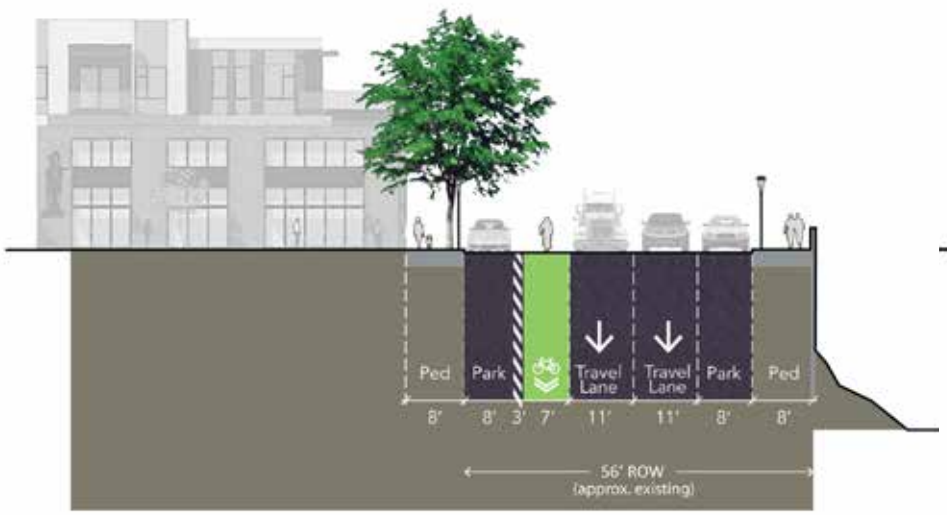


Figure 6.1: Moraine Street Option 1

Figure 6.2: Moraine Street Option 2

Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing Improvements

As discussed in previous chapters, enhanced crossings of rivers and streets are strongly recommended. Figure 6.3 displays potential crossing improvement locations. These crossing recommendations are based only on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity considerations and do not consider added benefits of flood conveyence that are available with grade-separated crossings.

	LOCATION	OPTION 1 Pro(P) / Con(C)	OPTION 2 Pro(P) / Con(C)
1	Elkhorn Lodge	**At Grade** P: Cost, low traffic C: Safety	**Underpass** P: Safety C: Ground water, high cost
2	Elkhorn - East of West Park	**At Grade** P: Cost C: Safety	
3	Elkhorn - East of herd	**Underpass** P: Safety, visibility C: Property take, cost	**At Grade** P: Cost, immediacy C: Safety, traffic
4	Moraine Bridge	**Currently under design and grade separated**	
5	Picadilly Square	**At Grade**	
6	Post office ped crossing		
7	Rockwell ped crossing		
8	Riverside Bridge	**Grade separated, proposed as loop project**	
9	Town Hall / Bond Park	**At Grade**	
10	Town Hall / mid-block	**At Grade** P: Safety, anticipate high volumes C: High traffic	
11	Big Thompson bridge	**Utilize existing abutment for new bridge** P: Cost C: Existing infrastructure doesn't align with Town Hall crossing	**New abutment** P: Flexibility C: Property take, cost
12	Big Thompson West of St. Vrain	**Underpass** P: Safety C: Property take, cost	**At Grade** P: Cost C: Signalized intersection disrupt continuity
13	Stanley Village ped crossing	**Underpass** P: Safety C: Property take, cost	**At Grade** P: Cost C: Traffic volume

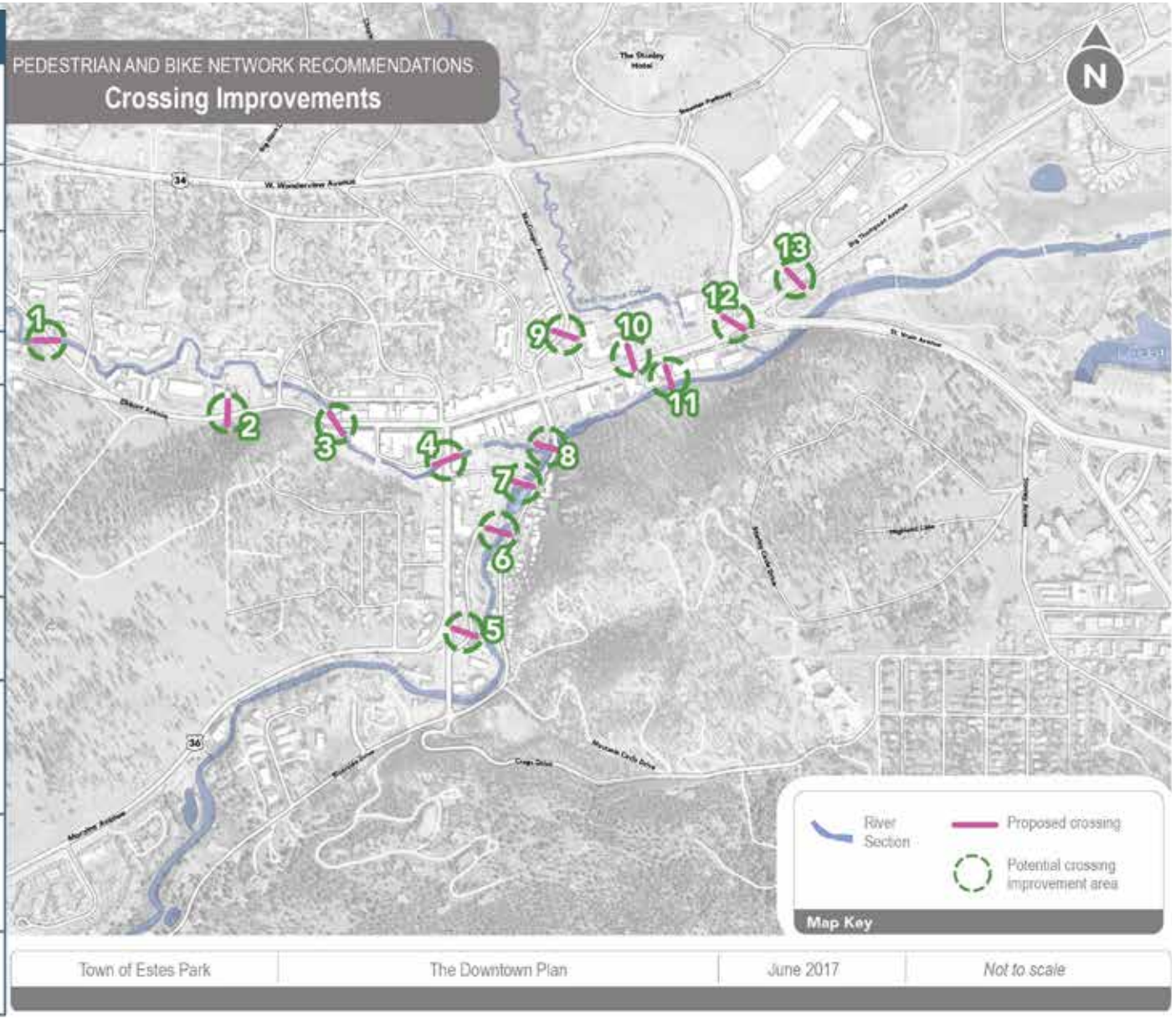


Figure 6.3: Downtown Crossing Improvements

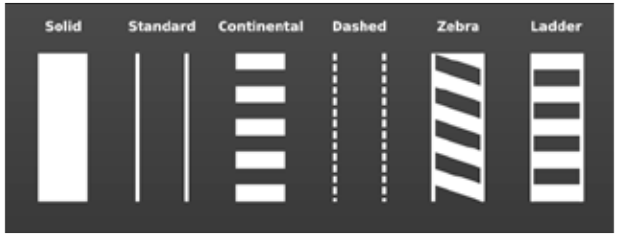
Accommodating Pedestrians at Critical Crossings in Estes Park

This Plan recommends adding infrastructure elements at critical crossings to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Figures 6.4 through 6.6 summarize and show options for a few of the key crossing challenges.

Street	Recommended Crossing Improvements
Big Thompson Avenue Crossing, Near the Visitor Center (Figure 6.4)	Precast concrete box culvert underpass. This may require coordinating with private property owners to ensure enough room is allotted to achieve ADA-compliant slopes along the path leading to and from the underpass.
MacGregor Avenue Crossing, West of Town Hall Site (Figure 6.5)	Controlled crossing via a pedestrian-activated flashing beacon or other treatment.
West Elkhorn Avenue Crossing, Along Fall River (Figure 6.6)	Underpass or at-grade crossing. Additional evaluation of flood level and underpass feasibility is needed.

Pedestrian refuge islands can be integrated into midblock crossings. (Source: USDOT Federal Highway Administration)

Public art can be integrated into curb extensions. (Source: John Greenfield; from Quick Builds for Better Streets, PeopleforBikes)



High-visibility continental crosswalks are the preferred type at intersection and mid-block locations.

Figure 6.4: Big Thompson Avenue Crossing, Near the Visitors Center

Figure 6.5: East-West Bicycle System, North of Town Hall

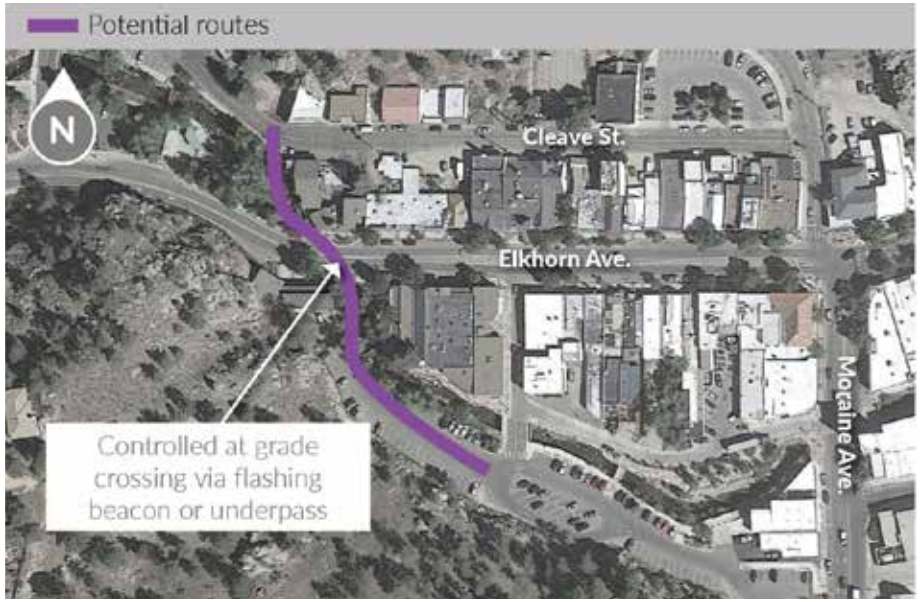


Figure 6.6: West Elkhorn Avenue, Along Fall River

Policy Recommendations

Beyond physical infrastructure improvements, the Town should cultivate policies, programs and practices that raise the profile of pedestrians and cyclists and support non-motorized, active transportation options. Several key policy and programming recommendations are included below.

Adopt a Town Complete Streets Policy

Complete streets are accessible, comfortable and functional for users of all modes, ages and abilities, to both travel along and cross. Cities across the U. S. have adopted complete streets policies of various forms.

Use Temporary Installations to Test Infrastructure Improvements

This Plan recommends the Town work with local businesses, community organizations and residents to test out potential pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Cones, sandbags, chalk, spray paint and movable planters can be used to delineate bicycle lanes, curb extensions and other enhancements. Improvements can be left for a single day to correspond with a specific event, several days or a week. Evaluating the improvements before and after installation helps to assess potential benefits in pedestrian and bicyclist use and driver compliance. With temporary installations, the Town can evaluate the potential effects of an infrastructure improvement without a significant capital investment.

Encourage Bicycle Supportive Facilities

Bicycle amenities should be provided to support bicycling by users of all ages and abilities. Potential bike share and bike parking facilities are shown on Figure 6.7.

Bicycle Parking

Convenient, accessible and easy-to-use bicycle parking is the most essential amenity for encouraging bicycling. Bicycle parking should be abundant, accessible and placed near primary building entrances. With the recommended "inverted-U" bike parking style, users can park their bikes from both sides of the rack and can lock both the bike wheel and frame to the rack.

Bicycle Storage

Beyond bicycle parking, several options provide convenient bicycle storage. These options provide greater security for bicycles, can be used for extended bicycle storage and keep bicycles out of weather elements. Extended bicycle storage options are appropriate at or near parking facilities, visitor centers or other areas that are outside of the plain view of passersby. Bicycle storage options can be lock and key or card accessible via a daily, weekly or monthly fee.

Bicycle Repair Stations

Bicycle repair stations are stationary kiosks placed near shared-use paths or bicycle parking areas that offer bicycle repair tools and air pumps. The tools are affixed to the station with cables to prevent theft.

Bike Share

Perfect for visitors or residents who may not have a bicycle readily available, bike share systems provide bicycles at stations throughout a community. Users rent bikes, typically by the hour or for a day, by using a credit card at station kiosks. Bike share systems offer enhanced connectivity for those wishing to easily connect after they have arrived at a location.

There is significant potential to establish a small bike share system in the Town of Estes Park with four prospective station locations—Estes Park Visitors Center, Estes Park Town Hall, the Post Office and the West Park Center. With future redevelopment at the Elkhorn Lodge, an additional location could be implemented there in the future. Bike sharing systems are best implemented where stations are easily visible to the public, readily accessible on foot or by car, and along a bicycle-friendly corridor so users can bike to and from the station safely. Figure 6.7 depicts recommended bicycle parking and bike share locations within the Town.

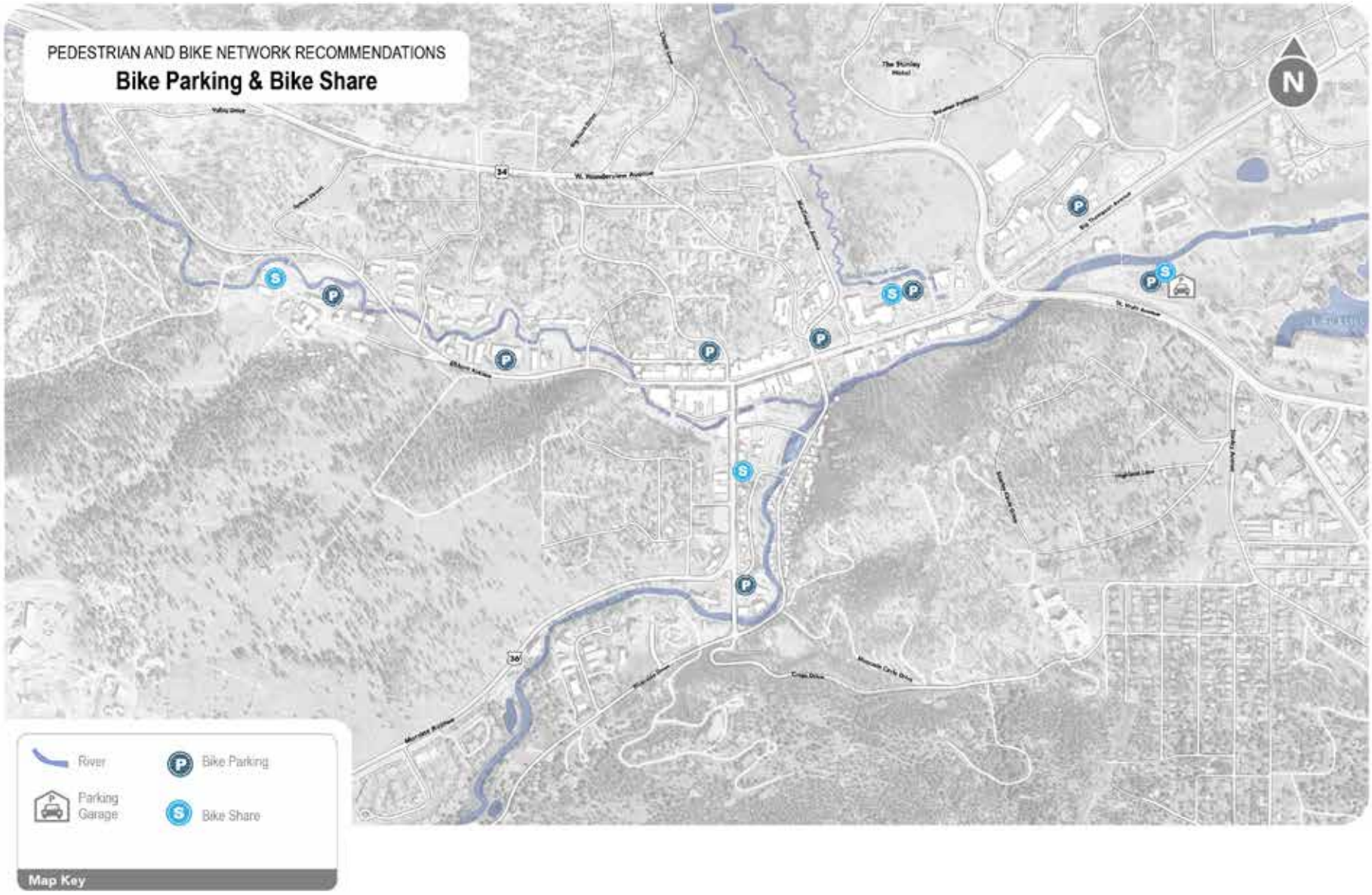


Figure 6.7: Potential Downtown Bike Share Locations

Vehicle Circulation

Efforts to address traffic congestion Downtown and to enhance the Town's street network must balance the needs of all users, rather than prioritize vehicles over all other modes, or vice versa. Wide roadways with exclusive turn lanes encourage higher speeds and degrade the experience of pedestrians and bicyclists. Alternatively, severe congestion that prioritizes all other users over automobile mobility can lead to visitor frustration and diminish the overall experience of visiting Estes Park.

A key element to preserving and enhancing Downtown's character is addressing anticipated traffic growth in the coming years. On weekends during the peak visitor season (June through October), traffic conditions regularly reach congested (over capacity) conditions. Recent traffic analyses indicated that in 2011 there were 40 days with two or more hours of congestion per day Downtown. Without the Loop project, this congestion is forecasted to increase to 147 days of congestion by 2040. To address current congestion levels and anticipated traffic growth, the Town should pursue several strategies that work together to better utilize the roadway network and reduce overall traffic demands Downtown:

- **Improve wayfinding to parking and transit facilities:** Vehicles circulating looking for parking add congestion to the network. This can be addressed in part through improved signage and wayfinding.
- **Reconfigure existing roadways to better spread traffic across the network:** The Loop project will significantly reallocate traffic between Moraine Avenue and West Riverside Drive/Riverside Drive.
- **Expand the roadway network where possible:** With a very limited network Downtown, providing new routes can relieve traffic on the primary routes.

Key considerations for enhancements to Downtown's vehicular network are shown in Figure 6.8.

Identifying public parking areas with clear signage that is visible from the street helps reduce vehicles' need to hunt for parking areas.

Improve Vehicular Wayfinding

In many downtown environments with limited parking, a portion of traffic congestion is caused by vehicles circulating looking for parking; outreach efforts in the Town support this assumption. Directing visitors to available parking quickly and efficiently can reduce congestion with no changes to the roadway network.

With the Loop project and potential future investments in Downtown parking, wayfinding will only become more important. Capturing vehicles before they enter Downtown has the greatest potential to reduce congestion. Signage that clearly communicates options for parking at the Visitor Center and walking or riding the shuttle will help visitors less familiar with the area access alternative options.

Extending Cleave Street between Big Horn Drive and Virginia Drive would provide an additional option for local traffic. While the steep hill and rock outcropping just north of the buildings fronting Elkhorn Avenue presents a challenge, a narrow shared connection could help improve local access for vehicles and bicycles.

Reconfigure Roadway Network

Depending on the type of intersection controls used, a single lane of traffic in a downtown environment can carry up to 800 vehicles per hour at slow speeds (less than 35 mph). In constrained downtown environments, towns can address traffic growth by using adjacent and parallel roadways rather than attempting to widen congested roadways, which can degrade pedestrian environments.

The Loop project attempts to improve existing, underutilized roadways (West Riverside Drive and Riverside Drive) without adding any new traffic lanes Downtown. Estimates from the Downtown Estes Loop Environmental Analysis indicate that traffic volumes will be reduced by around 12 to 15 percent on Moraine Avenue and Elkhorn Avenue by converting Elkhorn Avenue (from Riverside Drive to Moraine Avenue)/Moraine Avenue and West Riverside Drive/Riverside Drive to a one-way pair. One-way streets can typically accommodate approximately 20 percent more vehicles per lane than a standard two-way street, due to improved intersection operations. In the short term, operations at the US 34/US 36 intersection will also be improved through revised signal timing plans that complement the one-way pair operations to the west.

In part because vehicles tend to follow more closely at slower speeds, reducing traffic speeds through traffic calming measures does not have a significant effect on overall roadway capacity (vehicles carried per lane); it only impacts average vehicle travel times. When converting streets to a one-way pair, it is important to use elements such as on-street parking, pedestrian crossing treatments, highly visible bicycle lanes, and streetscape improvements to encourage slow speeds and preserve a multimodal environment for all users. Measures that slow traffic but maintain vehicle flow throughout will ensure that the proposed roadway reconfiguration will reduce congestion and allow for additional growth while maintaining safe, comfortable conditions for all users.

Expand the Roadway Network

Downtown is constrained by topography, the Fall and Big Thompson Rivers, and a limited roadway network. Options for adding new roadway connections are very limited. However, the Town can pursue options to expand the street network when possible to draw local traffic from the major through streets and activate side streets.

Cleave Street presents one such opportunity. Extending Cleave Street between Big Horn Drive and Virginia Drive would provide an additional option for local traffic. While the steep hill and rock outcropping just north of the buildings fronting Elkhorn Avenue presents a challenge, a new shared connection could help improve local access for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.

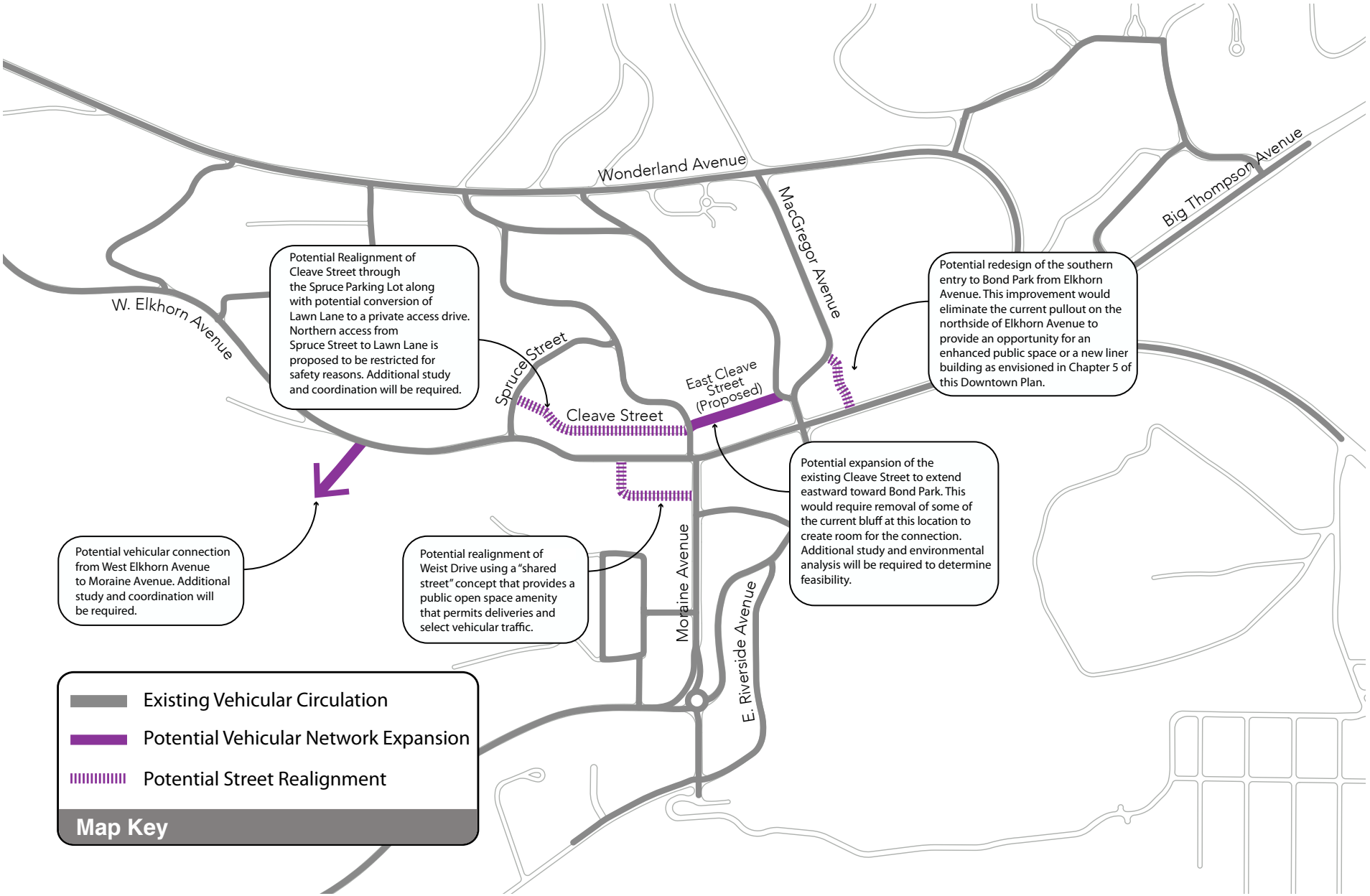


Figure 6.8: Potential Vehicular Network Enhancements

Estes Park free trolley

Transit

The Town operates six free daily shuttles during the 12-week peak summer season (between June and September) from the Visitor Center to a variety of destinations. Additionally, the Town provides free trolley services for guests and residents during several events outside of the summer shuttle season (21 days of service outside of the peak summer season in 2015).

The National Park Service operates three free shuttles during the peak season (typically late May to early October) in and around Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). One of these routes, the Hiker Shuttle, serves the Visitor Center.

Figure 6.9 displays a map of the six Estes Park shuttle routes. All routes serve the Visitor Center. However, only three routes serve the Downtown Core:

- Gold Route (Trolley): All day out and back service between the Visitor Center and Maxwell Inn via Downtown every 30 minutes
- Green Route: Afternoon one-way loop service between the Events Complex, Town Hall and the Visitor Center every 15 minutes
- Brown Route: All day one-way loop service between the Events Complex, Mary's Lake Lodge, the YMCA Hampel Auditorium, Picadilly Square, Barlow Plaza/Town Hall and the Visitor Center every hour

Currently, those who park at the Visitor Center and ride the shuttle wait approximately 15 minutes on average for the Trolley (Gold Route), which arrives at the Visitor Center every 30 minutes. During the afternoon hours, some may elect to ride to the Downtown Core from the Visitor Center on the Green Route, which runs every 15 minutes. However, because this route operates on a one-way loop and first serves the Events Complex after stopping at the Visitor Center, the trip takes approximately 10 minutes. The Brown Route does not provide a reasonable option to travel from the Visitor Center to the Downtown Core, as it operates on a one-way loop, serving Elkhorn Avenue last after departing the Visitor Center. Both the Visitor Center and the Events Complex provide ample parking and, with clear signage and communication, can serve as attractive options to park and ride Downtown for visitors and Downtown employees alike.

The Town should pursue several strategies to continue to improve shuttle service as a convenient, easy-to-use and efficient alternative to driving and parking Downtown:

- Revised routes to improve frequency of service between the Visitor Center and the Downtown Core
- Easy-to-understand route maps and schedules that clearly communicate options for riding to and from Downtown
- Highly visible transit stops with amenities, such as shelters, trash receptacles, benches and route information

Improved Frequency of Service to and from Downtown

The Trolley (Gold Route) offers an easy-to-understand route map that provides a convenient option for visitors to park at the Visitor Center and ride Downtown. With 30-minute service, however, visitors can expect to wait for 15 minutes on average to take the five-minute trip on the Trolley to the Downtown Core. The Town should strive to provide service between the Downtown Core and the Visitor Center every 10 minutes; this is considered "high-frequency" and allows riders to feel confident a shuttle will arrive shortly, without consulting a schedule.

This can be accomplished by investing in additional Trolley service or revising the Green, Brown and Silver Routes so they serve the Downtown Core and the Visitor Center in both directions. Example route revisions could include converting the Green, Silver and Brown Routes to out and back service to provide multiple overlapping routes between the Visitor Center and the Downtown Core. These revisions would increase the end to end travel times for each route, but provide overlapping, high-frequency service between the Visitor Center and the Downtown Core, as shown in Figure 6.10.

Easy-to-understand Route Maps and Schedules

One-way looping routes provide an efficient way to serve many destinations with a single vehicle, but such routes are often confusing for visitors as they only provide service in one direction. While residents and employees can learn schedules and figure out the best routes to meet their needs, visitors often avoid shuttles with complicated route structures because it can be difficult to confirm they will be able to find another shuttle back to their vehicle or point of origin.

The Town should implement a high-frequency corridor between the Visitor Center and the Downtown Core using multiple routes, route maps, schedules and shuttle displays to clearly communicate the next major stop on the route so that visitors can easily understand how to use the shuttle system. Most visitors will be less concerned with the end point destinations of individual routes, but will simply want to know if any individual shuttle will run between the Visitor Center and the Downtown Core via Elkhorn Avenue.

Design a transit stop with amenities and recognizable branding.

Highly Visible Transit Stops with Amenities

Not all shuttle stops will serve a large number of passengers. In fact, only a few stops along the highest frequency corridors are likely to carry most visitors to the Town. Investing in amenities at these select stops will draw attention to the transit system, allow visitors to feel the shuttle system is both reliable and convenient and provide a comfortable location to wait for the next shuttle. The Town should invest in amenities such as shelters, benches, route information and potentially real time arrival information at the following locations:

- Events Complex
- Visitor Center
- Town Hall/Barlow Plaza
- Moraine Avenue and Elkhorn Avenue
- Rockwell Street

Branded, visible vehicles and highly visible transit stops communicate to all visitors that the shuttle system provides a convenient option for travel to and from Downtown, which will attract additional riders over time.

Exclusive Travel Lanes for Shuttles and Bikes

Explore the feasibility of establishing a temporary exclusive travel lane for shuttles and bicyclists. This would require designating a vehicular travel lane as a "Shuttle/Bike Only" lane and restricting personal vehicle travel on certain days or during specific time periods of the day. The objective is to encourage transit use in Downtown by facilitating lesser travel times for those willing to take transit. At the same time, reduced vehicular activity would result in a safer bicycling environment. Significant study and coordination with the California Department of Transportation (CDOT) and other agencies would be required to determine project feasibility.

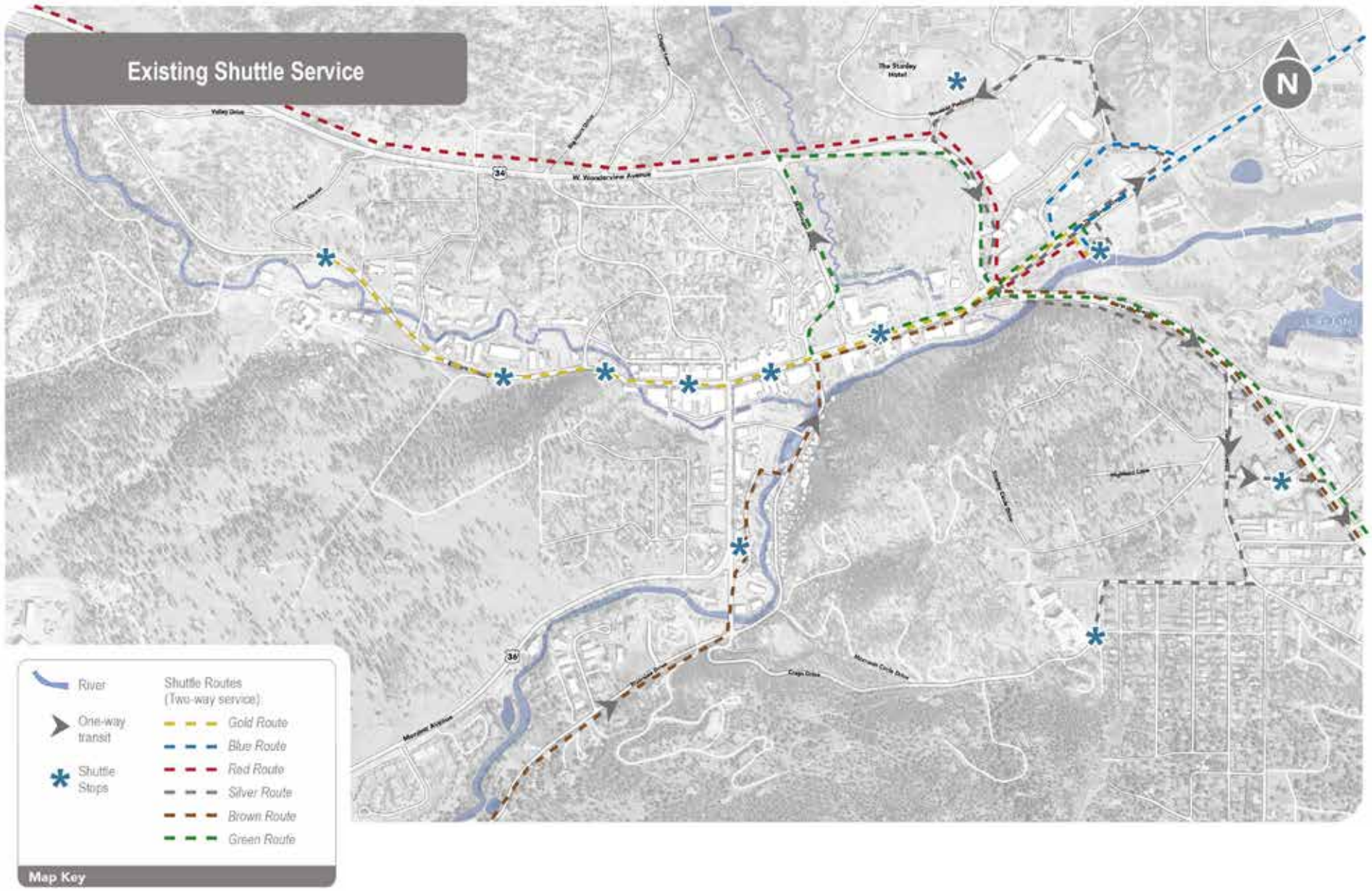


Figure 6.9: Existing Shuttle Service

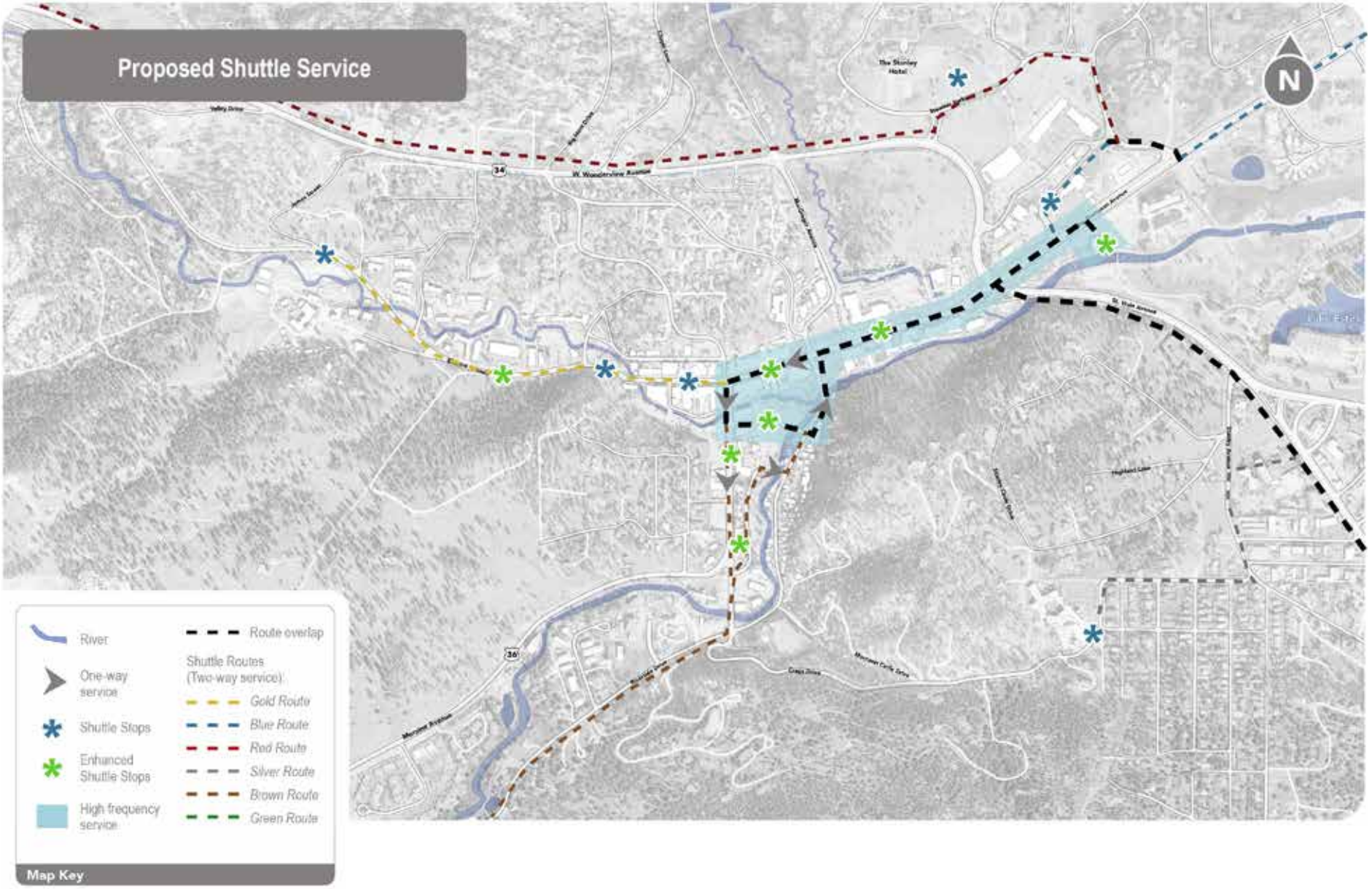


Figure 6.10: Recommended Transit Shuttle Improvements

PARKING

7

This chapter provides parking-related recommendations for Downtown. It includes:

- **Parking Management Recommendations:** Recommended immediate to short-term, as well as mid- to longer-term strategies carefully curated to provide guidance on how to effectively leverage parking and mobility management to support the Town's growth
- **Preparing for the Future:** Key industry trends in parking and mobility management that should be kept in mind as the Town's parking and mobility management program grows in size and sophistication.

Parking Management Recommendations

The following recommendations are focused on transitioning the Town's parking management efforts to be more effective, more efficient and more user-friendly.

Short-Term (2017-2018)

Transition to a Consolidated City Department Management Model

The Town should identify the preferred location for all Downtown parking management functions. Traditionally, parking functions in municipal environments have been "horizontally-fragmented," where different functions of parking have been assigned to various departments. This approach can present communication challenges, which can lead to inefficiency, disjointed planning efforts, and customer frustration. The Downtown Plan recommends a "vertically-integrated" model, with all parking-oriented functions fully "housed" within one department.

- **Consolidated ("Vertically-Integrated") City Department Model:** This model places all parking functions within one town department. Functions such as enforcement, facilities management, outreach, branding and parking planning are placed under one director, who may or may not have cabinet-level status within town government. Examples of well-run public parking systems that use this organizational model can be found in Fort Collins, CO; Manitou Springs, CO; and Breckenridge, CO (although Breckenridge is currently undergoing a process to consider outsourcing their parking system).

The **Consolidated "Vertically-Integrated" City Department Model** is essentially a typical department led by a department head that consists of a varying assortment of support staff. The defining characteristic of this model is that the department director has complete responsibility for the management of all parking-related program elements.

Primary elements include:

- Off-street parking facilities
- On-street parking resources
- Overall program financial performance
- Parking system planning
- Parking enforcement and related areas:
  - » Transportation Demand Management (TDM) (trip reduction programs, preferential parking for car/van pools, transit programs, etc.)
  - » Parking system branding, marketing and community outreach
  - » Implementation of new technologies (special projects)
  - » Parking system planning (zoning, parking requirements, code issues, financial planning)
  - » Residential permit parking programs
  - » Interface with Downtown development and economic development

Make Strategic Investments in Technology

With innovation in technology moving at an increasingly rapid pace, it can be challenging for some communities to identify where technology can support their parking and transportation management activities and where technology might actually get in the way of progress. While technology is an important part of the conversation, it isn't the answer to every challenge and should be approached thoughtfully. "Best in Class" parking operations almost always have a comprehensive and integrated parking access and revenue control system that offers the following benefits:

- Consistent operations and features for customers
- Simplified/consistent training for staff and auditors
- Similar equipment and models, which provides for simplified maintenance and less costly parts stocking
- Consolidated system-wide reporting and management information

Staying informed of new technologies can help the parking department identify the best tools available to achieve its goals. New technologies can help the Town and staff responsible for parking management work smarter, not harder. Customer service levels can be enhanced using Automatic Vehicle Identification (AVI) systems, web-based permit renewal programs, pay-on-foot payment stations, mobile payment technologies, etc. These enhancements can be implemented when the timing is right, after the community has been brought along with the Town in planning conversations.

Maximize Existing Parking Infrastructure

While it is strongly recommended that the Town maximize the use of existing parking assets before investing in parking infrastructure, that does not mean that planning for the future should not start immediately. Effective parking management includes proactively coordinating with public and private partners, thoroughly understanding the often-competing needs of various user groups (i.e., employees, visitors, business owners), and managing supply to prioritize use, based on adjacent needs and land uses. The concept of shared parking should be actively promoted to move towards creating an integrated network of parking offerings, where both public and private parking assets can be leveraged to meet peak demand. The Town should take an active role in promoting and facilitating shared parking to ensure that supply is not over-built and demand is effectively managed by leveraging the existing parking supply.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Review existing parking assets for layout efficiency. Supply can often be increased by 5-15% through improved lot layout and/or via lot combination, etc.
- Maintain clean, safe and attractive facilities. This is a core function of any parking program and significantly impacts the perception of the program and the community it serves. A strategy of addressing the "First 30 Feet" of each parking facility is a recommended first step in showing some immediate progress. Key elements of the "First 30 Feet" approach include:
  - » Cleaning and painting
  - » Reviewing and consolidating signage
  - » Adding "Welcome" and "Thank You" messaging
  - » Upgrading lighting to ensure that there are no dark corners or unlit locations within the lot or structure
- With the recent investment in a new parking structure near the Visitors Center, the Town should also consider developing a "maintenance reserve fund" program for its public parking assets. Parking facilities are made of concrete, which deteriorates over time and requires significant investments in on-going maintenance and periodic restoration. Deferring maintenance will only cost more over time. Without an effective routine maintenance program and dedicated maintenance reserve funds, the likelihood that serious deferred maintenance will lead to even higher maintenance and facility restoration costs is much more likely. Typical parking facility maintenance reserves range from $50 to $75 per space per year.

Provide Options to Help Customers Make the Right Parking or Transportation Choice for their Trip

The goal of parking management is not to "get better at catching illegal parkers," nor is it about a "money grab"; it is about identifying strategies that help people find safe and legal parking spaces quickly and efficiently. It is also about effectively managing a limited public resource. Improving the Downtown experience begins with managing available parking and transportation resources, introducing new parking policies and systems judiciously, and developing programs that help alleviate and address current "chokepoints" in Downtown circulation. Ultimately, the Town's "big picture" focus should include strategies to integrate parking with transit, cycling and pedestrian initiatives and programmatic support for enhancing transportation and community elements.

ACTION ITEMS:

- As the Town works to develop an employee and resident parking program, staff should work closely with key community development partners (i.e., the Chamber, Visit Estes Park, and the Estes Park Economic Development Corporation [EDC]) to involve stakeholders in the process, especially with regard to employee education about parking options for longer stays.
- Invest in a comprehensive wayfinding study. This investment would not only provide a noticeable improvement to the customer experience, it would also likely impact congestion caused by visitors who are circling to look for available parking.
- As a shorter-term and cost-effective strategy, continue to expand the use of temporary variable messaging signs to assist with event parking management.
- Consider installing bicycle parking signage to help identify legal bicycle parking locations.
- Review and improve Downtown street furniture needs/design, including improving existing bike racks to ensure bikes can be adequately secured, and consider strategically investing in additional bicycle infrastructure.
- Consider exploring technology that may be of assistance and using flexible options, including vehicular and bicycle valet programs.
- Consider conducting a "walking experience audit" with Town staff and members of the community. This process can help "remind" residents what it's like to "be a visitor" and can be a helpful tool in identifying and defining bike, vehicle and pedestrian wayfinding needs.

Additional Planning Steps

This section provides additional recommendations related to parking.

ACTION ITEMS:

The following action items should be considered as high priorities as the Town looks to take a more strategic approach to communicating about existing and future parking and transportation offerings:

- Develop a specific distinctive parking brand and visual mark that is incorporated into all parking signage, marketing and communications materials.
- Invest in a comprehensive wayfinding study. This investment would not only provide a noticeable improvement to the customer experience, it would also likely impact congestion caused by visitors who are circling to look for available parking.
- Consider a strategic investment in lower-cost parking monitoring and communication technology as a component of enhanced wayfinding and signage exploration. An example of a vendor that specializes in this type of low-cost alternative is Parking Logix.
- Plan for annual stakeholder outreach and engagement, especially before, during,and after significant policy, technology or programmatic changes.
- Coordinate with local community partners (i.e., Visit Estes Park, the Estes Park Chamber of Commerce and the Estes Park EDC) to create a "one stop shop" online resource for vehicle parking, bicycle parking and multimodal (i.e., shuttle) options. Work collaboratively to ensure that this resource has one "champion" or point person responsible for making sure that the site stays up-to-date and is well-promoted. The following outlines some industry best practices that should be considered when developing a "one stop shop" online resource:

    - » Include basic parking and mobility information/location/directions
    - » Include the organization's mission, vision and values, and the work underway to achieve those goals
    - » Include a contact form for feedback purposes
    - » Include an emergency/contact phone number that is answered 24/7
    - » Ideally, create the website in distinct sections that correlate to target audience categories, with information neatly sorted and organized based on the type of user accessing the site.
    - » Ensure that the website is well-managed with a plan to keep content fresh and new. Users returning to the site and finding nothing new are likely to stop utilizing it as a resource.
    - » In addition to hosting some static content, include tools to allow users to select how they want to communicate with/receive information about upcoming changes that will impact parking in the Downtown area.
    - » Offer a mobile optimized version of the website for those who wish to access the site on mobile devices.
    - » Consider using Google Analytics (or a similar tool) to track where the website is receiving the most traffic and actively move those items to the home page.

Mid- to Long-Term

Identify Desirable and Viable Locations for Future Addition of Parking Infrastructure

Through conversations with Town staff and feedback from community members during the April 2017 design charrette and open house, the following sites were identified as those that present the most opportunity to serve multiple purposes (i.e., provide additional parking and protect against and/or mitigate the impact of flooding). The sites are listed in order of preference and each include brief bullets about site opportunities and/or challenges.

A **"(+)"** indicates a benefit to a given site. A **(=)** indicates a factor that is neither positive or negative. A **(-)** indicates a negative factor to consider associated with a parking site.

A. Town Hall/Library Parking Lot

- (+) Garnered the most excitement in conversations with community members
- (+) Could potentially double parking in a core area of the Town
- (+) Existing land use is parking
- (+) Highly visible location
- (+) Strategic location could serve special events (i.e., Farmer's Markets)
- (+) Multi-purpose benefit of bringing street level activation (such as retail storefronts) along Elkhorn Avenue
- (+) Site size and layout are conducive for structure parking
- (+) Drivers won't have to travel very far into Downtown before exiting their vehicles
- (+) Land is already owned by the Town
- (=) "Downtime" for facility construction should be considered and closures phased, if possible, to limit disruption to parking access for this highly-utilized surface parking lot

B. Post Office Building and Existing Post Office Surface Lot

- (+) Could allow highly-utilized Post Office to stay in its current location as part of a new mixed-use development
- (+) Part of the site is already parking
- (+) Second story of the structure would be level with Moraine Avenue, with a possible pedestrian bridge connection
- (+) Structure could act as a sieve for debris during a flood event
- (+) Centralized, highly-trafficked location of Downtown
- (=) "Downtime" for facility construction should be considered and closures phased, if possible, to limit disruption to parking access
- (=) Drivers still have to drive into the core of Downtown before exiting their vehicles
- (-) Post office currently has a longer-term lease for the land

C. Piccadilly Square

- (+) Ideal location for capturing drivers departing the Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), before they enter the core of Downtown
- (+) Potential for a "showpiece" parking structure that serves multiple purposes—parking, an increase in retail and residential offerings, and flood mitigation
- (=) "Downtime" for facility construction should be considered and closures phased, if possible, to limit disruption to parking access
- (=) Land is privately-held
- (-) Due to site's location, slope, and multiple access points, financial feasibility will likely be a concern

D. Cleave Street Lot

- (+) Potential for a smaller facility, perhaps only two stories
- (+) Supports best practice concept of investing in distributed pockets of smaller parking assets around Downtown versus larger consolidated assets in one location
- (=) Need to accommodate access for deliveries, loading and other functions could impact site viability

E. Lot West of Moraine Avenue

- (+) Potential for a smaller facility, perhaps only two stories
- (+) Supports best practice concept of investing in distributed pockets of smaller parking assets around Downtown versus larger consolidated assets in one location

There is additional opportunity to reconstruct the surface lot near Spruce Park ("Performance Park") to allow for intentional flooding of the lot during a larger flood event. Due to the lot's location in a sensitive flood zone area, dropping the existing lot to a lower level could help create a natural "retention area" that could be designed to flood and drain more slowly.

Out of the list of possible parking sites identified in the previous section, the site that shows the most promise for redevelopment into a multi-purpose, mixed-use facility that includes an opportunity for parking, residential, retail, and flood mitigation is the Piccadilly Square lot. Due to its location, this site also could serve as a functional "mobility basecamp" to RMNP, a multimodal hub for shuttles and bike share, and as a centrally-located public meeting gathering space. As this parcel is privately-held, a conversation should first be had with the property owner to determine their interest in site redevelopment. This step should happen before any future conversations about the site are held.

Preparing for the Future

The Estes Park Downtown Plan was designed to be a guiding framework that balances the multimodal access needs, trends and choices of today while also preparing for inevitable shifts in demographics, economics, travel choices, physical designs and technology. As such, this final section touches on a few emerging trends that will likely influence and shape how people travel to and around the Town for years to come:

- Shared travel options
- Data-driven management
- Adaptive reuse principles (covered previously)
- Electric vehicles (EVs)
- Autonomous and connected vehicles (AV/CV)

Shared Travel Options

Promote shared travel options over tools that push users to a single mode each day.

One-way travel options are rapidly expanding. These options include walking, transit, bike share, Transportation Network Companies (i.e., Uber and Lyft), carsharing (Car2Go) and much more. In the near future, shared autonomous vehicles will likely also join this category of transportation options. These travel options allow users even more options for first and last mile connectivity, and greater opportunities to live car-free or "car-lite" lifestyles.

Data-Driven Management

Pursue data-driven management practices to improve system efficiency and share information effectively.

Performance-based parking pricing, Uber's "surge pricing," and peak hour transit fares are all examples of using pricing to address peak demands. Real-time data collection and analysis—such as commute mode detection that can distinguish between biking, Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) use, carpooling and transit use—will lay the foundation for effective system management moving forward. As the Town moves through its Community Conversation about Downtown Parking—specifically with regard to a conversation about seasonal paid parking—identifying technology vendors (i.e., smart parking meters, pay by phone/mobile app providers) that can help the Town make data-driven decisions is strongly recommended.

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

To support the trend of increased electric vehicle (EV) ownership, cities across the nation are looking at how to incorporate and prioritize EV investments into existing infrastructure. Items for consideration in conversation about the impact of EVs include:

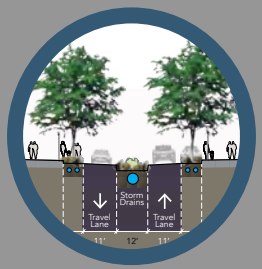
- Quantity and location charging stations, including possible location prioritization
- Variety of charging stations offered (Levels 1-3)
- Fee schedule or time stay limit for EV spaces
- Full or self-service offerings
- Communication and signage to promote utilization
- Payment options

Autonomous & Connected Vehicles (AVs & CVs)

An autonomous vehicle (AV) is a car or truck that can guide itself without a human driver, while a connected vehicle (CV) is a vehicle that is equipped with internet access and likely with a local wide area network (WAN). While widespread testing of partially and fully autonomous vehicles is taking place across the globe, the parking industry as a whole likely won't need to start redesigning parking assets to accommodate AVs/CVs for at least another five years or so. Most of the release dates seen from AV/CV developers for revenue service "aTaxis" is not until at least 2021. However, it isn't clear what capabilities those "aTaxis" will have initially. Being able to drive on "any" street from any origin to any destination (and park in any lot) completely driverless is a pretty big challenge. Businesses and parking lot/garage owners that want to be early-adopters or trailblazers are encouraged to start partnering today with AV developers and parking facility designers to start piloting new concepts and doing demonstration projects.

FLOOD MITIGATION

8



Flood control dams are used to store flood waters and attenuate peak flows.

Steel bulkheads can be used to contain larger storm and flood flows.

Black Canyon Creek and two major rivers, Big Thompson and Fall River, come together at the center of Downtown. The Town's proximity to RMNP is both an asset and a vulnerability. From an access and aesthetics standpoint, the park and the rivers are wonderful assets for the Town. From a flood mitigation standpoint, the Town is vulnerable to flooding from snow melt and storms. Undersized bridges and river sections provide additional challenges. As seen from past flooding, the Town's infrastructure is not capable of safely passing large storm flows without enduring significant impact to the rivers, landscape and built environment.

This chapter provides flood mitigation concepts using a three-level approach that looks at Regional, Town and Site/Property design. The concepts build on information from previously completely studies and recommendations in this document.

Three Levels of Flood Mitigation

A three-level approach is suggested to develop concepts for flood mitigation at a range of scales.

Regional Level

The regional level considers how solutions can be achieved in the upper watershed. This requires cooperation among agencies and governments. Opportunities may be limited due to inconsistencies in federal policies. Nonetheless, lands not federally owned above the Town that could provide opportunities for retention/detention and naturalized channel improvements such as diversions and drop structures should be investigated.

The opportunity exists to work with Larimer County. The improvement concepts developed in the Downtown Plan would benefit the county farther downstream. The county could be a partner in both flood control and funding.

From a regional perspective, national park and county lands provide opportunities for flood mitigation on a large scale, which could potentially greatly benefit the Town and the whole of Estes Valley. Some of those may be:

- **Regional retention/detention basin**
  - » Regional detention/retention basins both in-line and off-line can be beneficial to attenuating the peak runoff rate. Attenuating the peak on one of the rivers or the creek until the other peak passes through town can reduce the overall magnitude and impact of the flood waves to the Town infrastructure.
- **Flood control dam**
  - » A flood control dam is an above-ground structure that is normally empty, but that is used to store flood waters and attenuate peak flows. Dams tend to be larger structures than detention/retention basins. The Colorado Division of Water Resources Dam Safety Section administers the Dam Safety Program for the state.

- **Divert a portion of the river flow around the Town**
  - » Opportunities to redirect flow upstream so that it bypasses the Town should be investigated. In large storms, some of the flow could possibly be diverted to a different watercourse, or a new conveyance around the Town. The runoff could be permanently diverted to a different watershed, or join back with the river downstream of the Town.

The diversion of a portion of the flow around the Town is recommended, but not whole scale diversion of either river. The rivers are a major feature of the Town, and some flow should be maintained.

Town Level

Improvements to the two rivers and Black Canyon Creek are recommended for flood mitigation. At the same time, mitigation measures can provide opportunities to access waterways in a way that enhances the Estes Park experience. Improvement ideas include:

- Provide a multi-tiered channel section such that lower magnitude storms are conveyed at the lower level, and the upper tiers can be used for trails and passive uses. In larger, less frequent storms the benched area will convey flow.
- Widen channel sections in some areas. This can dissipate flow energy and convey additional flow in the channel. This could reduce overtopping of the banks of the channel and flooding into the Town.
- Incorporate trails and bikeways to accommodate low volume storms, and provide flood control in higher volume storms.
- Utilize bulkheads, steel structures used as part of hard-surface plazas, terraces and trail structures to contain flow. A good use of a bulkhead would also be to redirect flow into a park setting for a play pool or interactive education space.
- Convert streets from normal, crowned street to inverted crowns to direct flood flows away from businesses.
- Incorporate a Best Management Low Impact Development Toolbox.
  - » **Center median bioswales:** Bioswales, ditches that are used for water quality treatment and infiltration, can be used to provide openings in curbs to allow runoff to flow into a planted area in the roadway median.
  - » **Tree wells:** Trees can be planted adjacent to the street and sidewalk in an underground open-bottom box with a grate "lid" around the tree. Runoff from the street and adjacent sidewalks can flow into the tree well, leaving streets and sidewalks dry.
  - » **Depressed water quality treatment areas:** Swales, curb islands and street landscaping can be lowered to collect runoff. The runoff is removed from surfaces and treated through infiltration.
  - » **Chicanes:** Chicanes bump-out of the sidewalk/landscape area into the street and can be used to slow down traffic and provide areas for depressed water quality treatment.
- Use the rivers and flooding of the Town to educate residents and visitors.
  - » Divert water to play pools.
  - » Develop educational interactive features related to hydropower, flood elevations, the impact of debris, floodproofing, diverting flow and flood measurement.

A central channel concept similar to the one pictured above could be used in conjunction with the inverted crown of West Elkhorn to assist with the capture and conveyance of storm flows and flood water.

Use the rivers and flooding of the Town to educate residents and visitors.

Upgrading select bridges can help improve flood conveyance while also providing space for trail underpasses.

Rain gardens collect and treat runoff from storm and snow events.

- Design surface parking areas for water detention. A portion of parking lots could be set aside to hold water for a short period of time. This would require carefully planning and siting the detention areas so that residents and visitors would not be cut off from their vehicles in storm events.
  - » Pervious pavement: Porous pavement and bricks can be used to infiltrate runoff from a parking lot.
  - » Underground storage and surface storage: Underground storage can be a good option, though it can be cost prohibitive and would require a cost/benefit analysis.
- Lower parks from nearby landscape to serve as detention areas.
- Utilize drop structures, concrete or boulder structures that decrease the bottom of a river (the river inverts) two to three feet in a short span. Drop structures create ripples and eddies in the river, which are aesthetically pleasing. They help reduce velocity for minor events, but will not be effective for major events.

Key Flood Mitigation Opportunities

This section describes some of the key flood mitigation opportunities. Additional opportunities are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this Plan.

A. The Fall River Bridge at West Elkhorn Avenue

The bridge over Fall River is a major choke point of the river as it enters the Downtown core. Upgrading the bridge could be highly beneficial. Implementing these upgrades, however, would need to be coordinated with the owner of the adjacent property. The Town should consider negotiating an acquisition of this property to provide space to expand the bridge.

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce possibility of bridge overtopping.
- Mitigate flooding of businesses adjacent to the bridge and along West Elkhorn Avenue.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increase the capacity of river and infrastructure downstream of the bridge to accommodate larger flows.

B. West Elkhorn Avenue Inverted Cross Section

When Fall River hits West Elkhorn Avenue in Character Area 2, a pinch point causes overflow down the street. Convert West Elkhorn Avenue from a normal crown cross-section to an inverted crown with an enhanced pedestrian realm with rain gardens along the street edge.

OBJECTIVES:
- Mitigate flood flows by capturing and conveying in the street away from buildings.
- Improve water quality.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:
- Potential to extend the rain garden concept farther east
- May dilute the "specialness" of the western segment.
- Relationship to potential bridge improvements west of the festival street area—replacing this bridge with the street redesign will provide a valuable redundancy while also offering valuable construction efficiencies.
- Development as an amenity may encourage pedestrian/vehicular traffic to explore and activate the west side of Town.

C. Weist Drive Realignment and Fall River Widening

The west-east section of Weist Drive could be realigned/straightened to create space (~100') for the widening on the north side of Fall River. Additionally, redesigning approximately 30 parking spaces would allow the river to expand an additional 30 feet on the south side.

OBJECTIVES:
- Mitigate flood flows by providing a wider section of the river to manage higher flows.
- Provide space to support active and passive access on both sides of the river.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Enhance the interface between buildings on the north side of the river.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:
- Value of property acquisitions

D. Confluence Park (at the confluence of Big Thompson and Fall Rivers)

Develop a new Confluence Park as an open space. One property would need to be acquired to accommodate a plaza, a green space, a riverside trail, and the rehabilitation of the existing traffic bridge. Riverside bridge would be redesigned to maintain traffic conveyance and also to be a major visual accent. Additionally, the bridge would provide a grade-separated crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists.

OBJECTIVES:
- Mitigate flood flows by improving the capacity of the bridge with the redesign.
- Provide space to support active and passive access/use adjacent to the river and along the trail.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience by allowing pedestrians to interact alongside flowing water.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:
- Value of property acquisition
- This bridge is scheduled for replacement as part of the one-way couplet project, but would need design modification to accommodate this Plan concept. The modification to provide a grade separated crossing would enhance the use of the trail in a safe manner. The rivers are a major feature and draw of the Town. This is an excellent location to create a sense of arrival with a visually pleasing infrastructure project that supports community and connectivity.

Realigning Weist Drive and widening the Fall River will create additional space for an enhanced pedestrian experience.

Terraced walls and flood detention areas can also provide passive recreation amenity spaces during times of low water flow.

Landscaped parking islands capture parking lot runoff and provide water quality treatment and infiltration.

Site/Property Level

Individual properties have been impacted by flooding in the Town; specific measures, both structural and non-structural, can be taken to protect them.

Structural:

- Floodproofing buildings with flood protection walls
- Raising lower floors of existing buildings
- Raising buildings on supports
- Raising entry doors by sloping up sidewalks; providing ramps into businesses
- Local detention storage such as tree wells, bioswales adjacent to buildings
- Reduce impervious areas by breaking up pavement with landscaped areas

Non-Structural:

- **Ordinances:** Define and enforce building and floodplain ordinances to clarify acceptable limitations of building in floodways, to set finished floors of new building and to require floodproofing.
- **Property acquisition:** Purchase properties that continually have substantial damage from floods; purchase properties to provide more open, natural space.
- **Zoning and land planning:** Think about flood mitigation at all stages of the zoning and planning process to ensure a sustainable community.
- **Flood insurance:** Property owners should be encouraged to purchase flood insurance whether they are in a FEMA mapped floodplain or not.
- **Flood insurance:** Become a member of the FEMA Community Rating System to reduce flood insurance requirements.
- **Floodplain regulations:** Review and update regulations regularly.

The Town should consider the future floodplain maps currently under development by FEMA with all mitigation options.

Photo 1 shows a chicane (bump out of landscape and curb area) with zero curb face to allow street runoff to enter landscaped area. Runoff enters the landscaped area from the street at the zero face curb in the foreground and is stored and infiltrates in the landscaped area. Photo 2 shows a bioswale with natural rock and local landscaping. This is used for water quality treatment and infiltration. Photo 3 shows a curbside bioretention within the public right-of-way. This image shows a curb cut leading to a bioretention area that street runoff enters and drains into the planted area for treatment.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

9

This section of the Plan provides an overview of the utility infrastructure improvements that will be required to support the projected Downtown development. Recommendations for storm drainage, wastewater, water, electric and fiber optics are provided. Utility infrastructure systems are typically a town-wide issue; therefore Downtown-specific infrastructure improvements should be re-evaluated as system improvements are made in other parts of town.

Utility Infrastructure Systems

Town-wide utility infrastructure systems are described below.

Water

Domestic water is provided to downtown by the Town of Estes Park Water Division via the Mary's Lake Water Treatment Facility and the Glacier Creek Water Treatment Facility. Both treatment plants treat surface water. Domestic water is also used for fire lines and irrigation systems.

Water System Assessment:

The existing water system has been modeled with the following assessments made;

- The Town's Water Division has plans to up-size and improve water mains in the downtown corridor prior to/in conjunction with the completion of the proposed Downtown Loop Project. These improvements will help with fire flows, volume and velocities in the immediate downtown area as well as the surrounding area. These improvements area included in the Plan Area.
- In limited areas, water mains are too small to meet future potential fire flow requirements. Developers are required to design and construct and/or fund improvements to meet fire suppression standards if or when they become required, usually upon substantial redevelopment.
- The water pressure within the Town's distribution system is adequate at this time for existing development.

Light and Power

The Town's electricity is provided to downtown by the Town of Estes Park Light and Power (L&P) Division. The Town purchases power from the Platte River Power Authority. The power is transmitted to Estes Park on the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) power lines to each of our two substations (Lake Estes and Mary's Lake). From there, the L&P staff distributes the metered electricity to residents and businesses.

Electrical System Assessment:

- The existing electric system is deemed to be adequate for the anticipated build out within the downtown corridor. All new construction (greenfield and re-development) will require underground electric service in the interest of safety and protecting the Town's view corridors. New electric services are funded by private developers.

Fiber Optics

The Town of Estes Park is exploring the concept of the distribution of fiber optics (in addition to what is currently offered by other private/commercial entities). The Town recognizes the needs and desires of its customers for advancing technologies as related to high speed internet service. This infrastructure would essentially need to be installed from start to finish. The expectation is that in general, fiber would run in existing rights-of-way or easements occupied by L&P infrastructure both overhead and underground.

Wastewater

Downtown sewer demands are serviced by two private sewer districts, Upper Thompson Sanitation District (UTSD) and the Estes Park Sanitation District (EPSD). While UTSD has mains running through but not serving the downtown area, EPSD provides service to the vast majority of properties downtown.

Wastewater System Assessment:

- After October 2017, EPSD will have replaced and upsized 520-feet of mainline and two manhole structures because of aging infrastructure and compromised pipe.
- EPSD currently has sixteen F.O.G. (Fats, Oils, and Grease) interceptors in the Elkhorn corridor and currently nine other food establishments need them.
- There are currently 2490-feet of Vitrified Clay pipe (VCP) in the downtown Elkhorn corridor that will need to be replaced in the future with PVC (Poly Vinyl Chloride) pipe.
  - » Starting at manhole "Elkhorn 19" and ending at manhole "Elkhorn 10 + 80 feet"
    - 10 manhole Structures
    - 1420-feet of 15" VCP to be replaced with 15" PVC
    - 400-feet of 10" VCP to be replaced with 15" PVC
  - » Starting at manhole "Elkhorn 8" and ending at manhole "Elkhorn 5"
    - 3 manhole structures
    - 610-feet of 10" VCP to be replaced with 12" PVC
    - Note: This portion of sewer main is undersized. It is also completely underneath streetscape, which makes it nearly impossible to replace because of obstructions and the cost of replacement.
  - » Coming out of manhole "Elkhorn 8" there is a section of 6" VCP that heads North and needs to be replaced with 8" PVC.
- Very few service lines in the downtown corridor have been replaced with updated materials. Approximately 42 service lines will need to be replaced at some point in the future, either because of failure or to avoid failure.
- Sump pumps in the downtown corridor are connected to the sanitary sewer system and annually introduce storm water into the wastewater treatment plant. These need to be disconnected from the sanitary sewer and be connected to storm sewer, which currently does not exist.

Stormwater

A stormwater master plan for the Estes Valley Development Area is expected to be completed by the end of 2017. This plan will include the identification of existing and potential new stormwater infrastructure (examples are: detention ponds and flood mitigation projects), development of a prioritization matrix of maintenance and construction based primarily on cost and need, and identification of potential funding sources, such as a stormwater utility. Water quality management objectives may be identified in the future and potentially may be incorporated into a stormwater management program.

Downtown Plan Buildout Estimate

Table 9.1 provides an estimate of new development anticipated to occur in the Plan Area over the next twenty years. This rough estimate is intended to serve as a general guide for the Town in anticipating infrastructure upgrades as the Plan is implemented. The buildout estimate is based on the aspiration for new infill development detailed in this Plan coupled with an analysis of the likelihood of properties in the Plan Area to develop or redevelop within the Plan horizon. It is conservative in that it includes sites that are highly likely to develop as well as sites that are moderately likely to develop. Actual buildout will ultimately be determined based on available infrastructure, market factors, property owner preferences and other conditions.

	Commercial	Residential	Hotel	Office	Craft Production	Civic	
CA-1	22800	83	40	0	10000	0	
CA-2	271600	223	90	59000	0	25000	
CA-3	86000	91	0	12500	18500	0	
CA-4	43000	18	0	7500	0	0	
sub-TOTAL	**423400**	**415**	**130**	**79000**	**28500**	**25000**	GAINED (possible projected development)
units	sf	units	rooms	sf	sf	sf	
CA-1	-15000	-15	0	0	0	0	
CA-2	-171000	-33	0	-17000	-10000	0	
CA-3	-52000	-4	0	-5000	-3000	-10000	
CA-4	-5000	0	0	0	0	0	
sub-TOTAL	**-243000**	**-52**	**0**	**-22000**	**-13000**	**-10000**	REMOVED (existing development)
units	sf	units	rooms	sf	sf	sf	
TOTAL	**180400**	**363**	**130**	**57000**	**15500**	**15000**	**NET GAIN (total possible buildout)**
units	sf	units	rooms	sf	sf	sf	

Table 9.1 - Downtown Plan Buildout Estimate

Overarching Utility Infrastructure Policies

The following overarching policies should be used in guiding all infrastructure investments in Downtown:

- Continue to monitor, analyze, assess and improve the capacity of Downtown and Estes Park's utility infrastructure components such that new Downtown growth anticipated in this Plan is adequately accommodated.
- Prior to construction of any building in Downtown, ensure that adequate utility infrastructure is in place to support the proposed project and ensure that no negative impacts are incurred by other properties in Downtown or Estes Park.
- Where feasible, coordinate public utility investments with other infrastructure improvements, such as streetscape design projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

10

This chapter provides a strategy for implementing the recommendations contained in the Downtown Plan. Successful implementation requires a coordinated effort between public and private entities. Economic development and revitalization of Downtown will require vision, investment and commitment from a broad base within the Town, including private citizens, public officials and Town departments.

The community should use a bilateral approach to implement the Plan. It should be both proactive and responsive, follow the priorities and phasing recommendations, but remain ready to modify in response to private sector initiatives. The Town should coordinate its actions with the work of other agencies and adjust phasing plans as opportunities arise. For example, if Public Works plans to construct new curbs and repair sidewalks along a section of a street, then the intersection improvements recommended in this Plan should occur at the same time.

The Downtown Plan implementation strategy includes the following key recommendations, which are detailed further in this chapter.

1. Create an Estes Park Downtown Partnership to oversee implementation of the Downtown Plan and to serve as the overarching coordinating group for advancing projects, programs and policies within the Plan Area.
2. Set aside some portion of Town funds to support Plan implementation.
3. Establish a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to provide funding for both infrastructure projects, and ongoing management of Downtown and Plan priorities.
4. Establish incentives to encourage development/redevelopment in the DDA area.
5. Support the evolution and growth of the Arts District.
6. Identify outside sources of funding which can be leveraged via local funding.
7. Explore parking as a revenue source.

Implementation Recommendations

This section provides more specific implementation recommendations for each of the Summary Recommendations above.

Establish a Downtown Partnership

While many individual staff and commission members will have opportunities to implement individual elements of the Plan, it is important that one office be responsible for monitoring implementation and coordinating work efforts. One of the key concerns heard during the engagement process was the sheer number of districts and organizations investing in the Estes Park area, the lack of coordination amongst them, and the lack of a clear leader in shepherding projects, programs, and policies, which would include this Downtown Plan. To address this, formation of a partnership organization is recommended – the Estes Park Downtown Partnership. This group would not replace the roles of other existing entities in Estes Park, but rather would be a body that brings diverse resources and perspectives together and, in a managed group setting, determines how best to collaborate and deploy resources. In addition to the formal Downtown Partnership, explore the creation of a parallel Citizen Advisory Committee that is charged with pushing along implementation of the Downtown Plan.

Membership

The Partnership should be comprised of key organizations that will have a direct impact on the Downtown Plan Area. At a minimum, the following organizations should be key participants:

- Town of Estes Park: Key staff personnel and elected officials should be included to provide guidance and support in implementing projects and also to be a liaison to developers and address issues that arise.
- Estes Park Economic Development Corp. (EDC): The EDC plans for and promotes the economic development of Estes Park in ways that are compatible with those qualities that make it a unique mountain community. Their role would be to provide guidance on the economic strategies associated with this Plan and to bring financial resources to the table where possible.
- Visit Estes Park/Estes Park Local Marketing District: Visit Estes focuses its resources on advertising, marketing and promoting tourism. Their role would be to consider how to support or develop projects and programs that amplify and expand the tourism offerings in Downtown.
- Estes Arts District: The Estes Arts District aims to cultivate excitement, promote interaction and create memorable experiences for the betterment of the Estes community. They play an important role in bringing together the community through arts, creative programming and new experiences, all of which relate to economic resilience. Their role would be to amplify the creative and cultural differentiators that Estes Park provides.
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA): If established, the DDA would also be a critically important player in this Partnership, providing funding capacity to help fund specific initiatives within its boundaries.

The group does not need to be limited to these partners, but these are likely to be the principal partners. Other organizations may also participate in a variety of ways, depending on their role in the community. In lieu of starting a new nonprofit or corporation, the participating organizations should create an agreement document that outlines how they will operate, how decisions get made, and parameters of participation. The goal of the Downtown Partnership is to implement the Downtown Plan and find ways to connect the Downtown more broadly to things happening in Estes Park and in Larimer County.

Mission and Roles

The mission of the organization is to serve as a collective and collaborative voice to implement the Downtown Plan and identify opportunities to advance the Downtown. Roles of the Partnership in achieving this mission are to:

- Be the champion of the Downtown Plan. Each year the Partnership should set an annual work plan and budget based on the priorities of the Plan.
- Be a collective funding source. Each partner should provide funding to the Partnership that supports initiatives set forth in the Plan. The Partnership should also identify ways to leverage funding and explore other funding sources.
- Be an advocate for and educator about the important of Downtown and advancing the Downtown Plan.
- Keep organizations operating in Estes Park working in harmony, collaborating and sharing resources.

Partnership Decisions

A clear set of operational protocols should be developed up front to ensure decisions are made in a democratic way. Bylaws should be set out, including:

- How many representatives from each organization
- Who are voting vs. non-voting members
- Whether financial participation is required to be a voting member
- How often meetings are held
- Who will serve as chair, secretary, treasurer and/or which positions are needed, how long people serve, etc.
- Attendance requirements

Potential Year One Priorities

Year one priorities for the Partnership could include:

- Formalize the Partnership, including structure and operations, partners and funding
- Set year one and year two priorities and budget
- Initiate a feasibility study for a Downtown Development Authority, including identifying funding
- Targeted Code changes to eliminate conflicts with the Downtown Plan

Dedicate Town Funds for Plan Implementation

While the Town's funds may be limited in terms of investment in major capital, it must be a financial player in implementation. This could occur through a variety of mechanisms as described below.

General Fund/Capital Improvement Project Funding Commitments

Each year, the Town may allocate a portion of its General Fund toward implementation of capital improvements, based upon a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Plan. These funds must be spent on public serving projects, and are generally best suited for projects that can be completed within a single year or that can be phased without a multi-year commitment. Additionally, these funds are often used to leverage other funds, such as grants, for larger projects. The Town should initiate a CIP planning process as an outcome of this Plan, demonstrating specific projects that can be advanced.

General Obligation Bonds

General obligation bonds commit a portion of the Town's annual income stream to designated projects which are supported by ad valorem taxes. A Town election is held to approve General Obligation Bonds, and thus spreads the costs over the entire tax base. Bonds are then issued for work, based on projected revenues. General obligation bonds are best suited for projects that provide general public benefits. This approach spreads the costs of improvements over a wider population and can speed up implementation schedules.

Revenue Bonds

A separate bonding source is a Revenue Bond in which sales tax revenues are pledged for a specific project. The Town could utilize existing sales tax revenues, or could also explore a slight increase in sales tax and utilize that increased revenue to bond for public improvements.

Create a Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a financing tool frequently used for funding infrastructure, public improvements and administration. It is an effective way of applying tax increment financing (TIF) while also providing for the ability to implement a mill levy (either together with the TIF or separate) in order to leverage additional resources.

TIF is one of the most impactful tools in helping communities strategically invest in infrastructure. TIF works by capturing an increase in property tax revenues and/or sales tax revenues over a period of time – increases that may be generated by development and improvements to the area as well as overall value increases over time. The tax increment from TIF is created without raising taxes and without dipping into the tax value present at the time of adoption. TIF is most commonly utilized to promote economic development, encourage new development, eliminate blight, address environmental issues, and undertake redevelopment and adaptive reuse.

There are two statutory tools in Colorado that allow for the use of TIF in a community. These are:

- **Urban Renewal Authority (URA)**: A URA may be established to eliminate slummed or blighted areas within a municipality. Establishing a URA requires a finding of blight (via a blight study) and an argument that "but for" its use, development would be unlikely. There must be a determined need for an urban renewal plan before it is adopted, and the applicable municipal governing body must make that determination or specific finding. While the primary benefit of a URA is the use of tax-increment financing (TIF), the power of eminent domain is also available to URAs to acquire property, when necessary, to alleviate blight.
- **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**: A DDA can provide both organizational focus and financing to support improvements to an area. Like URAs, DDAs have the ability to utilize TIF, but they may also impose a special levy of up to 5 mills for DDA operations, if approved by the Town and voters. A DDA is authorized by the Town Board and managed by a board of 5-11 directors appointed by the Town Board. A majority of these directors must reside or own property in the DDA area. DDAs facilitate partnerships, joining businesses and property owners with local government. In addition, DDAs create a self-sustaining organization to champion the district for the long-term. Unlike a URA, formation of the DDA does not require a finding of blight or a "but-for" argument. DDAs must be created in the core downtown area of a municipality.

DDAs and URAs differ primarily in the following ways:

- A URA has the power of eminent domain, whereas a DDA does not.
- A DDA has the ability to assess an additional mill levy in the defined area, whereas a URA does not.
- A URA requires a blight study and a "but-for" argument, whereas a DDA does not.

Both organizations are bodies politic and corporate, meaning they have attributes of both a political and corporate organization by law. Table 10.1 shows a side-by-side comparison of the URA and DDA models.

	Downtown Development Authority (DDA)	Urban Renewal Authority (URA)
Summary	Quasi-municipal corporation that is intended to halt or prevent deterioration of property values or structures in a central business area.	Established to eliminate blighted areas for development or redevelopment. A URA is sometimes viewed as a public-private partnership.
Focus	Can plan and implement any plan of development, whether economic or physical. Can do real estate development, public infrastructure, and operations.	Acquisition of slums, demolition of buildings, construction of streets, acquisition of proprety to improve health and revitalize neighborhoods, etc. Cannot do operations.
Pros/Cons	• Can finance improvements and provide services • Can generate mill levy and utilize TIF • Overseen by diverse board of directors, including stakeholders • Finding of blight not needed • No eminent domain	• Cannot do mill levy, can only utilize TIF • Finding of blight needed and "but-for" argument must be met • Has power of eminent domain, which can be controversial • No money for operations other than income from projects, TIF, grants, and donations
Formation	Formed through TABOR election of residents, landowners, lessees, and designated persons	Formed with a blight study along with a petition by 25 residents; established by council resolution
Assessment Method	• TIF: TIF on property and/or sales tax • Up to 5 mill property tax for operations • Rates, fees, tolls, rents, charges for use of DDA property, and other governmental revenues	• Only TIF on property and/or sales tax. • No mill levy option available • Project income
Governance	5-11 member board of directors including a Municipal Council member. Appointed by the Municipal Council for four year terms with the majority of directors residing/owning property in the DDA.	5-11 member commission appointed by Municipal Council. The Municipal Council may designate itself as the board or may appoint anyone else with one Council member serving.
Other Points	• Cannot condemn property • Can operate facilities • Can levy property tax if approved in election • Cannot levy sales tax • Municipality can issue bonds on DDA's behalf	• Can condemn property • Can operate facilities • Cannot levy property tax • Cannot levy sales tax • Can issue bonds

Table 10.1-DDA and URA Comparison

A DDA for Downtown Estes Park

In Estes Park, the creation of a DDA is recommended as the preferred tool for supporting Plan implementation. It will be the more effective tool for purposes of raising both capital and operational dollars for the following reasons:

- DDAs provide the ability to utilize one tool to collect tax increment, while also having the ability to impose a mill levy for operational support. TIF or mills can be used together, or alone and can be turned on or off during the life of the district.
- DDAs do not require a blight study, making them more cost and time effective to form.
- DDAs cannot utilize eminent domain, meaning their powers are more limited than a URA.
- DDAs are overseen by an independent, appointed board.
- Estes Park has a negative history with URAs, including disbanding a previously formed URA in 2010 by referendum. The URA was originally formed in the aftermath of the 1982 Lawn Lake Flood and it helped rebuild Downtown. The URA was funded through property and sales taxes collected from within the district, and opponents claimed it was diverting money that could have been going to other entities such as the schools, hospital and library. The URA provided more than $18 million in Downtown public improvements over 25 years.

Based upon past histories and current concerns about the use of such tools, it is recommended that exploration of a DDA first look at the use of TIF alone. In future years, if it is desired, the community may amend the DDA structure to add a mill levy component.

Potential Financial Capacity of a DDA

This section describes the potential financial capacity of a DDA based on the Downtown Plan boundary. The Downtown Plan Buildout Estimate included in Chapter 9 of this Plan was used to forecast growth. Future value calculations and their impact on assessed values (AV) are demonstrated in Table 10.2. The estimates, as shown, are extremely conservative and show current actual square footage and assessed value of both residential and commercial properties, as well as proposed square footage and assessed value at the end of 20 years, if the growth forecasts are correct. The estimate does not assume increases in assessed value per square foot, though this is likely to be a possibility.

	Existing Square Footage	Increased Square Footage per Downtown Plan	Current Assessed Value	Increase in Assessed Value per Downtown Plan	Total After Plan Implementation
Commercially Assessed (29%)	637,291 SF (80%)	305,800 SF* (45%)	$33,148,051.54 ($52/sf)	$15,901,600	$49,049,653.54 943,091 SF
Residentially Assessed (7.2%)	162,925 SF (20%)	363,000 SF** (44%)	$2,743,163.02 ($16.84/ft)	$6,112,920	$8,856,083.02 525,925 SF
TOTAL	800,886 SF (100%)	668,800 SF (100%)	$35,891,214.56	$22,014,520	$57,905,718.56 1,469,686 SF

**Includes 130 hotel rooms, avg sf of hotel room is 330 sf, plus 10K sf open space*
***363 units, avg. home size is 1,000 sf*

Table 10.2-Assessed Value Projections

Tax Increment	
Average Yearly Increase in AV (Total Increase in AV/20 years)	$2,895,000
Average Yearly Increase in Property Taxes Collected (86.49 Mills)	$250,388 (the Increment)
Assume ½ the increment could be utilized/bonded against	$125,194
What could you generate through Bonds over 25 years against Property Taxes?	$3-5 Million (Including sales tax. Sales tax increased 7.5% between 2015/2016 and as of August 2017 is 5.4% up)

Table 10.3-DDA Tax Increment Forecast

Mill Levy on Commercial and Residential Properties	DDA Budget from Mill Levy Only *(Currently)*
1 mill	~$35,891
2 mills	~$71,782
3 mills	~$107,674
4 mills	~$143,565
5 mills	~$179,456

Table 10.4-DDA Mill Levy Scenarios

Over 20 years, the Downtown Plan assumes about a 61% increase in the total assessed value of property in the Plan Area. Table 10.3 takes the total assessed value over 20 years and averages it on a yearly basis to demonstrate how much tax increment could be collected, and how much could actually be utilized after giving back a portion of this amount to other taxing bodies. Utilizing very conservative estimates, this table identifies $125,000+ in annual increment, or bonding capacity of anywhere between $3-5Million depending also on sales tax increment retained.

Table 10.4 demonstrates what could be generated annually if the DDA also utilized a mill levy, utilizing today's assessed values (not taking into account assumed Plan Area growth and increases in value).

DDA Creation Process and Costs

The DDA organizational process includes the following steps:

1. Create a DDA operational plan that includes, at a minimum, the following items:
   - Boundaries
   - Package of projects to be financed, and how financed
   - Whether a mill will be included, what that mill will be and what it will pay for. If a mill levy is not initially included, the plan should also address what future steps need to be taken to include it.
   - Powers and limits on powers
   - Governance and terms (will be important to create a clear and transparent governance structure)
   - Debt plan and limits
   - Information on outcomes of negotiation with school districts/other districts to determine how much tax increment will go into DDA vs. to them
2. Send the plan and ordinance language to the Town Board to approve. Before approving, the Town Board must submit the organizing question to an election of "qualified electors" which include residents, landowners, lessees within the boundary area.
3. Hold a TABOR election. A special ballot is sent to qualified electors, as identified above. A simple majority of ballots returned must be in favor of the DDA. Please note that elections are done in accordance with November election timeframes. The TABOR election may be used to authorize the creation of the DDA, as well as the mill levy and ability to bond if desired, or these last two items may be done as separate elections.

The cost to establish a DDA can run between $75,000 to $100,000 or more and requires the support of both a special district consultant and special district attorney. Cost can vary depending on the size and complexity of the district.

Timeline to Create a DDA

This Plan recommends advancement of a DDA for the November 2018 election. Table 10.5 sets out tasks and a timeline to achieve this.

Establish Incentives

The DDA will only be effective if and when development actually does occur. To that end, the Town must consider incentives to encourage development. We heard from stakeholders that the following challenges are affecting development and growth:

- A need for code changes
- Concerns about the outcomes of the currently underway FEMA Flood Insurance Study and revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps
- Concerns about potential changes forthcoming from Rocky Mountain National Park. In October 2017 the National Park Service proposed steep increases in entry fees, more than doubling the park-season gate fee to $70 in order to fund infrastructure and amenity improvements. Rocky Mountain National Park set visitation records in 2014, 2015 and 2016 welcoming some 4.5 million visitors and is on pace to do the same in 2017. Significant changes to the fee structure, as proposed, could have an impact on visitation to Estes Park.

Overcoming some of these development challenges means that the Town must look for ways to advocate for and incentivize development and growth that meets the vision set out in this Plan. There are a number of ways the Town could structure incentives and provide support tools to drive growth. These include:

- Establish a Development Facilitator Role: There will be the need for a person who will assist developers to advance projects consistent with the Plan. A development facilitator, or ombudsman, should be designated for this role. This person would work with property owners to help guide appropriate projects through the Town's review and permitting processes. This may be a Town staff person, perhaps in the Community Development Department Office, or it could be a position housed within the recommended Estes Park Downtown Partnership. This person would also troubleshoot issues and connect investors to incentives, tools, programs and potential partners.
- Create a Toolkit of Incentives Currently Available: A number of financial tools are already available through the federal government and the State of Colorado to support economic growth. These are identified and described in Appendix B.
- Utilize the DDA to Provide Direct Incentives: TIF derived from the DDA could be utilized to provide direct financial support to projects, be it through incentives, direct support for infrastructure and other similar initiatives. Guidelines for how DDA could use funds for this purpose would need to be developed.

Date	Process Step
December 2017	▪ Finalize Downtown Plan and agree to proceed with DDA ▪ Identify funding for DDA creation process
January 2018	▪ Establish DDA working group and hold kickoff meeting ▪ Create engagement strategy ▪ Acquire recent data ▪ Kick-off event to educate/explore priorities
February 2018	▪ Online survey ▪ Small group and one-to-one meetings ▪ Working group meeting
March 2018	▪ Frame up outline of DDA operating plan ▪ Test with working group ▪ Run financial scenarios ▪ Another large group public meeting to test findings/options and select a preferred way forward ▪ Small group meetings to get final buy-in into operating plan
April 2018	▪ Amendments to DDA Operating Plan and meeting with working group to get final sign off ▪ Events around the neighborhood to gather signatures
May 2018	▪ Submit operating plan to Town ▪ Town Board process begins
June 2018	▪ Town Board process, public hearing, ordinance creation ▪ Submit mill levy (if applicable) to city/state by last day of June
July 2018	▪ Establish communications strategy for election
August 2018	▪ Begin implementing communications strategy for election ▪ Designation of elector forms completed ▪ Election question finalized
September 2018	▪ Informational sessions/educational materials continue ▪ Designation of elector forms continued
October 2018	▪ Early October ballots go out to electors ▪ Continue designation of elector forms and informational efforts
November 2018	▪ November 6, 2018 – Election day/ballots opened ▪ Election results certified ▪ Mill levy submitted to City for assessment (if applicable)

Table 10.5-Timeline for Advancement of DDA

- Provide Incentives through the Development Review Process: For new development that meets the Downtown vision, the Town could reduce development or permitting fees and fast-track the review process.

Support the Estes Arts District

Art and culture have long had a profound impact on community, but today they are shifting how people engage, spend time and come together. There is growing interest and demand for unique experiences. Creative ventures that provide unique opportunities, reveal interesting spaces, and give people an opportunity to express themselves are in demand. Authenticity is paramount. This cultural shift impacts communities, including Estes Park. People want to live in places that inspire them, and visit places that offer something different.

There is already a creative culture brewing in Downtown. Working to capitalize on that, the Estes Arts District was formed by a group of volunteers in 2015 and established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2016. With strong volunteer activity, Town support and some fundraising, the organization has focused on promotion and programming. This should be leveraged. Stakeholders suggest programming provided by Estes Arts has had its most profound impact on the local community, bringing community members together and giving them local opportunities to gather for events and activities that are for them, not necessarily targeted at visitors coming to or passing through Estes Park.

To play that important role, the Estes Arts District will need support. This well-organized group has made big strides as a volunteer organization, but now require support and a platform to deliver on their mission and expand their work. Supporting the Estes Arts District includes three key recommendations:

1. **Establish Downtown Estes Park as a State-Certified Creative District.**
   Organized Creative Districts concentrate creative activity in order to stimulate economic growth for both the producers and the community as a whole. State-Certified Creative Districts are eligible to receive financial and technical support, networking, and training programs. In the last ten years in particular, creative industries have become a large part of modern economies, and have been increasingly seen as a significant factor in the growth and development of jurisdictions. Creative Districts are often hubs of creative energy and innovation, and tend to draw younger, diverse generations to reside in an area. In addition to giving tourists a unique and thoughtful experience, creative areas enhance livability, and help to build sustainable local economies. Establishing a formal Creative District could codify and create a platform for the arts to be a solid economic driver for the community, and one of the Town's key differentiators.

   The Estes Arts District unsuccessfully applied twice to become a state-certified district, in 2014 and 2016. Based upon the results of that process, and current state of the Estes Arts District, and the Downtown Plan effort, a renewed attempt to apply for state certification in 2018 is recommended. Please see Appendix B for more information about Colorado's Creative District program.

2. **Provide Estes Arts with financial support and membership in the recommended Downtown Partnership.**
   Obtaining Creative District certification status requires that the Creative District have at least a $10,000 annual budget and paid staff. Achieving these requirements can be challenging, but in cases where communities have supported this, the statistics show that the return is measurable. The Town, Marketing District and EDC should coordinate with Estes Arts to provide some seed-funding on a 3-year basis to get the organization to a place where it can deliver with the support of a budget and paid staff, lifting some of the volunteer fatigue off the organization and giving it a solid foundation for success. It is possible that Estes Arts could share staffing with the new Downtown Partnership, or a portion of an employee's time from one of these existing community organizations could be allocated to serving the Estes Arts organization.

3. **Empower Estes Arts.**
   Provide Estes Arts with key roles in the community, including administration of the Public Art program which is currently administered by the Parks Advisory Board. As the lead arts organization in Estes Park, Estes Arts should have oversight over or direct involvement in all arts-related programming in the community. Any funding associated with the program should also shift to Estes Arts.

   In addition to the specific recommendations above and those identified in Chapter 4 of this Plan, explore other opportunities to support the arts in Estes Park, including an art program requirement for development projects or public improvements. This could apply to both public and private investments, where 1% or some other percentage of the total project cost goes to public art or other art programming in the community. Such moves empower the arts community and show Estes Park's commitment to the arts.

Leverage Outside Funding

Grants from foundations and public agencies will be needed for many major Downtown projects. Federal and state agency funding, for example, may be available for flood mitigation, outdoor recreation and transportation projects. Other, smaller grants may help with installation of public art and construction of small parks. See Appendix B for a listing and description of potential grant sources.

Explore Parking as a Revenue Source

Often considered as a best practice nationwide, managing parking operations as a "business" via an enterprise fund model can be advantageous. By aligning parking revenue streams (i.e., enforcement revenue, special event parking revenue, fee-in-lieu) into one parking enterprise fund, the Town can create, over time, a self-supporting enterprise that can cover its own operating and maintenance funding, fund parking maintenance reserves and ultimately finance future parking facilities.

Parking revenues from the following sources should contribute to the parking enterprise fund:

- Off-street parking revenues (i.e., permit parking for employees, when applicable)
- On-street parking revenues (i.e., metered parking, when applicable)
- Parking enforcement revenues (i.e., ticketing, fines)
- Special event parking revenues
- Revenues from special districts and/or other parking-related taxes/fees, when applicable

Setting Priorities

In general, the community should set a high priority on any improvement that can help support private development that is consistent with this Downtown Plan. However, there will still be times when decision makers need to reassess the priority of a recommended action. When this occurs, use the following criteria. Projects that meet several of the criteria should be given the highest priority for near-term implementation.

Financing Criteria

- The project will generate funds to cover portions of development costs. (For example, resulting uses will generate rental income or sales tax revenues.)
- The project will leverage investment from other sources. (For example, property owners will finance a portion of sidewalk construction costs through an assessment program.)
- Grant funds are available to cover portions of development costs.
- The project fits within a larger capital improvement project, such that cost savings will be realized. (For example, streetscape improvements could be constructed when utilities are being improved in a street.)
- Funding for maintenance of the improvement is provided. This is an important consideration for streetscape, gateways and parks improvements.
- The project yields significant results for the level investment. It has a high return on investment.

Location Criteria

- The project is sited in a key part of Downtown. It is an opportunity site that would stimulate other investment.
- The project will have high public visibility. (For example, a project visible along Elkhorn or Moraine Avenue or another major public right-of-way)

Ownership and Project Control Criteria

- The project already is under the appropriate ownership or control.
- The project ownership or control can be acquired with reasonable effort.

Public Benefits

- The project will provide a direct benefit to local residents. (For example, improving circulation and access from abutting neighborhoods.)
- The project will serve multiple users or interest groups. (For example, an outdoor plaza that may be used by local residents, visitors and that may be used for festivals.)

Relationship to Other Projects

- The project will connect to existing public improvements. (For example, construction of a missing link in a pathway that would connect two existing segments.)
- The project will enhance existing improvements and will not cause other desired improvements to become obsolete.
- The project provides opportunities to connect with other future public improvements. (For example, a gateway that can later serve as a trail head for a river connection)
- The project will function well upon completion and later phases of construction are not required for this phase to perform adequately.

Compliance with Community Plans and Administration

- The project will help to accomplish broader goals of the community.
- The project fits within work plans of Downtown organizations and Town staff.
- Adequate administrative oversight is available for the project.

Prioritization Categories

Based on consideration of the previously described criteria, priorities for implementation are arranged in the following five categories:

Priority A
These are the highest priority. They should be implemented as soon as possible. Many of these are items that must be set in place before other later projects can be accomplished. For example, adopting the Downtown Master Plan as official policy is an early step that should be taken. These are generally scheduled for years 1-2 of implementation.

Priority B
These are also of high priority, but usually require more ground work to accomplish. In some cases, a different Priority A category must be in place first. These are generally scheduled for years 2-4 of implementation.

Priority C
These are projects that require more ground work, fund-raising and coordination with other groups. These are scheduled for years 3-5 of implementation.

Priority D
These are more complex projects, and those that require that a strong market be established first. They also include later phases of special projects of systems improvements that may have been initiated in early stages. These are scheduled for years 5-10 of implementation.

Priority E
These are long-range projects, final phases of staged improvements, and more complex undertakings. Some are feasible only when market conditions are in place to support them. These are scheduled for years 10+ of implementation.

APPENDICES

ESTES PARK, COLORADO

DOWNTOWN PLAN

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT #2 DECEMBER 5, 2017

APPENDIX A: DESIGN GUIDELINES

A

All Downtown projects will be designed, built and managed to contribute to the larger goals of a resilient and adaptable Downtown.

Placemaking opportunities should be harnessed at all scales.

The relationship and interface between privately owned areas and public rights-of-way define the user experience.

This Appendix provides design guidelines for public improvements and private development in Downtown. It is intended to complement the vision, principles, recommendations and concepts provided in the Downtown Plan. It should be used as a companion reference and resource for reviewing future public and private investments.

Downtown Design Principles

The following baseline principles apply to all public improvements and private development:

- **Develop a Resilient Downtown.** Design infrastructure and development to adapt to closures due to disasters or disruptions. Streamside infrastructure should be designed to provide access, enjoyment and protection from flooding. All Downtown projects should be designed, built and managed to contribute to the larger goals of a resilient and adaptable Downtown.
- **Integrate with and Respect the Natural Environment.** Downtown's natural features, including landforms and outcroppings, waterways, and its dynamic wildlife, are critical to its physical identity. Private development and public improvements should celebrate these features by minimizing potential negative impacts to them, conserving them and creating views to geologic features and waterways. Sites and buildings should be designed to integrate with nature by working with topography, creating access to rivers and streams and orienting toward these wonderful amenities. Improvements should consider potential impacts to Estes Park's wildlife habitat and ensure that their well-being is preserved.
- **Prioritize Placemaking.** Design in the private and public realm should create interesting, memorable and comfortable places for residents and visitors. These should be planned for use in all seasons and function effectively under changing circumstances. Private development should orient to the public realm in a manner that energizes it and creates interest. Placemaking opportunities should be harnessed at all scales, from creating sidewalks that are functional and attractive to establishing a world-class Riverwalk experience.
- **Make Art Integral to the Downtown Experience.** Art should be synonymous with the character of Downtown and a key placemaking driver. Buildings, streets and other public spaces should incorporate art. This ranges from designing a sidewalk with adequate width to allow temporary art displays to incorporating physical artwork in a site or building's design.
- **Create Synergy Between the Public and Private Realm.** The design of both public and private areas is critical to creating a high quality physical environment Downtown. More importantly, the relationship and interface between privately owned areas and public rights-of-way define the user experience. The public realm refers to sidewalks, streets, the Riverwalk and other outdoor places like plazas and parks. The private realm includes individual properties that flank the public realm. The private realm includes all elements of a property, including buildings, parking areas and landscaped areas.

Private Realm Design Guidelines

This section provides design guidelines for private development projects.

The guidelines in this section should be followed for all development projects, regardless of Character Area. The guidelines outline objectives for design, but flexibility in meeting these objectives should be afforded for each individual project. Site considerations and context matter, so the application of these guidelines may differ from one site to another.

Employ Resilient Design Principles

A cornerstone principle of this Downtown Plan is designing for a resilient Estes Park. For Downtown, this means designing in a fashion that improves the ability to prevent, react, respond and recover to sudden or slowly occurring shocks to the economy and environment. Site design features and innovative building design approaches can help in this effort. Key guidelines include:

- **Locate a Building Strategically** - Consider the pre-development conditions of a site or area and try to maintain the natural urge of water to flow. The siting and placement of a building and grading of a site should be done strategically such that it minimizes disruption to the natural flow of water.
- **Design a Resilient Building** - Design a building to accommodate permanent or temporary flood barrier mechanisms to prevent water intrusion during a flood event.
- **Promote Buildings that Can Accommodate Flood Flows** - In some cases, ground-floor occupancy of buildings will be found to be inappropriate due to the location being vulnerable under flood conditions. In some cases, this may prevent certain uses or any uses on the ground floor. Unoccupied space or non-residential space may still be viable. In extreme cases, a building could include parking on lower levels that is designed to absorb and permit water flow during flood events.
- **Employ Wildlife Friendly Design Features** - Estes Park's wildlife is one of its major assets and strongly contributes to its identity and sense of place. Sites and buildings should be designed such that they do not disrupt the natural movement patterns of wildlife. This may include employing special fencing or no fencing, setting back from sensitive areas or strategically preserving some parts of a site as open space.
- **Design for Disaster Preparedness** - A building and site should be designed to accommodate emergency access and evacuation needs during a storm event or other potential disaster situation. This includes designing for clear egress, easy access to vehicles and operable windows that permit evacuation.

Design in harmony with nature.

A building could include parking on lower levels that is designed to absorb and permit water flow during flood events.

Orient outdoor public spaces toward natural amenities.

Encouraged the private realm to "spill" into the public realm.

Preserve and Celebrate Downtown's Natural Resources

All development in Downtown should embrace the surrounding natural setting, while also being sensitive to critical features like rivers, creeks and mountainsides. Key design guidelines include:

- **Design in Harmony with Nature** - Site and building designs should work with a natural setting harmoniously. Do not attempt to force the environment to adapt to a design, but rather adapt a design to conform to the natural setting with as little amount of disturbance as possible. This means designing buildings to terrace into a hillside instead of massive cut and fill and the use of retaining walls.
- **Minimize Impacts to the Environment** - Development should seek to minimize impacts on the natural environment, such as stormwater runoff into Downtown's creeks and rivers.
- **Orient Toward Natural Amenities** - Consider the possibility to take advantage of a natural amenity in the design of a new building. Orient an entry, outdoor seating area or private outdoor space toward natural features wherever possible.
- **Provide Access to Natural Features** - Encourage a private development to provide public access to and along the rivers and creeks in Downtown wherever possible. This could include a public path connecting a public street to a waterway through a private development site.
- **Preserve and Create View Opportunities** - Consider how a development can preserve and enhance the visual connection to nature that occurs in Downtown. This could include modulating the form of a building to preserve public viewsheds to the extent feasible or designing private outdoor spaces and rooftop decks such that scenic views from these features are maximized.

Contribute to a Vibrant Downtown

One of the key objectives for Downtown is that it be a lively, active place throughout the year. This means people, activities and action during the day and at night. Private development can contribute to creating a vibrant Downtown by employing some or all of the following guidelines.

- **Employ an Activity-Generating Use Mix** - A new development should pursue land uses that promote activity in Downtown, particularly in off-peak seasons and at night. Creating mixed-use developments that combine housing, commercial, hospitality and office activities can help fuel an active Downtown by establishing a symbiotic relationship between various uses on a site as well as other activities Downtown.
- **Incorporate Social Gathering Spaces** - New development should consider opportunities to create great outdoor spaces that help to enliven the public realm. Locating such spaces to be highly visible along a street or the Riverwalk will help achieve the desired vibrancy.
- **Create "Eyes on the Street."** - Creating "eyes on the street" enhances a feeling of safety in environments like Downtown. Maximizing façade transparency and creating occupied upper floor residential space create a feeling of safety in Downtown, contributing to overall vibrancy and activity.
- **"Spill" into the Public Realm** - Private development, and commercial space in particular, should be designed to "spill" onto the street, add visual interest and enhance the vibrancy of Downtown.

Contribute to Downtown Connectivity

Increasing connectivity around the Downtown is a primary goal of this Plan. This means expanding the existing network to provide additional options for multi-modal transportation operations. Doing so will not only alleviate pressure on the primary roadway systems, but in the case of vehicular flow, can create alternative transportation routes that contribute to a resilient Estes Park. Allowing public access through a private development site will require coordination between the Town and private landowners, but is possible. Some basic principles include:

- **Expand the Roadway Network** - Create public roadways through a larger site or private, street-like drives.
- **Provide Pedestrian and Bike Access Through a Site** - Consider how a site can be designed to permit public access between streets. Examples include designing a site to permit access from Elkhorn Avenue to the Fall River to the south or Cleave Street to the north.

Design for Walkability

Enhancing walkability is a key objective of this Downtown Plan. This is critical throughout the Downtown and especially along major streets like Moraine Avenue, Elkhorn Avenue, Cleave Street and the Riverwalk. Buildings and sites should be designed to maximize pedestrian connectivity and create a pleasant and comfortable walking experience on adjacent sidewalks.

- **Provide Visual Interest** - As mentioned above, buildings and sites should be designed to provide interest to those walking by on adjacent sidewalks and other public spaces.
- **Frame the Public Realm** - Buildings should be placed and oriented such that they "frame" the street, providing a sense of enclosure for pedestrians. This helps add comfort for pedestrians.
- **Facilitate a Safe Walking Experience** - Buildings should not encroach on the public sidewalk or other public spaces in a manner that restricts the flow of Downtown pedestrians. Where outdoor seating is used, it must permit adequate space on the sidewalk for people to safely and comfortably pass one another. Private development should strategically use low, downward- facing lighting to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort. The Town's "Dark Sky" code policies should be followed when designing lighting plans for any site.

Expand the existing network to provide additional options for multi-modal transport options.

Orient a building to face a street, plaza or the Riverwalk. Residential entries and balconies can also help to activate the public realm.

Accommodate Access for All Modes

Sites and buildings Downtown should be designed to promote walkability and bicycling, while still safely accommodating vehicle access. Designs should be sensitive to the needs of all transportation modes. Key guidelines include:

- **Minimize Conflicts** - Design site access and circulation to minimize potential conflicts between automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians. Carefully locate access drives and utilize signage, striping and paving creatively to help address conflicts.
- **Minimize Vehicular Access Points Along Pedestrian Routes** - Provide the fewest number of vehicular access points needed for the functionality of a site so that pedestrian interactions with vehicles are minimized. Where access points are provided, minimize the width of the driveway.
- **Avoid Vehicular Access Off of Primary Pedestrian Streets** - Provide vehicular access to a site from a side street wherever possible. This is particularly important on roadways that are envisioned to be highly pedestrian-oriented, such as Elkhorn Avenue and Moraine Avenue.

Design circulation to promote walkability and bicycling, while still safely accommodating vehicle access.

Design a building to provide interest to those walking by and on adjacent sidewalks.

Design in Context

Development in Downtown should consider context. This means understanding the relationship of a building to its built and natural surrounding and being sensitive to that surrounding, if necessary. Guidelines for context-sensitive design in Downtown are as follows:

- **Transition to Sensitive Neighboring Properties** - Where a new development occurs adjacent to a sensitive neighboring property, such as a single-family residential zone, consider employing design features that help provide a transition at the interface between the two properties.
  - » ***Transition in Scale*** - Where a taller building is developed adjacent to an area zoned for a lower scale, consider stepping down the scale of the building adjacent to the lower-scaled area. Where the new building is at a lower grade than the lower-scaled area, this may not be needed as the natural terrain will provide a natural transition.
  - » ***Transition in Use*** - Where a commercial or mixed-use building is located adjacent to a residentially-zoned area, consider locating compatible uses and activities adjacent to the residential areas. In a mixed-use project containing residential and commercial uses, this may mean locating the residential component at the transition interface. For a purely commercial building, a development should strategically avoid placing odor- or noise-emitting operations at an interface with a sensitive residential use.
  - » ***Provide a Buffer*** - In some cases, a sensitive transition can be established by simply setting a building further back from a sensitive interface or by providing a landscape buffer (trees, shrubs, etc.) between the two properties.
- **Respect the Fine Grain Building Patterns in the Downtown Core** - When designing a project in the Downtown Core, respond to the fundamental architectural patterns. In the Downtown Core, this means providing significant vertical articulation that breaks down a larger building into smaller horizontal modules that reflect the narrow building widths of the older, existing buildings. Conversely, using a variety of materials, colors and design treatments appropriately responds to the Downtown Core's eclectic architectural diversity.
- **Design for the Estes Park Character** - Downtown is inarguably connected to nature. As such, a fusion of nature and Town is a fundamental design principle for the Plan Area. When designing a new development, consider using natural materials in the design, such as stone and wood. Synthetic, masonry or even metal materials are appropriate, but these buildings are encouraged to interweave natural materials throughout their designs as accent features or to better define key architectural elements.

Designers should be encouraged to use a variety of materials in their designs, while using some design cues that represent the natural environment, such as wood or stone.

Mass variation techniques include stepbacks, increased setbacks and wall offsets.

Vary the mass of a building to step with changes in landform.

Express a Human Scale

"Human scale" is used to describe how a person perceives a building element or a group of building elements in relation to themselves. A person relates better to building features that are of a size and scale similar to that of a human. For example, a blank wall that spans multiple stories does not properly exhibit human scale. The same wall can begin to express human scale by demarcating floors and adding appropriately sized windows and doors. Expressing human scale is critical for new buildings in Downtown, and particularly for those that are larger and taller. Building articulation methods include vertical and horizontal changes in materials, color, wall plane or other elements that reduce the real and/or perceived mass of a structure. The following articulation techniques should be utilized in Downtown:

- **Façade Articulation** - Physical design elements that break down a building into human scale components and express a sense of horizontal and vertical scale. These methods typically do not significantly affect the overall square footage of a floor or building. Typical façade articulation approaches include:
  - » *Windows and fenestration*
  - » *Color changes*
  - » *Material changes*
  - » *Horizontal and vertical expression lines*
  - » *Minor wall offsets*
  - » *Door Alcoves*
- **Mass Variation** - Design elements vary the building mass significantly enough that they reduce the actual mass and scale of the building. These include the modulation of a building floor or wall in a manner that creates a physical relief in the architectural form. Mass variation techniques include:
  - » *Stepbacks*
  - » *Increased setbacks*
  - » *Major wall offsets*
  - » *Stepdowns to respond to topographical changes*

Reinforce Estes Park's Eclectic Architectural Character

Estes Park is known for its eclectic and vibrant architecture and diversity in the built environment. The community and this Plan support this eclecticism, and future development that continues this tradition should be encouraged.

- **Encourage Variety in Style** - No one architectural style should be assigned for buildings in Downtown. Instead, architects and designers should be encouraged to incorporate variety in design, materials and the use of color in Downtown, and "outside the box" creativity should be supported.
- **Promote Creative Use of Materials** - Designers should be encouraged to use a variety of materials in their designs, while using some design cues that represent the natural environment ubiquitous in Downtown. These may include using wood or stone accents on a building that otherwise utilizes modern materials. Use of traditional materials is also appropriate and should be encouraged if desired.
- **Utilize Art** - Incorporate public art into the design of a building. This may include reserving space for public art or incorporating artistic elements into the building itself.
- **Avoid a Monotonous Feel** - Downtown's eclectic character should be reinforced by its architecture. Design of individual buildings should be encouraged to be unique and add to the variety that defines Downtown today. A cookie cutter approach is inappropriate and should be avoided to prevent a homogenous feel.

Designers should be encouraged to employ a variety of materials in their designs, while using some design cues that represent the natural environment.

Employ Winter City Design Principles

Estes Park is a winter city given its high altitude and its extended periods of snow and cold temperatures. The conditions that winter cities experience during colder months must be thoughtfully considered in the design of private development. A development should be designed such that it takes advantages of opportunities created by seasonal changes.

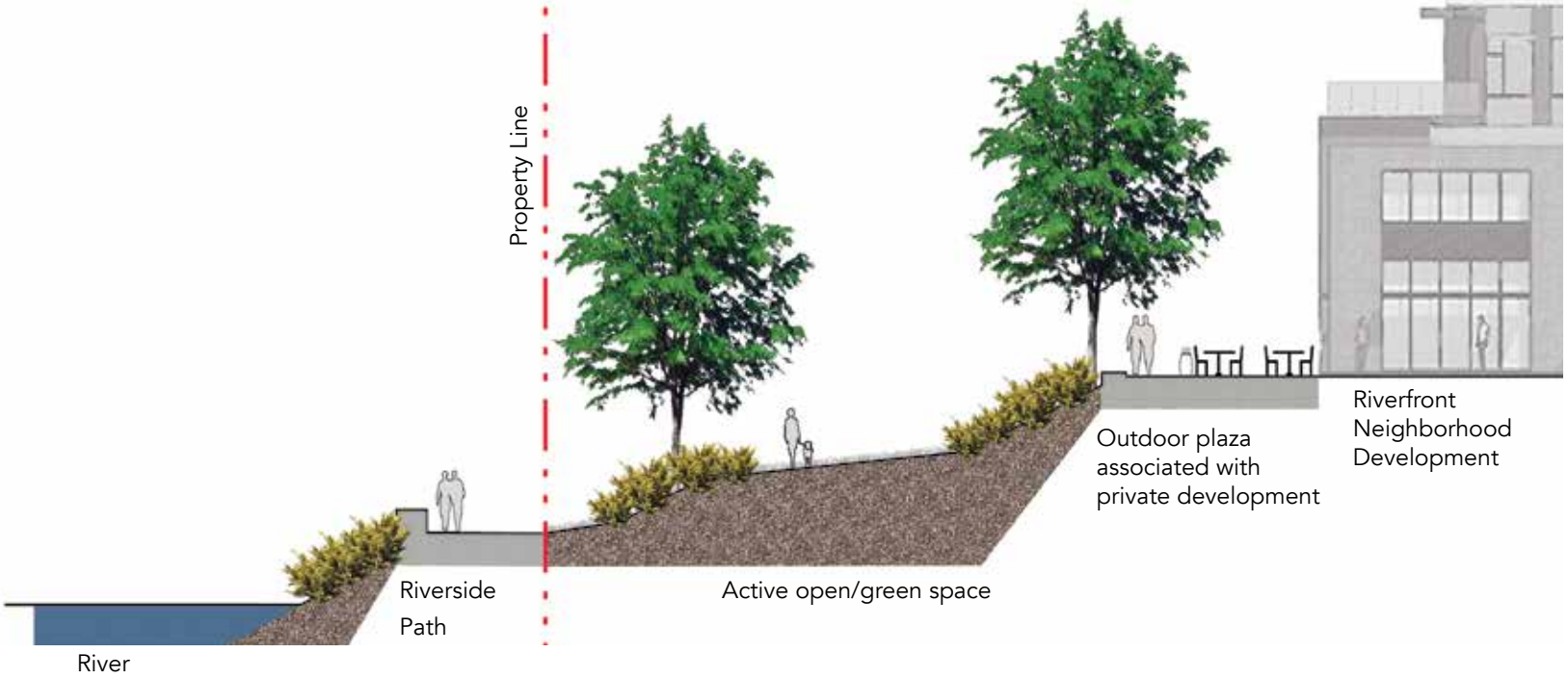
- **Maximize Solar Exposure** - When designing a site and building, carefully locate and design critical features to maximize solar exposure. During winter months, this can help facilitate solar heating, making a space more comfortable. Designing the form of a building to permit solar access to key walking areas can also be critical to prevent ice buildup that can detract users and potentially cause an accident.

Sites and buildings in Downtown should not be designed strictly for summer months when snow is not an issue.

Celebrate the Riverfront

Buildings and sites located adjacent to Downtown's rivers and creeks should design their interface with the river to respond to the importance of these natural features. This may be relevant for the Fall and Big Thompson Rivers, as well as Black Canyon Creek.

- **Step Down in Scale** - A building should generally step down in scale as it approaches the river edge.
- **Orient to the River** - A building should be designed to orient toward and animate the river edge. This means locating entrances, outdoor seating areas, patios and other features to open toward the river. In some cases, this will require double-fronted buildings that have an interface with a waterway and the public street.
- **Set Back from the River** - Buildings should be set back generously from the rivers in Downtown. As with upper floor setbacks, some space will help to celebrate and remain subordinate to these critical natural features.
- **Provide Access to the River** - A site should be designed to permit public access to the river, either at the edge of a site or through the middle. In no cases shall a new development further restrict river access.
- **Coordinate with the Riverwalk** - Where possible, design site elements and circulation features to coordinate with key elements on the Riverwalk. For example, where a public bridge from the Riverwalk is provided, locate a key site circulation feature to lead to the bridge.



Incorporate On-Site Flood Mitigation

Alternatives for building in flood zones must be developed due to the existing Downtown conditions. Parts of Downtown are in the floodway, and others are in the floodplain as designated by FEMA maps. These designations are used for a variety of flood management policies and regulations. Flood insurance and local building codes also are linked to these maps.

Flood mapping can change over time, as new information becomes available, and such an update is anticipated for Estes Park in the Fall/Winter of 2017. The results of remapping may change the way in which some properties can develop, especially in the near term. In any case, understanding the range of options that could be permitted is important.

The Downtown Plan proposes proactive changes to river sections in the Downtown that, in the long term, could remove some properties from the floodway and perhaps even the floodplain in the future. The Plan also recommends continuing to explore other work higher up in the drainage basins that also could improve development opportunities.

In the interim, before in-stream improvements can be achieved, there are a variety of ways a property can be improved. One approach is to elevate the ground level, by filling a site in accordance with floodplain regulations. However, doing so cannot affect the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Thus, this approach is not likely to be feasible in the Downtown Plan area. There are, however, some building options (outlined below) that could be considered, depending upon if the property is located in the floodplain or floodway and upon the type of use that is planned. These are some potential approaches to development, based on publications from FEMA. Note that more specific studies during Plan implementation may change some of these options. Applicable federal, state and local regulations must be adhered to.

The ground story of this parking deck has a facade designed to emulate traditional buildings in its context; however, the ground level is open, permitting flood waters to pass through.

Architectural screens may be used to provide visual interest at the street level, if they are designed to permit water to flow through.

Scenario A - Occupied floors are elevated above BFE.

Scenario B - Use is limited to outdoor spaces which could be parking lots, parks and plazas.

Scenario A - Building with an unoccupied ground level (Floodway)
Features:

- The ground level is used for parking or storage.
- Open foundations at the ground level are designed to permit flood waters to move through the ground level. It does not increase flood heights.
- Architectural screens may be used to provide visual interest at the street level, if they are designed to permit water to flow through.
- Occupied floors are elevated to a sufficient level above BFE.
- Occupied uses on second floor and above may be commercial or industrial, but not residential.

Comment:
While this option is not as desirable as others in terms of providing an active use at the ground level, it could result in more compact use of land, since parking would be tucked under the building. It may be the only option for an occupied structure in the floodway itself. Any new development in the floodway must have a no-rise analysis and subsequent no-rise certificate or a conditional letter of map revision is obtained.

Scenario B - No permanent structure (Floodway)
Features:

- Use is limited to outdoor spaces, which could be parking lots, parks and plazas.
- An open-air structure, such as a band shell, is generally discouraged but may be allowed if a no-rise certification or certificate or a conditional letter of map revision is obtained.
- No below-grade uses would be included.

Comment:
This approach would be useful where public plazas and surface parking lots are planned. Mobile services, such as food trucks or outdoor markets, could be included as temporary means of activating these places.

Scenario C - Occupied structure with non-residential use at the ground level (Floodplain)
Features:

- Occupied space is permitted. This could include residential and commercial uses, including retail, dining and offices.
- The ground level would be designed to minimize potential flood impacts, or otherwise flood proofed. Windows, for example, would be set above potential flood levels and doorways would be designed to accommodate operable flood barriers.
- No below-grade uses would be included.

Scenario D - Addition constructed in the Conveyance Shadow
Features:
An addition is constructed on the side of the building that will be out of the way of direct flood water path. The assumption is that is does not modify the flood pattern. This may have limited application in Downtown Estes Park, but may merit some consideration on a case-by-case basis. Applicable federal, state and local regulations must be adhered to.

Site-Specific Flood Mitigation

Site-specific flood mitigation actions provide excellent opportunities to meet flood abatement objectives in Downtown. These are strongly encouraged in all new private and public development, including parking structures, new buildings and new parks. Refer to the section on "Private Realm Design Concepts" for more information on this topic.

Site-specific or property-level solutions may have smaller overall impacts individually than those at the regional or Downtown level, but they are attractive because they can be implemented more quickly. These are solutions that existing property owners could initiate or those that could be incorporated into future development. Programs could also be established to provide financial assistance or incentives. Property-level solutions include incorporating landscape features that allow water infiltration into the ground, basement retrofits and temporary barriers that protect storefronts from floodwaters. Mitigation projects at the individual property level include these measures for existing buildings:

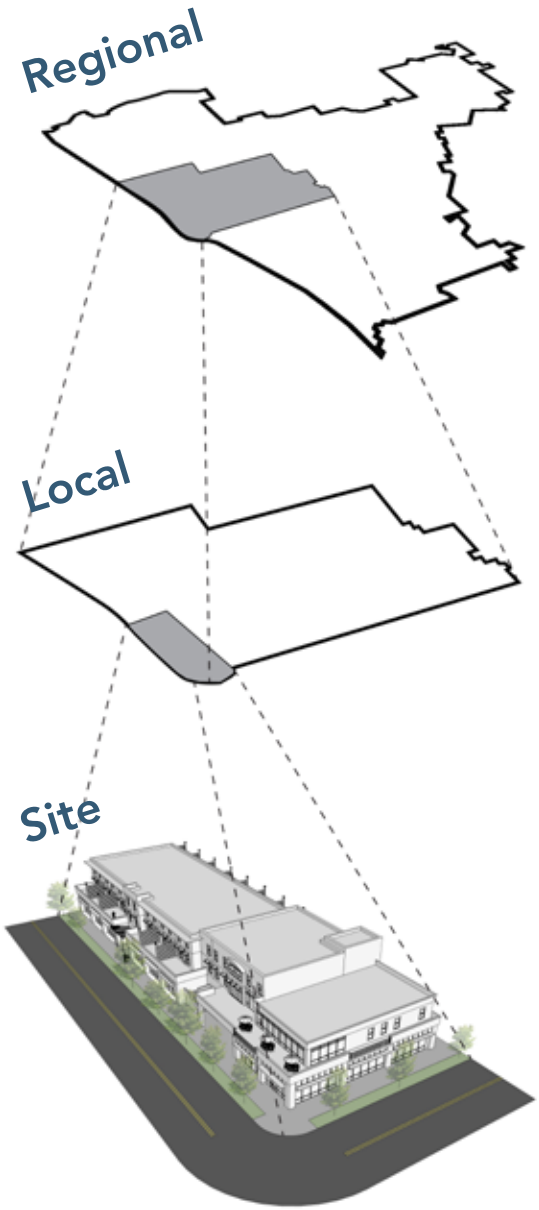
- **Temporary Barrier System for an Existing Building** - These can be erected at times of rising waters to protect storefronts and building entries.
- **Elevate Ground-Level Floor of Existing Building** - In some buildings, it may be possible to raise the floor level above the Building Floor Elevation.
- **Abandon the Basement Level of an Existing Building** - Removing mechanical and electrical systems from basements and modifying them such that they cannot be occupied helps reduce risk of damage to existing buildings.

For new buildings, these options may be feasible, depending upon the flood hazard designation for the site:

- **Develop for Outdoor Use Only** - Use would be parking lots, parks and plazas.
- **Develop with an Unoccupied Ground Level** - The ground level is designed to permit flood waters to pass through. It may be used for parking.
- **Develop with a Non-residential Use at the Ground Level** - This may include retail, dining and offices. The ground level would be designed to minimize potential flood impacts, or be otherwise flood proofed.

These building scenarios could be combined with structured terracing to accommodate flood waters as well.

Temporary barrier systems can be erected at times of rising water to protect storefronts and building entries.



This diagram illustrates the three levels of flood resilience. Note that "site" level flood resilience is discussed in the previous section.

Public Realm Design Guidelines

This section provides design guidelines for public improvements, including flood resilience infrastructure, active transportation facilities, streets and other similar topics.

Flood Resilience

Flood mitigation is a primary objective. A multi-faceted approach is required to address flooding issues Downtown and to ensure that existing buildings and future investments are protected from catastrophic events. The Plan approaches the issue at three levels. Flood resilience includes a variety of strategies which have been divided into the following levels:

- **Regional -** Regional solutions include initiatives that address flooding within the watersheds above Town that impact Downtown.
- **Local -** Local solutions are projects that address flooding within the Plan Area itself.
- **Site Specific -** Property level solutions are design features and mechanisms, both permanent and temporary, for individual properties Downtown.

Specific Public Realm Opportunities

- Design the Loop such that if part of it is closed by a flood, accident or special event, it could be converted back to a two-way system or reverse direction.
- Plan the pedestrian system to make it possible to hike in or out of Downtown in a large flood. View the pedestrian system as an emergency facility for evacuation and rescue. Link walkways to "areas of refuge" where people can take shelter and EMS can stage operations.
- Treat the park shuttle bus system as a critical facility. It is an economic lifeline for Downtown.
- Treat snow storage areas and public parking as integral parts of the floodable areas strategy.
- Promote better flood warning systems - - install more gauges using state of the art sensor technology. Consider an "amber alert"-style system for flooding in Downtown.
- Integrate public and private investments to meet larger resilience outcomes - - identify five strategically sequenced catalyst projects that are connected.
- Design, fund and build a new bridge and adaptable approach to flooding at West Elkhorn and Fall River - - a gateway and "nozzle" for Fall River that reduces flooding by changing the speed and flow of the river as it enters Downtown.

Regional Flood Mitigation

Regional solutions present excellent opportunities to aid in Downtown flood management, but also present some of the greatest challenges of the three levels. Because regional solutions require property, resources and significant cooperation beyond the limits of the Town of Estes Park, they are likely to take longer and cost more. Regional solutions could involve permanent upstream interventions to slow or divert floodwaters. Large retention or detention areas and dams are examples. These are large, multi-jurisdictional capital improvements.

- **Upstream Channel Widening** examines opportunity sites that have the space to expand the width of a river or stream channel. This helps to reduce the overall pressure from initial flood surges. These solutions mitigate the initial flood concerns by decreasing flood surges, headwall strength and intensity, which provides increased warning time for an event.
- **Regional Flood Control Infrastructure** can include dams, reservoirs, dikes or levees. These large-scale engineering projects contain, divert and armor against flood events.

Regional flood control infrastructure can include dams, reservoirs, dikes or levees.

Local Flood Mitigation

Local solutions are ones that are directed by the Town and that occur within its boundaries. They present opportunities to aid in flood management, and they are attractive because they are measures over which the Town may have more direct control. While inter-jurisdictional cooperation will still be required in some cases, the potential is more certain and the results may be realized more quickly as compared to regional level projects. Downtown-level solutions would include widening channels at key locations and building more effective local stormwater management infrastructure. These can be designed as amenities like open spaces and parking areas that can double as detention areas. Temporary improvements, such as detachable flood barriers, may also be options. Mitigation projects as the Town Level include:

- **Strategic Widening of Channels** - These may be naturalized designs, with sloping, landscaped banks or structured ones, with stepped terraces that accommodate outdoor uses during times of normal flow. This will increase capacity and could lead to adjustments in flood maps that would facilitate appropriate uses in other areas.
- **Grade Separated Bike and Pedestrian Routes Along River Edge** - These are structures that are designed to accommodate water during flood events. The trail floor is located near the normal river bed elevation in some places.
- **Bridge Upgrades** - Increasing the capacity for water flows under bridges is a key action. This involves enlarging the cross section of the opening, with a combination of widening and increasing height.
- **Streetscape Designs to Retain and Convey Floor Waters** - These devices direct water to areas that can absorb it or direct it to locations where it can be managed. They include rain gardens, bioswales and special gutter designs, including inverted road systems.

This image shows an example of a widened waterway channel that would be appropriate in the outer areas of Downtown.

Streetscape Design

Streets in Downtown should be designed to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles. They should also contribute to placemaking efforts by creating spaces for social interaction, special events and opportunities for private businesses to extend into the public realm with outdoor seating, displays, public art and other features. Additionally, streets in Downtown should be designed to support resiliency efforts by ensuring safe and adequate vehicle access and contributing to stormwater management and flood mitigation.

A streetscape "cluster" is an organization of the street furnishings and art. Generally, a cluster of benches, bike racks, planters, trash receptacles, etc. should be provided approximately every 100 feet in the Downtown Core. Outside the Downtown Core, streetscape clusters should be provided at every transit stop, or at least one cluster per block. Some elements within the clusters could be removed and stored during winter months for improved longevity and snow clearance

This image shows a street that supports a mix of primary circulation modes including bicycles, pedestrians, passenger vehicles and transit.

Pedestrian Facilities

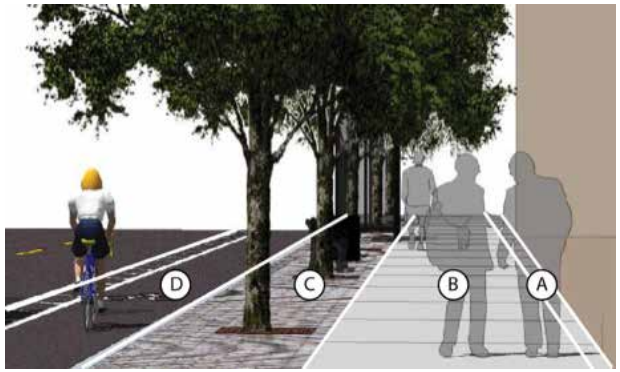
Connecting Pedestrians: Best Practices and Applications in Estes Park

Walking is the most basic mode of transportation. Creating a community that is walkable for both recreation and transportation purposes requires the following:

- Establish comfortable and connected walking routes that are separated and/or buffered from motor vehicle traffic.
- Provide routes that offer direct and convenient access to key destinations, such as businesses, parks, natural features and other transportation facilities (i.e. bicycle parking, vehicle parking and transit stops).
- Develop routes consistent in style, size and type so that pedestrians can visually understand the system.
- Provide wayfinding signage with information on distance and approximate time to access destinations.
- Create diverse visual interest along routes and walkways, such as windowed storefronts, landscaping, art and natural features; routes along blank building walls or in areas with little visual interest will not be inviting to pedestrians.
- Supply adequate space for pedestrians along sidewalks and other routes and provide pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, shade, benches and trash receptacles.
- Provide intersection and mid-block crossings that reduce the distance pedestrians must cross, enhance the visibility and prominence of pedestrians to motor vehicles, and provide adequate signal time for users of all ages and abilities to cross.

Pedestrian-oriented wayfinding signage with travel distances and destination information welcomes pedestrians to experience the community and engage in commerce. (Source: www.downtownfindlay.com and Applied Wayfinding)

Midblock signage in Longmont, CO alerts motor vehicle drivers of crossing pedestrians.



Sidewalk zones

Sidewalks: Four Distinct Zones

To enhance the comfort, convenience and enjoyment of pedestrians and to encourage walking among users of all ages and abilities, sidewalks should be of adequate size and include four distinct zones:

A. Frontage zone that extends from the building or adjacent land uses (typically 0'-2')
B. Pedestrian zone (4'-12')
C. Greenscape/furnishing zone (typically 5'-6')
D. Curb zone (typically 6')

The Curb zone may contain shoulders, curb extensions, bike facilities, parking or other uses. Zone widths and uses depend on the level of pedestrian activity and land uses adjacent to the sidewalk. For instance, the curb zone could be used for parking and the greenscape/furniture zone could be used for landscaping in applicable settings. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sets a minimum pedestrian zone width of four feet and recommends a zone of at least five feet.

Multi-use Paths: Integrating Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Multi-use paths combine pedestrians with bicyclists (and other users, such as skateboarders and rollerbladers) in a dedicated, separated facility.

Multi-use paths typically run parallel and adjacent to roadways as "sidepaths" or completely separated from the road right-of-way. Separated multi-use paths are typically either direct routes meant for bicycle transportation and commuting or meandering recreational routes that highlight prominent natural areas or features. Paved surfaces are more comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly those who would like to maintain higher speeds.

Regardless of the specific application, multi-use facilities should be a minimum of 10 feet wide to accommodate pedestrians and permit bi-directional bicycle travel. Widths typically range to a maximum of 14 feet. The appropriate width depends on pedestrian/bicyclist volume, land use, user type and how the path operates. Paths with a higher projected pedestrian use, for instance, should be closer to 14 feet in width.

Pedestrian Crossings

Comfortable and convenient intersection and mid-block crossings are essential to creating a walkable community. Walking routes themselves can feel safe, but users often feel uncomfortable crossing streets at intersections and mid-block locations. Users often report crossings (such as at Big Thompson Avenue near the Visitor's Center) as the most dangerous locations in pedestrian systems. These locations often deter people—particularly younger individuals and seniors—from walking comfortably. Like pedestrian routes, the appropriate treatment to enhance the comfort and convenience of pedestrians at intersections and crossings is context-specific. General design guidelines and best practices for pedestrian crossings are summarized below.

Pedestrian Crosswalks: Standardizing Placement and Type

Crosswalks indicate to pedestrians where to cross the street and show cars where to expect pedestrians to be in the road. In short, they delineate conflict zones. Crosswalks should:

- Orient perpendicular to the flow of vehicular traffic
- Be located only at critical and likely pedestrian crossing locations
- Connect to adjacent sidewalks via ADA-compliant curb ramps
- Mark the shortest path across the street

This Plan recommends that crosswalks be installed using thermoplastic markings in the high-visibility "continental crosswalk" style. Thermoplastic can cost approximately five times more than traditional painted stripes; however, its higher visibility creates a safer environment for crossing pedestrians. The increased costs are partially offset by the nearly three times longer lifespan of thermoplastic pavement markings compared to paint.

Public art can be integrated into curb extensions. (Source: John Greenfield; from Quick Builds for Better Streets, PeopleforBikes)

Pedestrian refuge islands can be integrated into midblock crossings. (Source: USDOT Federal Highway Administration)

High-visibility continental crosswalks are the preferred type at intersection and mid-block locations.

Pedestrian circulation should be enhanced with crossing improvements. Curb extensions or 'bulb-outs' increase pedestrian visibility and decrease pedestrian crossing time. The 'bulb-out' pictured above also includes a curb-cut to collect water from storm flows and snow melt.

Curb Extensions ("Bump Outs")
Curb extensions physically narrow the roadway, which creates shorter crossings for pedestrians and increases the overall visibility of pedestrians by aligning them with parking lanes. Additionally, curb extensions tighten intersection radii and encourage slower turning speeds.

Treatments range from permanent concrete solutions to low-cost pavement markings and flexible bollards. Flexible vertical bollards add physical separation and better delineate these areas. Bump out areas created with bollards can also be used as snow storage in the winter, so long as pedestrian lanes are maintained.

Mid-Block Crossing
Crossing mid-block, between intersections, is often necessary to allow pedestrians to connect to adjacent walking facilities or key destinations. These locations can be difficult places to cross, as pedestrians are often not completely visible and motor vehicle drivers are not expecting them. Guidance from industry best practices suggests that crossings at mid-block locations should:

- Provide pedestrians with the shortest possible length to cross using curb-extensions or median pedestrian refuge islands
- Create an unobstructed view for pedestrians of oncoming motor vehicles.
- Make pedestrians prominent and completely visible to motor vehicle drivers, using marked crosswalks, signage, signals, raised crossings (where appropriate) and maintain adequate site lines while avoiding obstructions such as parked cars, landscaping and sidewalk elements.
- Include clear guidance to motor vehicle drivers on where to stop in advance of mid-block crossings.
- Provide pedestrians clear guidance on when it is appropriate to cross the street.

When determining what types of mid-block pedestrian crossing treatments are warranted, the Town should conduct engineering evaluations and review State of Colorado guidance on traffic and uniform traffic controls.

Pedestrian-Activated Beacons: Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB)
Beyond static pedestrian crossing crosswalk signage and continuous pedestrian flash beacons, a dynamic pedestrian-activated beacon can be placed at critical mid-block crossings to increase the visibility of crossing pedestrians and increase yield/stop compliance among motor vehicle drivers. Chief among these is the Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB).

An RRFB is a user push button-activated flashing beacon that provides enhanced signal to drivers when pedestrians are crossing. RRFBs are horizontal light emitting diode (LED) light units typically affixed to stationary curb-side or median island pedestrian signage. RFFBs emit a rapid, intermittent, and irregular flashing signal when activated. When used in conjunction with appropriate crosswalk signage and advanced stop/yield warning signage, RRFBs have improved driver yielding behavior. An RRFB would be a potential solution to mid-block crossings, such as those along Big Thompson Avenue.

Below-Grade Crossing
A below-grade crossing provides a seamless crossing for pedestrians below the roadway or transit alignment. A common example of a below-grade crossing is an underpass, which is more convenient for both pedestrians and automobile drivers. Although below-grade crossings are generally more expensive than at-grade crossings, they provide an added element of safety and convenience for all users.

Pedestrian Refuge Islands
Pedestrian refuge islands are physical elements placed in the street median to offer a place for pedestrians to rest outside the flow of vehicular traffic while crossing a street. Refuge islands can be placed at pedestrian crossings with long crossing distances to break up a long "one-stage" crossing into a "two-stage" crossing with two shorter segments.

Two-stage crossings with a median refuge island provides pedestrians a more accessible crossing in areas with higher traffic volumes or speeds. (Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials)

Protected bike lane. (Source: Arlington County, VA)

Shared-use path facilities serve transportation and recreation bicycling purposes.

Bicyclists in a protected bike lane are buffered from motor vehicles, which provides a comfortable experience.

On-street bicycle facilities include bike lanes and other facilities that are located within the street right-of-way.

Bicycle Facilities

Incorporating Bicycles: Best Practices and Applications in Estes Park

Creating a bikeable community requires the following:

- Establish comfortable and connected biking routes that are separated and/or buffered from vehicular traffic.
- Provide routes that offer direct and convenient access to key destinations, such as businesses, parks, natural features and other transportation facilities (i. e. bicycle parking, vehicle parking and transit stops).
- Develop routes consistent in style, width, color and type, wherever possible, so bicyclists can visually understand the system.
- Provide wayfinding signage with information on distance and the approximate time it takes to access destinations.
- Offer space for bicyclists to queue at intersections and clear markings to alert both bicyclists and motor vehicle drivers of bicyclist paths through intersections.
- Provide available and convenient amenities, such as bicycle parking, repair stations and bike share stations.

Bikeway Design Considerations

The type of bike facility required depends on the context: whether the facility will be on-street or off-street, how much space is available, what the facility will be connecting and how it will integrate with other modes of transportation. This section summarizes design guidelines and best practices to consider with the recommended bicycle facility types in the Town.

On-Street Bicycle Lane

The most basic form of dedicated on-street bicycle facilities, bicycle lanes, are recommended to be five to six feet in width (exclusive of any curbside gutter pan). They can be placed either against the curb, away from the curb, or on the inside of vehicle parking, travel, or turn lanes. Where curb-to-curb street space exists, a bicycle lane placed against the curb and buffered from moving vehicles by parked cars (typically eight feet in width) is the preferred orientation. In such instances, on-street bicycle lanes are referred to as "protected bike lanes" or "cycle tracks." Where appropriate and possible, motor vehicle lanes may be narrowed to 12 or 10 feet to create extra width for on-street bicycle facilities. Protected bike lanes provide increased comfort, as bicyclists do not have to ride alongside moving vehicular traffic.

Shared Lane Markings

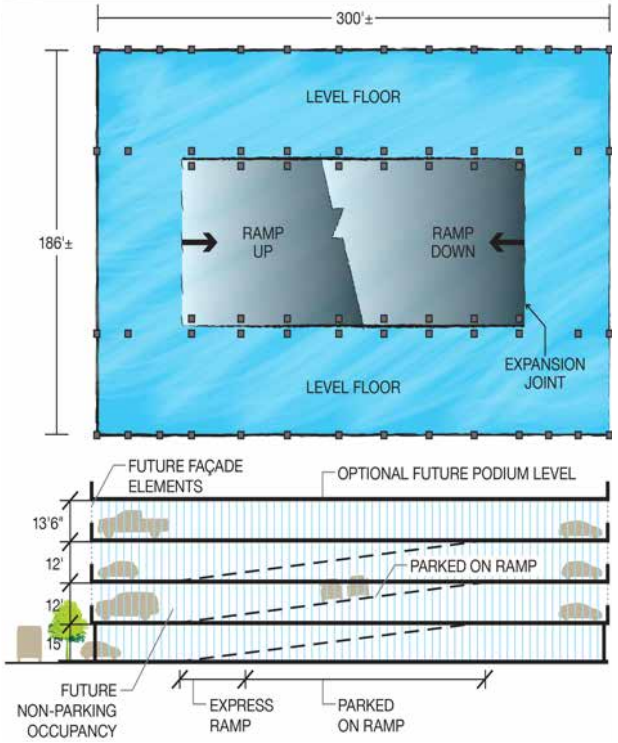
Shared lane markings, often referred to as "sharrows," are painted onto roadways that are part of a bicycle circulation system, but that do not have adequate right-of-way to provide an on-street bicycle lane. These markings are prominently striped on a roadway to indicate to motorists that they are driving in an environment that experiences heavy bicycle usage.

Multi-Use Path

Multi-use paths provide comfortable off-street connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists. These facilities are physically separated from vehicular travel lanes and are wide enough to safely accommodate two-way bike and pedestrian travel.

Painted bicycle lanes should be a minimum of five feet wide and identify space for bicyclists and motor vehicles.
(Source: www.bikeportland.org)

A protected two-way bike lane on the side of the road offers space for bicyclists separated from the motor vehicle lane and the sidewalk. Green paint is used to mark where bicyclists cross the path of turning motor vehicles. Properly maintaining pedestrian and bicycle facilities after snow and ice events is critical to supporting year-round walking and bicycling.



Parking Facilities

Integrate Adaptive Reuse Principles in Future Structures, Where Financially Feasible

Parking structures are unique building types. They are typically open to the environment and are designed to be storage facilities (Group S occupancy); they're generally not conditioned, occupied spaces. They are typically more horizontal than vertical in configuration. The primary focus of parking structure design has been to efficiently move cars in, store them and then move them back out. In contrast, buildings for non-parking uses focus on making the occupied space safe, habitable, appealing and accessible for people. There are a number of design features of a parking structure that don't lend themselves to non-parking uses:

- **Story heights.** Typically, parking structure story heights range between 10 feet and 11 feet, six inches. Those measurements are not suitable for most commercial office/retail or residential uses.
- **Sloped floors.** Parking structures require sloped floors to facilitate vehicular circulation between parking levels and for drainage.
- **Size, number and layout of stairs and elevators.** Stairs are a means of egress for life safety and are sized based on code-prescribed occupant load factors associated with an occupancy use classification. For parking structures, the occupant load factor is 200 square feet per person, whereas for an office (Group B) and mercantile (Group M) classifications, it is 100 and 60 square feet per person, respectively, which results in a requirement for wider stair widths and/or additional stairs. Stairs and accompanying elevators are typically located along the perimeter of a parking structure. In contrast, in non-parking use buildings, stairs are typically located within the interior of the building footprint.
- **HVAC systems are not provided for parking floor areas.** Many jurisdictions don't require parking structures to have fire sprinklers for fire protection but do require the systems in other kinds of buildings.
- **The minimum code-prescribed floor live loading for parking structures is 40 pounds per square foot.** For other uses such as office, retail, library reading rooms, public meeting spaces, and their corridors, the requirement is between 50 and 100 pounds per square foot.

As the Town explores a variety of options for investment in additional structured parking assets, to mitigate and/or compensate for the standard parking structure design features described above by doing the following:

- Increase story heights. We could make the height of the first story a minimum of 15 feet and the height of typical upper stories 12 feet. These heights are more suitable to provide higher clear heights of 12+ feet for ground-level commercial/retail use and 9+ feet for office, community meeting or possibly residential use. If sufficient site length is not available to provide a parked on-ramp with these story heights, or more flat floor area is desired, then a non-parked-on express ramp (with slope greater than 6.67 percent) could be provided for a portion or the entire length of a ramp. These ramps could be situated near ends of the floor plate or along its sides to provide for more flat floor area.

- Design the floor framing to allow for the ramped parking bay to be more readily demolished. One way to accomplish this is to provide a double row of columns along the bay with the ramp and expansion/construction joints at the top and bottom of each floor-to-floor ramp segment. This would likely require additional framing elements for lateral load resistance and detailing to facilitate load transfer and accommodate building movement at the expansion/construction joints. While this would add to the initial construction costs, it would also provide an opportunity for modifying each floor to be a complete flat floor plate for future use.
- Include 25- to 30-foot-wide light wells between parking bays to provide space for the construction of additional elevator and stair cores and flat-floor construction for corridors within the interior of the building footprint. Foundations for these future pedestrian circulation elements could be constructed as part of the initial construction.
- The perimeter stair and elevator cores that serve the parking structure could be located outboard to the floorplate. This would allow for easier demolition of these elements if they don't adequately serve the alternate use.
- Design floor framing for additional load-carrying capacity by including provisions for adding columns and beams to reduce beam and slab spans or supplement conventional and post-tensioned slab and beam reinforcement to support additional floor loads. This additional load-carrying capacity could accommodate a topping slab to level out the floor drainage slope.
- The impacts of floor cross slope for drainage could be reduced by providing additional floor drains.
- Building columns, walls and foundations could be designed to accept vertical expansion and the addition of a podium level for a public plaza recreational space or a one- or two-story light-framed (type-5-framed wood construction) building structure.
- Design for either the removal of perimeter vehicle and pedestrian guard rails or detail connection points to accept future installation of building facade elements (e.g., curtain wall/storefront system, panelized EIFS or stucco wall system, etc.), including doors and windows to fully enclose the perimeter of the structure.
- Provide additional capacity in the electrical service, sanitary sewer and fire protection systems. Include provisions for electrical and mechanical chases to accommodate duct work and cabling and additional space for mechanical and electrical service and fire protection equipment (fire pumps, emergency generators, etc.).

APPENDIX B: IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

B

This Appendix provides additional background and resource material. It should be used in conjunction with Chapter 10, implementation.

Economic Development Incentives

Key state and federal economic development incentives that may be relevant for Downtown include, but are not limited to the following:

Incentive Name	Provided By	Use	How to apply	Notes
Recover Colorado Business Grant & Loan Program	State of Colorado	To assist small business and non-profits (including special districts) following a major natural disaster	Application is due 12/31/2017 and is available online. Applications must be a small business, new business, non-profit, or special district with a minimum annual revenue of $15,000. Other eligibility requirements must be met.	Assistance paying for inventory, furnishings, fixtures, equipment, payroll, insurance, mortgage, lease/rent, consultants, taxes, service agreements, and utilities. Maximum award amounts of $50,000 in grants and $100,000 in loans
Enterprise Tax Zone Credits	State of Colorado	Promote business in economically distressed areas through incentive based credits.	Businesses must annually pre-certify with the local EZ Administrator before claiming EZ tax credits (up to three months before the tax year start date). Following pre-certification and completing the activities eligible for credits, a certification is then filled out and the certification document must be submitted with the Colorado income tax filing. Learn more	Credits for investment, job training, new employees, employer-sponsored health insurance, research and development, vacant commercial building rehabilitation, commercial vehicle investment, and contribution projects are available through the Larimer County Administrative Enterprise Zone that encompasses all of Estes Park.
Colorado Creates Grant	State of Colorado	Provide support for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations to bring creative jobs, arts and cultural experiences, and added economic value to their communities	Complete an application and request once eligibility requirements have been fulfilled. These include a 501 (c) 3 status, at least three years of public art services, a minimum operating budget of $25,000 in the last fiscal year, a Colorado business registration, and others available here.	Applications are generally due in June of each year and provide funding for two year periods. The maximum amount awarded is $10,000.
Economic Development Administration's Public Works Assistance Programs	US Department of Commerce	Empower distressed communities to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry and business expansion.	Fill out the application available here with the contingency that all funds must be matched or shared by the applying body. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and require a proposal, construction details (if applicable) and engineering and design documents.	Previous grant recipients can be viewed here to get a better grasp of the types of projects the EDA generally funds.

Parking Related Funding Tools

Funding tools suitable for Downtown parking include, but are not limited to, the following:

Parking Benefit District (PBD)

A Parking Benefit District is "a program through which a city or town agrees to return all or some parking revenue (generated through parking meters, assessments, and/or taxes) to an area for improvements and/or beautification projects. Returning parking money directly to the community often improves the general public's acceptance of paying for parking. Key stakeholders, such as businesses, developers, land owners, residents and government representatives need to work together to develop goals, objectives and a plan to create a parking district" (MTC 2007). These stakeholders will also decide where and how funds should be spent. One example of a successful PBD is in Old Pasadena, CA, where on-street pricing was raised to keep vacancy rates around 15% and all parking revenue was used to purchase street furniture, trees and light fixtures and to do street cleaning and maintenance. In Boulder, CO, the PBD uses revenues to provide free universal transit passes, bicycle parking, and other services that encourage people to use alternative travel modes.

Parking Tax District

Parking Tax Districts are similar to BIDs and PBDs, but they only address parking issues, not neighborhood improvements more generally. In situations where a municipality provides most or all of an area's parking, the special assessment is levied on all commercial (and sometimes multifamily residential) properties on a standard per unit basis. Exemptions may be permitted for those businesses that already provide most or all of their required parking. Parking tax districts are found in several states, notably California (Baron and Dorsett 2004).

Impact Fees

Impact fees are implemented by a local government on new/proposed development or land-use changes to help pay for the costs that the new development may impose on public services, including expanded off-site capital improvements such as roads, schools and/or sewer systems.

These fees are usually implemented to help reduce the economic burden on local jurisdictions that are trying to deal with population growth. The property owner/developer pays impact fees, which are often one-time, upfront payments at the time a permit is issued for a development project. However, payment terms can vary, and a lien is typically placed on the property until the fee is paid in full.

Conceptually, impact fee payments could be used for public or private district-scale infrastructure projects rather than only for public, centralized systems. This would depend largely on the flexibility of the municipality's impact fee policy and the willingness of the Town Board to explore financing infrastructure that is over and above what is already budgeted for impact fee funds.

Payment/Fee-In-Lieu

Some municipalities allow developers to pay a fee-in-lieu of constructing some or all of their parking (where parking is required). The collected fees are used to construct a public parking facility that serves a particular development and its surrounding uses. Most cities set a uniform fee per space, with the number of spaces per development dictated by the parking code. The fee itself is often less than the full cost per space for the public sector to provide the parking. Unless updated regularly, the fee may be considerably lower than the actual cost if the system has been around for a while. Vancouver, BC takes an interesting approach by setting the fee per space equal to the cost to construct that space in a public garage, minus the expected revenue the city will get from that space (Shoup 2005).

In most cases, the developer can choose whether or not (and for how many spaces) to pay the in-lieu fee. Some cities may offer payment in lieu of parking only in certain districts, when the option is available in downtown commercial/business districts. Beyond the financial aspects of payment in lieu of parking, there are a number of benefits to such programs. Donald Shoup (2005) identifies a number of advantages to payment in lieu of parking, including:

- Greater flexibility for developers, which can be a boon for historic preservation, given the challenge parking can pose for adaptive reuse.
- More shared parking, which potentially reduces the total number of spaces needed in the area.
- Fewer surface lots, because lots have been consolidated into one surface lot or possibly a structure.
- Fewer zoning variances that need to be issued, which expedites the development process and levels the playing field for all developers.
- Fewer surface parking lots leads to better access management and improved traffic operations.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (P3) are a way to reduce the public sector's direct debt burden while also providing needed infrastructure. A key element to these partnerships is the ability to enter into design-build contracts.

Design-Build-Operate-Manage

An example from Connecticut illustrates this innovative method. In 2000, the state issued bonds to cover the costs of constructing a new parking facility at the Bradley Airport in Hartford, CT. Due to the structure of the agreement, the bonds are actually guaranteed by a private entity. The state's arrangement used the same entity to design and build the facility and then, after construction, to operate and manage through a lease from the state. The lease payments cover the state's debt service and the facility revenues cover the lease payments. Excess revenues are split between the state and the private operator. Should the lease payments and revenue sharing prove insufficient to cover the debt service, the private operator is responsible for making up the difference (Bier et al 2006). Private parking operators are currently employing this strategy in communities large and small.

Build-Operate-Transfer

A private entity may cover the costs associated with building public infrastructure, operate it until the costs are recovered and then transfer ownership to a public agency. Early parking meters were often installed in this fashion, with manufacturers of meters installing them and recovering costs until they were paid for (Shoup 2005).

Grant Funding Sources

Key grant funding sources suitable for Downtown Plan implementation include, but are not limited to, the following.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program

FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program is a nationally competitive program that makes funding available to local, state and Indian Tribal governments to implement feasible and cost-effective hazard mitigation activities. Funding may be awarded for development or update of an all-hazards mitigation plan, or for a cost-effective hazard mitigation project. The first priority is to complete an approvable plan. Local governments and Indian Tribal governments applying for PDM funds for local mitigation projects must first have an approved local mitigation plan. Successful projects receive 75% federal funding for total project costs. The applicant is responsible for 25% of project costs. The local share may be in the form of in-kind services as well as dollars; however, no other federal source of money may be used to fund the local share.

Flood Mitigation Assistance Program

FEMA provides grants through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program to assist with the planning and implementation of flood mitigation projects that include measures to reduce flood losses by elevation, acquisition, or relocation of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)-insured structures. Eligible applicants are state, territorial, and tribal governments, and certain non-profits. Individual homeowners and businesses may not apply directly to the program, but a community may apply on their behalf as a sub-applicant.

Activities that are eligible under the FMA program include property acquisition and structure demolition, property acquisition and structure relocation, structure elevation, dry flood-proofing of non-residential structures, minor localized flood reduction projects, and flood mitigation planning. All project activities performed must have the effect of reducing the risk of flooding to NFIP insured properties, buildings and structures. Matching Requirements: Federal: up to 75 % Non-Federal: 25 %

Great Outdoors Colorado

GOCO offers competitive grant programs for parks, trails, wildlife, and open space projects in the state of Colorado. Programs relevant to the Downtown Plan include the Local Park and Outdoor Recreation Grants, which help build or improve community parks, outdoor recreation amenities, outdoor athletic facilities, and environmental education facilities. Another program is the Connect Initiative, which funds projects that help connect regional and local trail networks and provides more bikeable and walkable access to outdoor recreation.

Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) Creative District Program

In 2008, Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) formerly known as the Colorado Council on the Arts, commissioned a study to examine the state of Colorado's creative economy. The study concluded that the creative industries in Colorado were the fifth largest sector of jobs, with creative occupations expected to grow 30% to 45% over the next ten years (Colorado Council on the Arts, 2008). In hopes of capitalizing upon this growth and subsequent economic gains, House Bill 11-1031 was passed by Colorado legislation in 2011, which encouraged the formation of creative districts throughout the state. By recognizing and encouraging the development of creative districts, this bill hoped to create vibrant communities that attract creative enterprise and visitors, which in turn beautifies neighborhoods and creates enhanced economic activity.

Today, the Colorado Creative Districts program includes 21 certified Creative Districts across the state, and provides these communities with access to financial and technical support, networking, and training programs. Data recently published by the State of Colorado indicates the following about the economic impact these districts had in the first 5 years of the program (2011-2015):

- A 14% increase in cultural nonprofit revenues (total of $260.8M in nonprofit revenues)
- A 12% increase in the capture of grants of awarded ($822.1K grants awarded)
- A 5% increase in creative industries earnings (total of $972.5M in earnings)
- A 3% increase in total creative jobs (total of 10,351 jobs)

Becoming a state-certified Creative District requires a rigorous application and certification process (the application window opens once annually) that meets a number of important criteria:

- Clearly defined unique place and niche, and identification of what sets you apart
- A clear geographically defined area that is contiguous and walkable
- Distinguishing physical, artistic or cultural resources
- A concentration of artistic and cultural activity
- Engagement in promotion, preservation and educational aspects of arts and culture
- Formal recognition of the area as a creative district by local government
- Broad community support and buy-in
- Sustainable funding sources
- Paid district manager
- Strategic plan
- Governing board
- Minimum $10,000 operating budget

State-certified Creative Districts receive significant benefits and opportunities, in addition to recognition by the State of Colorado, which include:

- Cash award
- Marketing support from the Colorado Tourism Office
- Economic data and impact analysis
- Access to a technical assistance fund to support economic growth