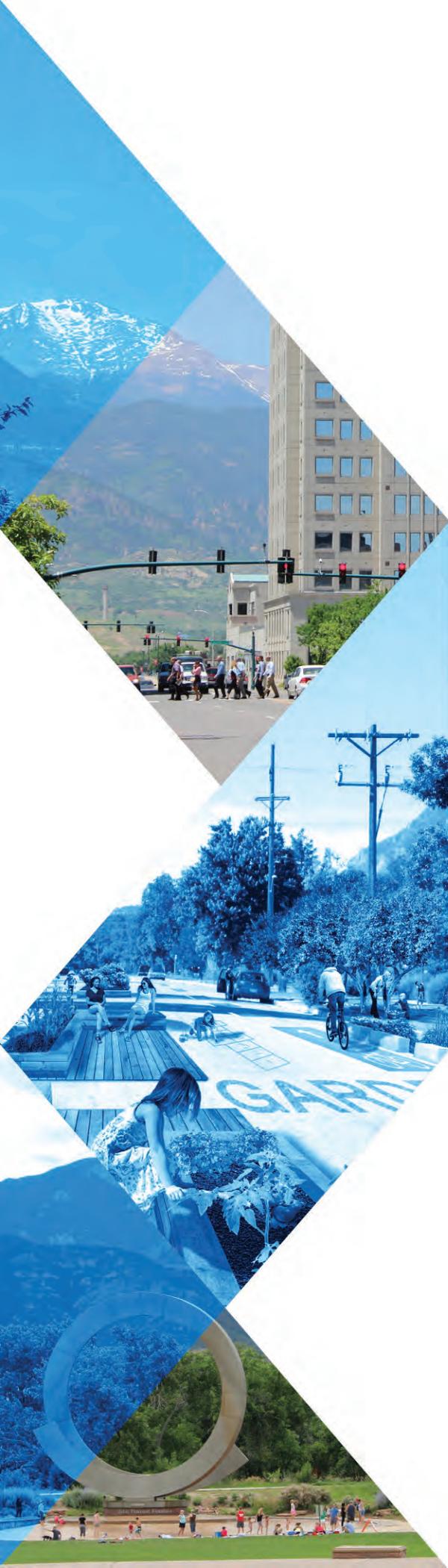


2016



EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN COLORADO SPRINGS

Plan of Development and Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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





The creation of the **Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan of Development and Master Plan** would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals and groups – through participation in focus groups, charrettes, individual interviews, site tours, community meetings, online surveys and more throughout a 15-month period.

The plans – stewarded under the joint leadership of the Downtown Development Authority of Colorado Springs and the City of Colorado Springs – serve as tactical updates to the 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan. They build off of the participation and input from more than 400 people in those original plans, as well as the integration of input from thousands of citizens in more than a dozen completed and ongoing community plans and initiatives.

Downtown and City staff would like to thank all those who participated in these past and present efforts and who ultimately made the Experience Downtown Plan a reality.

Complete acknowledgments can be found in the full plans, which can be accessed at www.DowntownCS.com/masterplan.

INTEGRATED PLANS

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

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

Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Planning Process

THE NEED FOR UPDATED PLANS

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

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

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

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

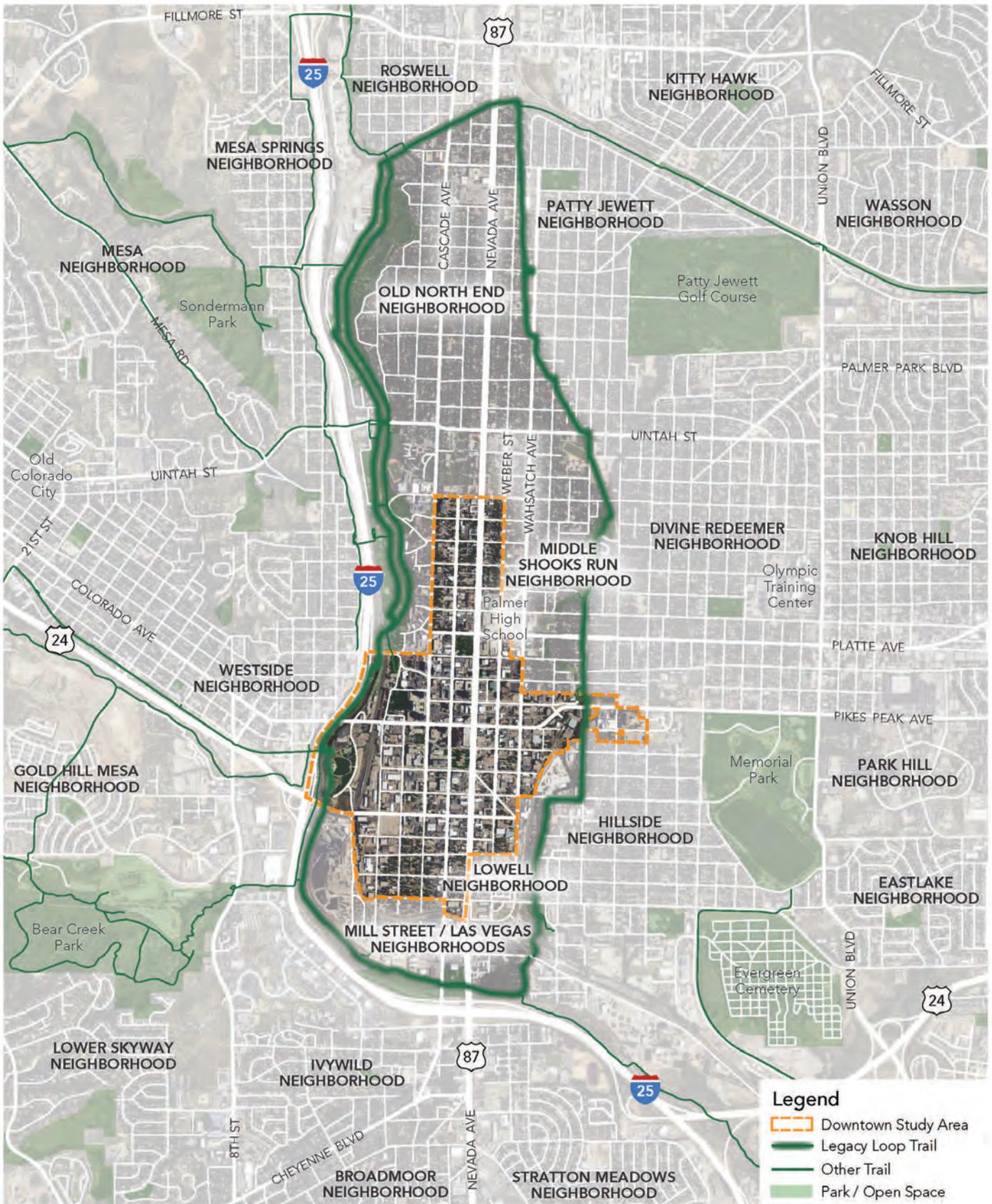
PLAN OUTREACH AND INPUTS

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

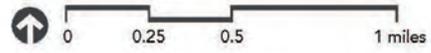
- Review of more than a dozen recent city, regional and state plans;
- 2014 and 2015 Downtown Perceptions online surveys with more than 1,200 respondents;
- Targeted focus groups including over 60 stakeholders;
- Numerous one-on-one stakeholder interviews;
- Public community workshop with 150 attendees;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



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



Downtown is viewed in the context of the Legacy Loop trail system, and the land use study area is defined by the boundary of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The Legacy Loop, a nearly 10-mile ring of trails and parks, encircles the Downtown study area and serves as a unifying feature that links many adjacent neighborhoods to the city center. Downtown is bordered by numerous established and emerging neighborhoods such as the Old North End, Middle Shooks Run, Lowell, Mill Street, Hillside, Ivywild, and the Westside.



Downtown Colorado Springs Vision

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

Goals



Action Steps

EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

JUNE
2016
DRAFT

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

VOLUME 1 CONTENTS:

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

EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

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

VOLUME 2 CONTENTS:

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

VALUES

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

Welcoming

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

Vibrant

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

Connected

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

Walkable

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

Anchored

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

Innovative

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

Entrepreneurial

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

Valued

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



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



Goals and Action Steps

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



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

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL HEART OF THE REGION



GOAL 1

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

Action Steps:

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

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PLACE TO LIVE,
INTEGRATED WITH
ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS



GOAL 2

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

Action Steps:

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



CELEBRATING AND CONNECTING WITH
OUTDOOR RECREATION AND
EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL SETTING



GOAL 3

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

Action Steps:

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



source: Jon Severson

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

A PLACE FOR HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



GOAL 4

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

Action Steps:

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



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



GOAL 5

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

Action Steps:

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

A LEADER IN INNOVATIVE URBAN DESIGN
AND SUSTAINABILITY



GOAL 6

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

Environmental stewardship is garnered by public and private improvements.

Action Steps:

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

OFFERING AN UNFORGETTABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCE



GOAL 1

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

Action Steps:

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



A PLACE FOR INSPIRATION,
HONORING HISTORY AND
FACING THE FUTURE



GOAL 8

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

Action Steps:

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



source: Stellar Propeller Studio

Land Use Master Plan

Land use traditionally has been the basis of most city and smaller area plans. The location, intensity, and variety of land uses continue to be crucial components of planning cities generally and downtowns in particular.

Through the planning process, Guiding Principles emerged that inform the approach to the Master Plan.

In particular, the Plan functions as a land use plan with a unique framework that embraces the Guiding Principles by prioritizing economic development, placemaking, branding and development of Downtown as its own neighborhood. The Guiding Principles in this plan will help “create a city that matches our scenery.”

LAND USE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

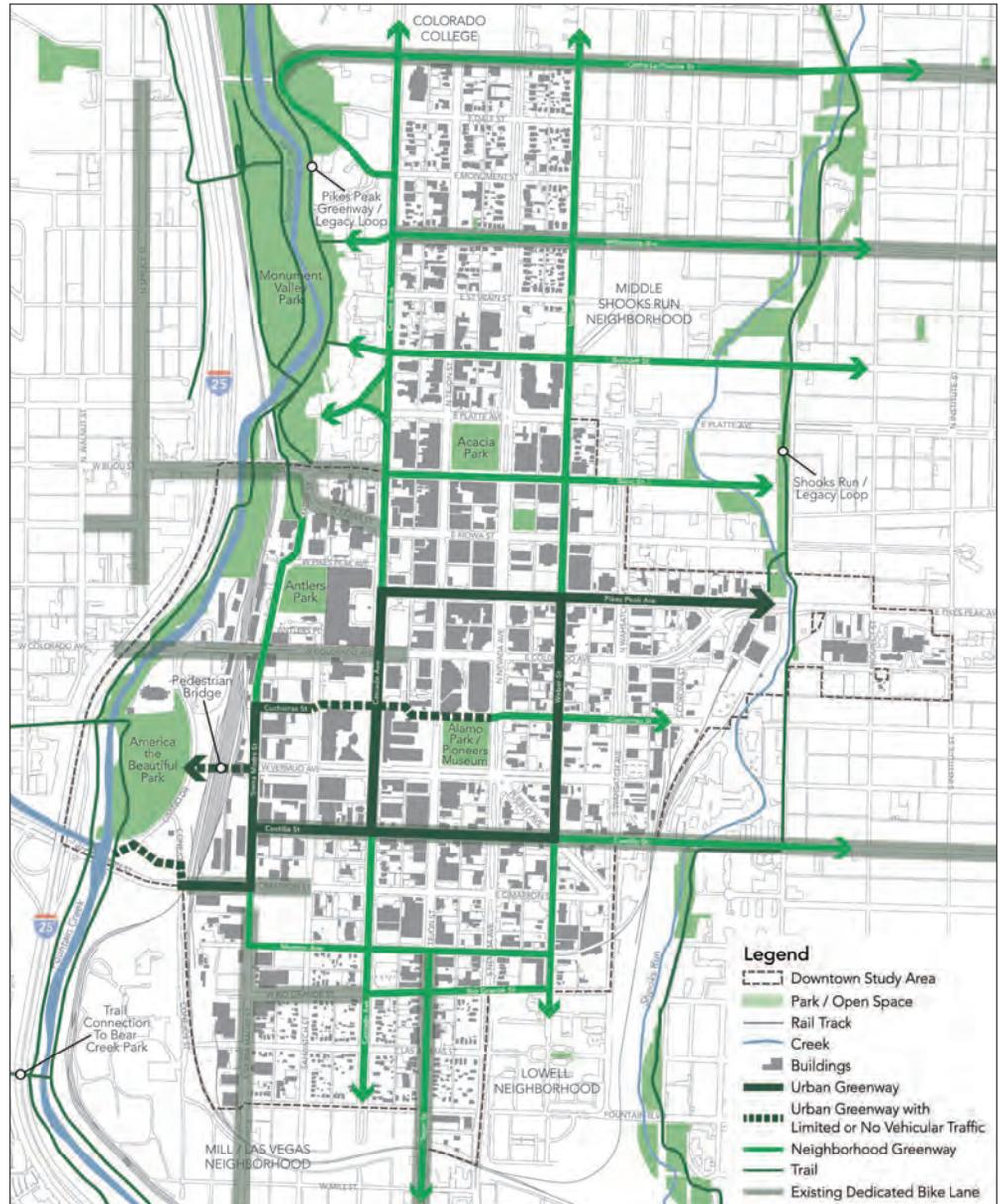


A range of improvements, which can be implemented incrementally, are possible for major gateways. Meant to improve sense of place and demark arrival, the above rendering shows a possible before and after example. Other transformative recommendations are visually suggested throughout the plan.

The Land Use Master Plan addresses the following areas, with recommendations on strategic actions and innovative approaches to designing and activating the public realm; improving public facilities such as transportation networks and wayfinding; envisioning future land use, private development and district identity; and increasing the access and utilization of recreational infrastructure such as parks and waterways.

LAND USE PLAN FRAMEWORK

- Future Land Use
- Catalytic Development Sites
- Parks, Trails, Waterways
- Gateways, Districts
- Mobility/Transportation
- Urban Design, Public Space



The Urban Greenways network is just one of four mobility frameworks presented in the master plan, outlining priority streets for specific improvement types and treatments.

Implementation: Who and How

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

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

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

- City of Colorado Springs and its departments;
- El Paso County;
- Downtown Partnership and its family of organizations;
- Colorado Springs Utilities;
- Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority;
- Private businesses, developers, and investors;
- Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance (CSRBA);
- Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD);
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG);
- State of Colorado and its departments;
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT);
- Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO);
- Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region (COPPeR);

- Neighborhood groups and associations within and adjacent to Downtown;
- Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).
- Advocacy groups and associations; and
- Citizens.

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

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

Progress on meeting priorities and tactics shall be publicly posted and measured through the Downtown website or other means. New opportunities and challenges will undoubtedly arise over the next decade, which will necessitate that specific actions be reviewed, reconsidered and augmented.

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

Executive Summary produced
September 2016

