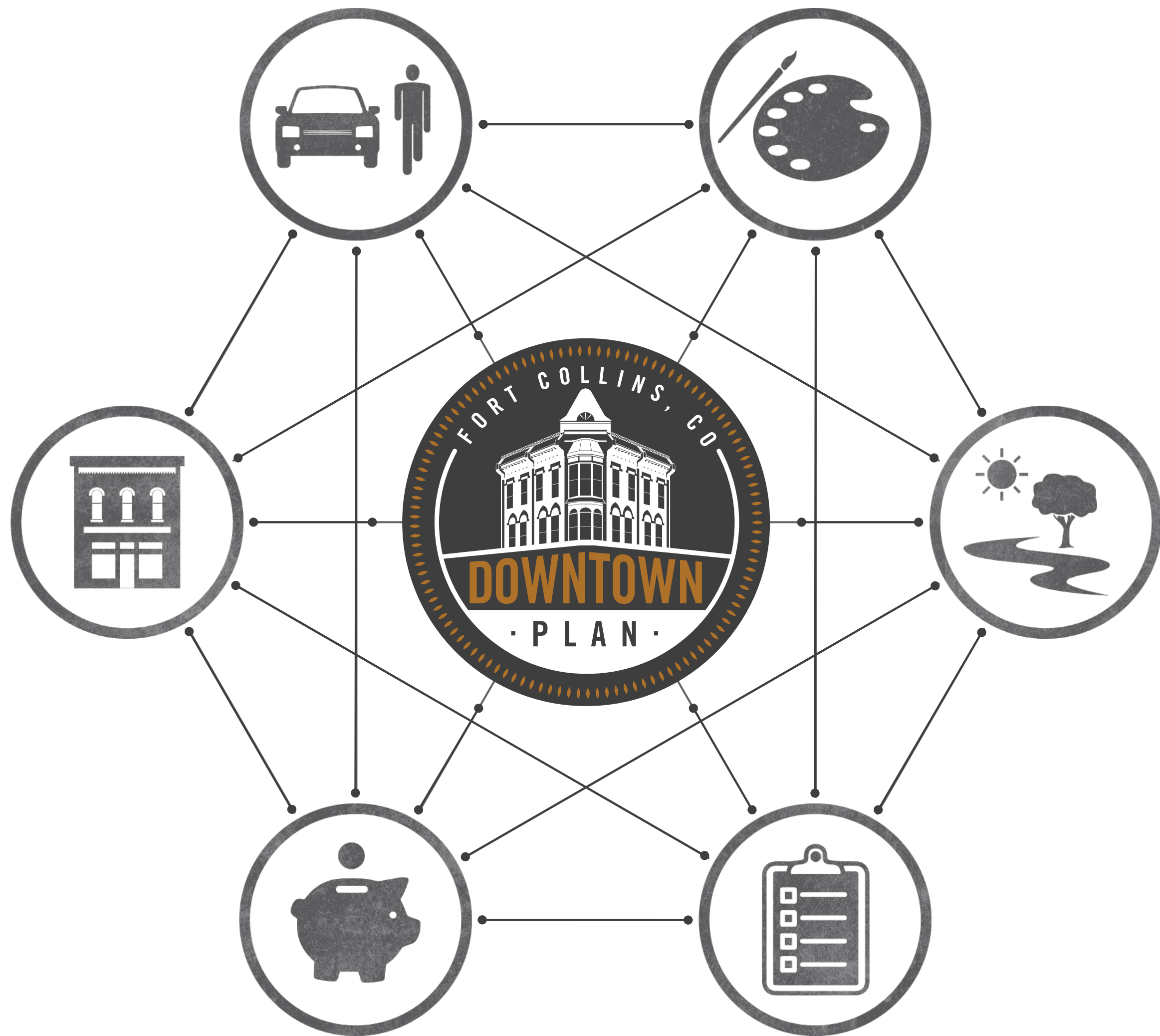


Downtown Plan

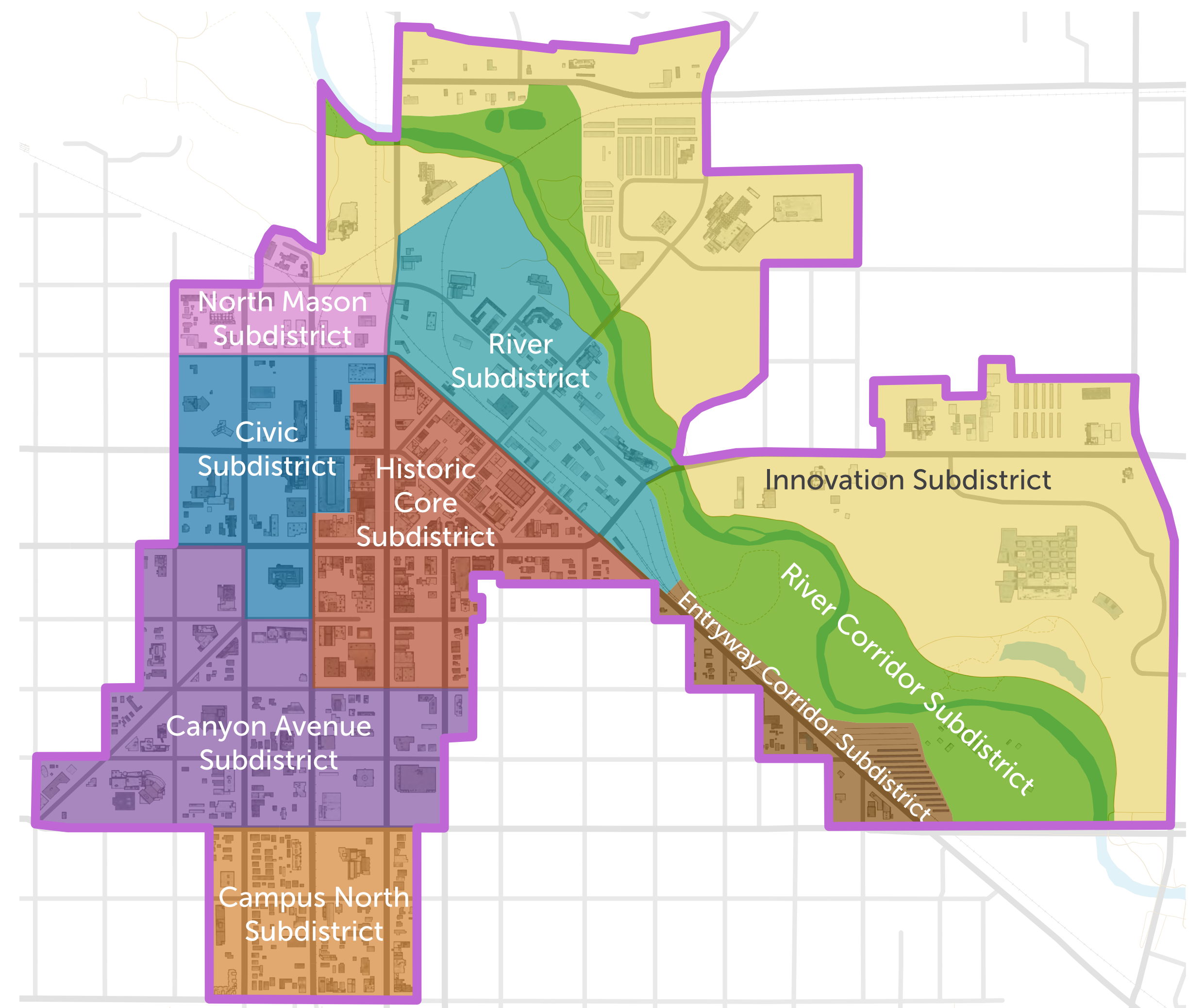
This plan is a guide and inspiration for budgets, projects, programs, investments, regulations and other related efforts to keep Downtown vibrant and successful as the vital heart of the community. It replaces the previous plan, which was adopted in 1989 to spur the dramatic turnaround and revitalization that shaped Downtown as it exists today. The City of Fort Collins collaborated with the Downtown Development Authority and the Downtown Business Association to engage everyone with a stake in Downtown, and the general public, in an open exploration of all issues and opportunities.

This plan describes a renewed vision, policy direction for achieving the vision, and action items to pursue over the next 10-20 years to continue success.

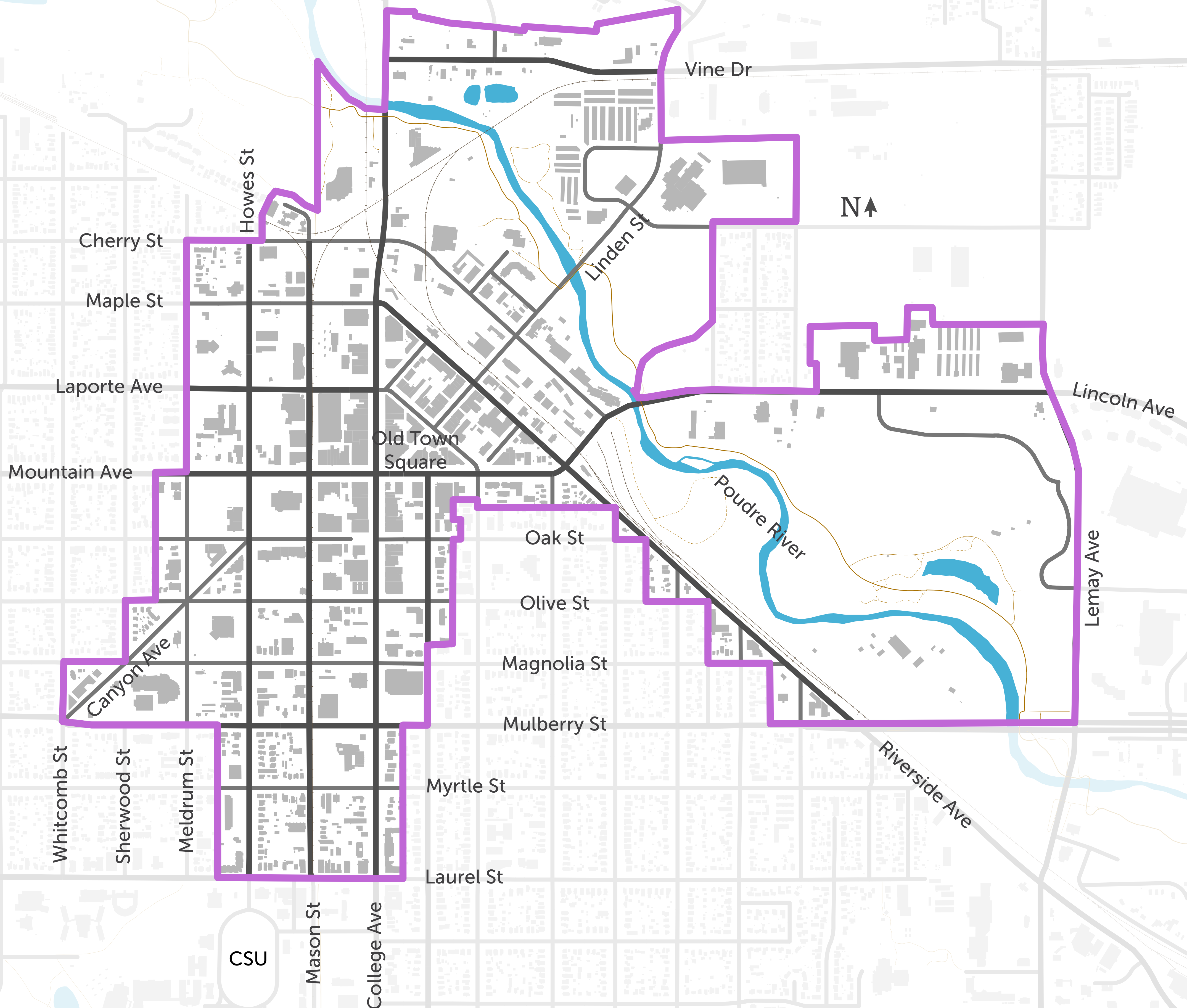
6 Topic Areas



9 Character Subdistricts



Downtown Boundaries



Urban Design



Vision

Downtown Fort Collins embraces its rich heritage of design by preserving existing historic structures and creating new buildings of architectural merit. A variety of distinct character subdistricts are recognizable within the Downtown, each evoking a unique sense of place. Streets, sidewalks and common public spaces are attractive and comfortable. Transitions between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as between different character subdistricts, are seamless. Downtown gateways provide an inviting sense of arrival.

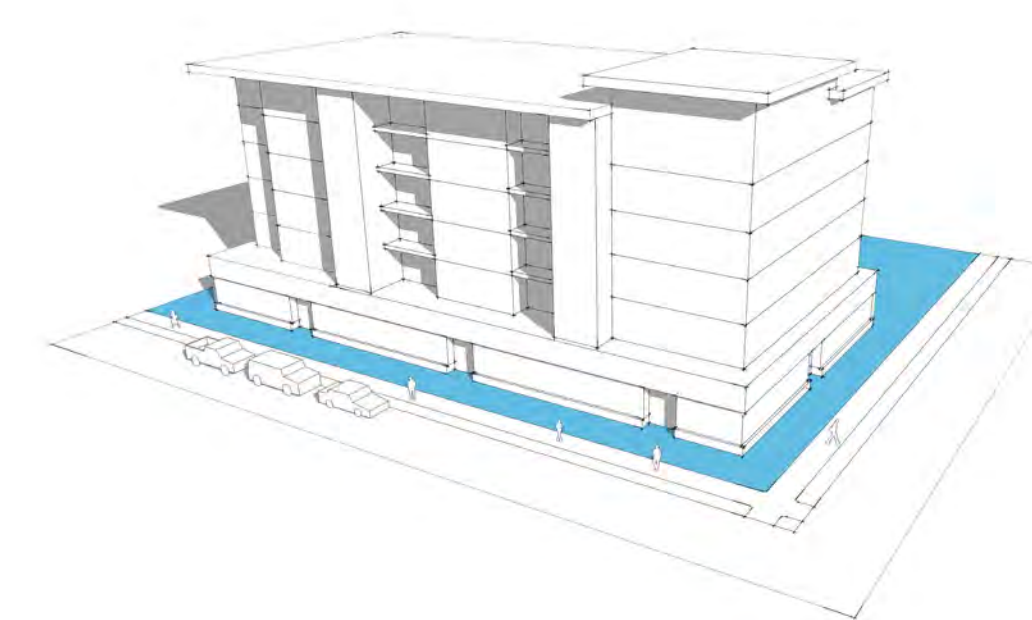


Key Considerations

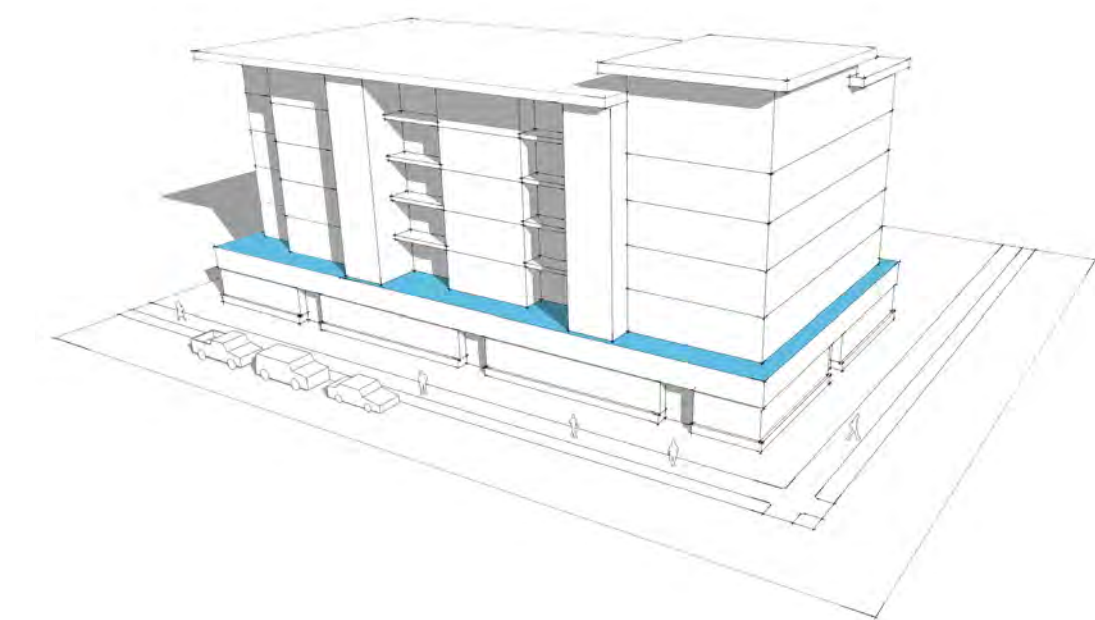
Develop new Land Use Code standards structured around buildings, transitions, streetscapes and outdoor spaces.

The Downtown Plan outlines several urban design policies governing Downtown building height and size:

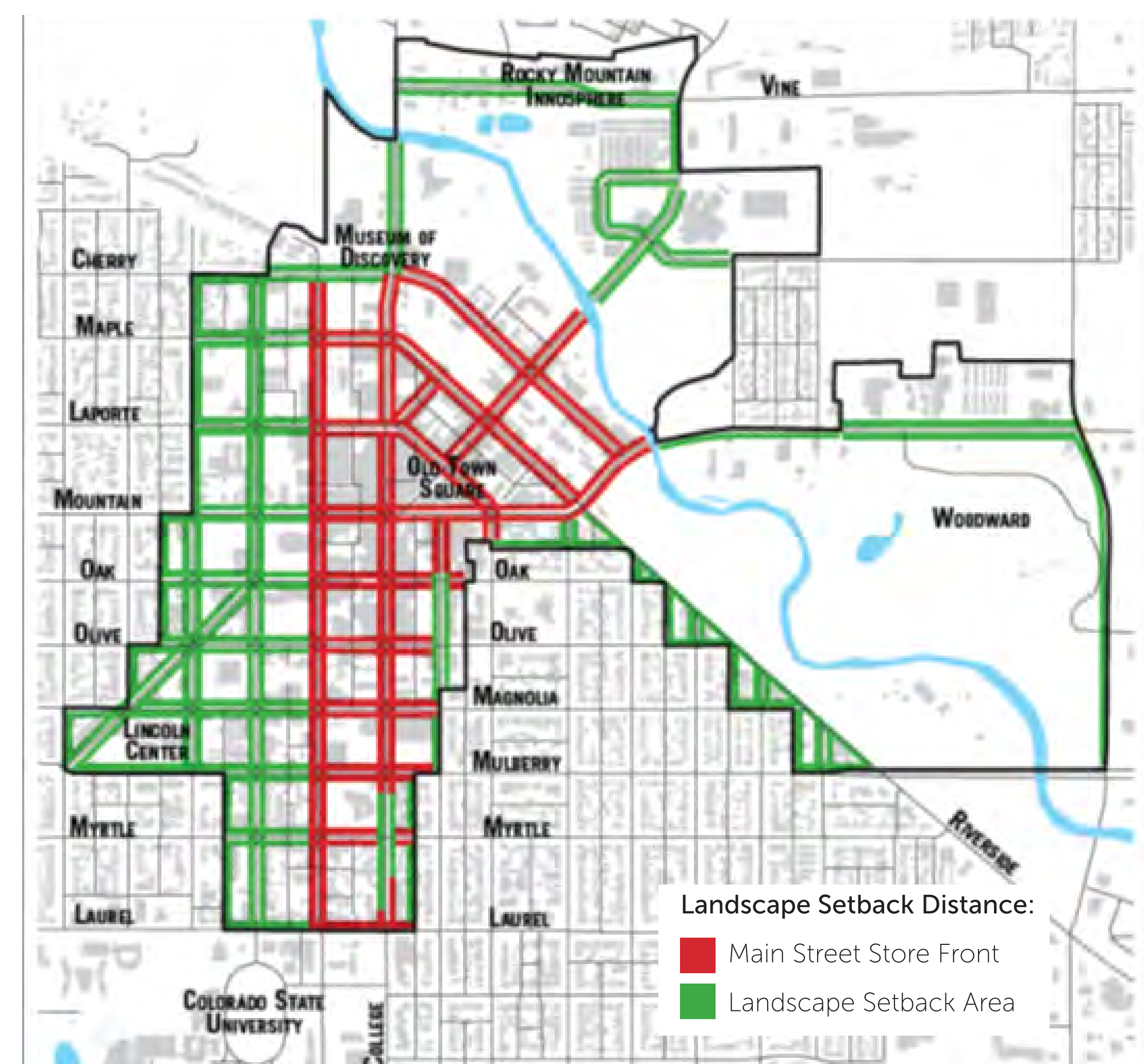
- Vary building heights based on location and follow a prescribed height zone map that aligns with the Character Subdistricts.
- Preserve Downtown's traditional pedestrian scale and character through upper floor building setbacks when buildings exceed the traditional height and massing proportions. Four stories would be the maximum setback line; two or three stories would also be an appropriate setback line depending upon the site context.
- Set buildings back from streets based upon the streetscape classification
- Promote slender buildings that allow view corridors and solar access to be maintained.
- Define appropriate transitions to and compatibility with adjacent historic structures and neighborhoods to provide limits on larger development and to mitigate detrimental visual, shading and privacy impacts.
- Implement Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards to mitigate the bulk of new buildings.



Setback:
The horizontal distance between the nearest projection of a building and the property line upon which the building is located.



Stepback:
The setting back of upper stories of a building behind the base stories.



Streetscape Design

Two types of evolving Downtown streetscapes have distinctively different character: a main street storefront streetscape with wider paved sidewalks and trees with steel grates; and a landscape setback streetscape that includes a parkway strip between the sidewalk and street along with more greenery.

Convertible Streets

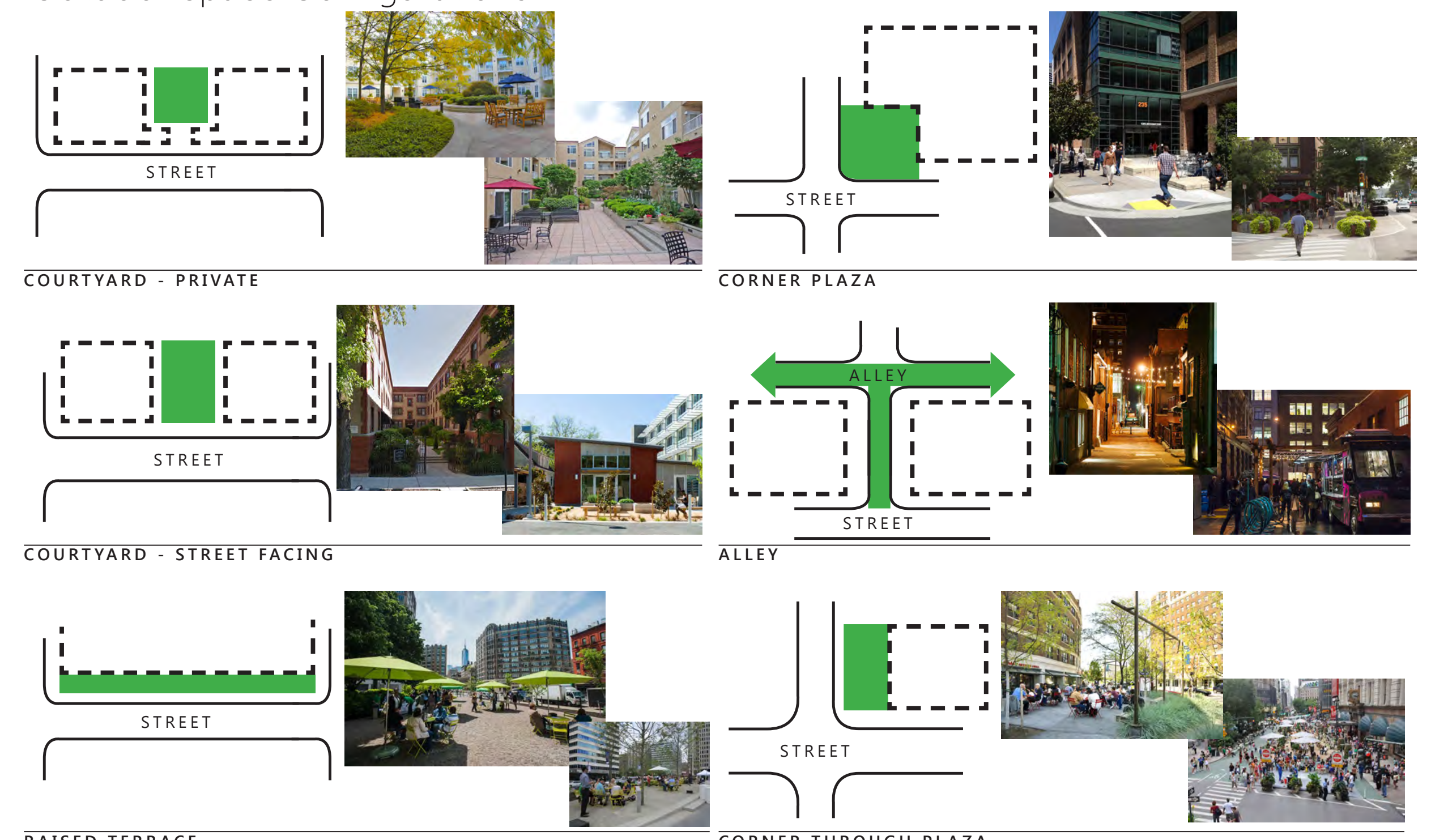
Future public gathering spaces will include "convertible streets," which can be temporarily closed to automobile and bike traffic during events and function as public gathering areas. Downtown contains three potential convertible streets:

- 200 block of Linden Street (between Walnut and Jefferson)
- 200 block of Howes Street (between LaPorte and Maple)
- 200-400 Block of Canyon Avenue

The function and vitality of outdoor spaces can be maximized by:

- Using solar orientation that will allow spaces to be used year-round.
- Understanding wind patterns to protect outdoor spaces from high wind impacts.
- Flexible design accommodating multiple activities.
- Conducting public space-public life surveys to understand both the level of support for active and passive activities within the Downtown's outdoor spaces and how behavior influences outdoor space design.
- Incorporate various features that will enhance public use of the area, including ample seating
- Entrances or private outdoor spaces that are oriented and connected to the sidewalk.
- Be designed to enhance user safety and security.
- Include public art.
- Be creatively-designed.
- Allow for a strong indoor-outdoor connection through the use of awnings, canopies, overhead or sliding doors, operable windows, and similar wall openings on abutting buildings.

Outdoor Space Configurations



Urban Design

Principles & Policies



Principle UD 1: Recognize and promote differences and defining characteristics in the varied character subdistricts that make up the Downtown.

Policy UD 1a: *Unique Character Subdistricts.* Support the unique qualities within each Character subdistrict by defining which characteristics should be preserved and enhanced.

Principle UD 2: Allow taller buildings in appropriate character subdistricts while maximizing compatibility through appropriate design.

Policy UD 2a: *Maximum Building Height.* Maintain maximum building height consistent with the maximum building heights map as a baseline, and establish requirements to ensure compatibility with the adjacent context.

Policy UD 2b: *Building Stepbacks.* Use upper-story stepbacks to ensure a sense of openness, access to sunlight and a pedestrian scale.

Policy UD 2c: *Design Incentives.* Provide incentives for enhanced building design and compatibility.

Policy UD 2d: *Building Massing.* Mitigate the impacts of larger buildings and additions through massing techniques that respond to positive, defining patterns in the surrounding area.

Policy UD 2e: *Transitions between Character Subdistricts.* Provide appropriate transitions in building mass, bulk, and scale between character subdistricts that have a different desired building scale, and at the edge of Downtown adjacent to the Old Town Neighborhoods.

Policy UD 2f: *Compatibility of Larger Development Projects.* Clarify compatibility requirements for mitigating the impacts of larger development projects, and the effect they have on the surrounding area.

Policy UD 2g: *Building Towers.* Articulate requirements for tall and slender tower components where heights greater than 6 stories are allowed, including size limits and space between tower components.

Principle UD 3: Promote high-quality building design and materials.

Policy UD 3a: *Context Sensitive Building Design.* Clarify City requirements for the design character of new buildings to be context sensitive, drawing on existing patterns terms of typology, building proportions and massing. in the surrounding area.

Policy UD 3b: *Building Materials and Fenestration.* Clarify City requirements for building material and fenestration compatibility, while acknowledging the need for designs that are unique to the contemporary era of development.

Principle UD 4: Preserve resources that contribute to the historic character and authenticity of Downtown.

Policy UD 4a: *New Buildings/Additions to Historic Buildings.* Design new construction and building additions to individually designated buildings within the Old Town Historic District and adjacent to historic buildings to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards and adopted historic preservation standards.

Policy UD 4b: *Historic Building Retention and Reuse.* Retain and reuse historic buildings that contribute to Downtown character and provide opportunities to maintain a distinctive sense of place.

Policy UD 4c: *Historic Commercial Signs.* Restore existing historic signs and allow for the reconstruction of previous historically significant signs.

Principle UD 5: Continue to develop a framework of attractive streetscapes.

Policy UD 5a: *Street Level Interest.* Street level space is activated with building entrances, openings, windows and outdoor spaces for people.

Policy UD 5b: *Streetscape Design.* Continue a program of improving sidewalks along Downtown streets with paving details, street trees, pedestrian and landscape lighting, benches, planters, and other street furnishings appropriate to each character subdistrict.

Policy UD 5c: *Surface Parking Design.* Site surface parking lots to minimize gaps in the continuous 'street wall' of a block and make all surface lots subordinate to buildings and open spaces.

Policy UD 5d: *Structured Parking Design.* The design of parking structures is encouraged to include an active use along the street level if it is located on an arterial or collector street, appropriate for the site context and financially supportable.

Policy UD 5e: *Access Management.* Limit curb cuts, driveways, and drop-off areas, and restrict drive-through facilities that interrupt the continuity of pedestrian movements.

Principle UD 6: Invest in new publicly accessible outdoor gathering spaces and improvements to existing publicly accessible spaces.

Policy UD 6a: *Public Gathering Spaces.* Support the creation of plazas, pocket parks and temporary installations that promote social interaction and programmed and informal events

Policy UD 6b: *Downtown Alley Improvements.* Continue to redevelop key Downtown alleys into shared streets and enhanced walkways.

Policy UD 6c: *Connected Outdoor Space Design.* Locate private publicly-accessible outdoor space amenities where they will best activate the street (e.g. gardens, courtyards, pocket parks, plazas, promenades, etc).

Policy UD 6d: *Outdoor Space Solar Orientation.* Orient publicly accessible outdoor space areas to maximize solar access during winter months.

Principle UD 7: Provide clear and inviting Downtown Gateways.

Policy UD 7a: *Gateway Corridors.* Use redevelopment, urban design and signage to identify major gateway corridors into Downtown (e.g., Riverside, North College at the River).

Policy UD 7b: *Gateway Intersections.* Improve key intersections that function as gateways and transitions within Downtown.

Transportation + Parking



Vision

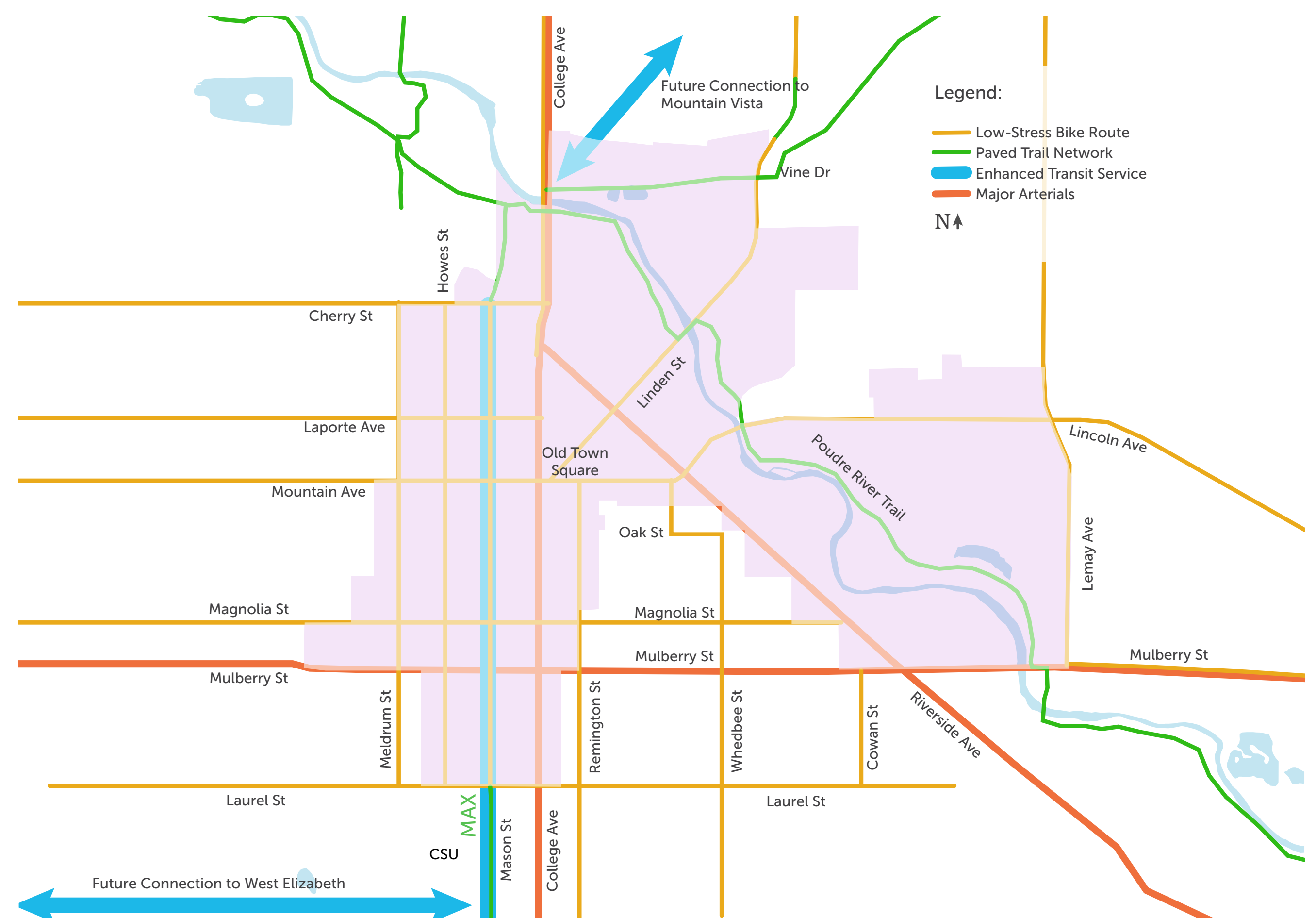
Downtown residents and visitors enjoy multiple travel choices. More people are biking, walking, and taking public transit to Downtown than ever before. For tourists, visitors and other drivers, vehicle parking is available in well-marked parking structures that serve longer-duration parking needs, as well as convenient on-street parking spaces and off-street lots for shorter trips. Bus service to Downtown is frequent, convenient and comfortable. There are multiple low-stress (low-speed and low-volume) routes for bicyclists with ample, convenient bicycle parking near destinations, and the sidewalk network is well-connected and in good condition. Once Downtown, it is easy for people of all ages and abilities to move about on foot, with a stroller or mobility device, by bus, or by bicycle.



Key Considerations:

Getting to/from Downtown

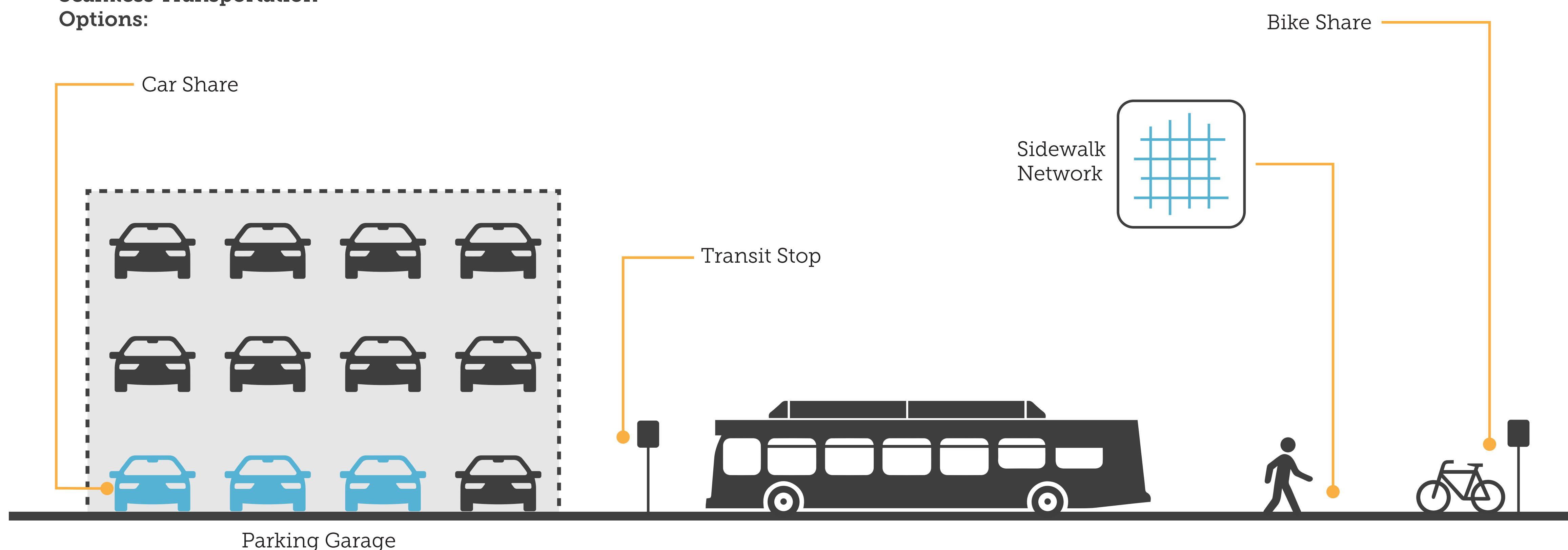
- Provide a robust set of transportation options for residents and visitors.
- New and continuing investments in infrastructure and systems related to all modes, including additional Park-n-Rides for transit outside of Downtown.
- Comprehensive way to add to and manage parking for vehicles and bicycles to increase the availability of parking spaces.



Getting around Downtown

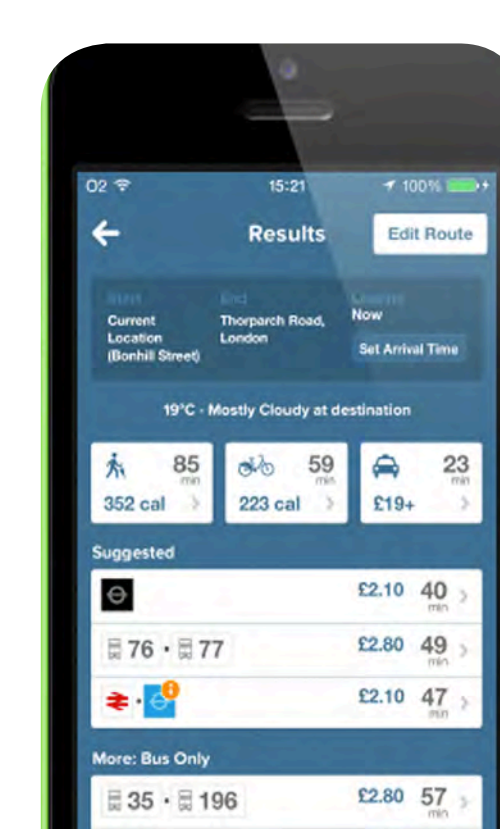
- Provide a variety of ways for getting around Downtown.
- For shorter trips people should be able to walk on comfortable sidewalks with safe and easy street crossings.
- Navigating Downtown is supported by easily understood wayfinding, well-marked streets, and few barriers.
- Drivers park once and do everything they need to do.
- Innovations such as bike sharing programs, on street bike corrals and a Downtown bus circulator can offer flexibility and leverage new technology to make it easy to get around without moving one's car.
- Reducing the need to drive around Downtown can improve the user experience for everyone.

Seamless Transportation Options:



Communication

- Offer tools for trip planning.
- Reduce perception of inconvenience traveling Downtown.
- Provide real-time travel information.
- Work with employers so employees know options and have incentives to bike, walk, and take transit.
- Provide wayfinding to help visitors easily find destinations.



Cutting edge mobile applications like Citymapper provide a holistic view of all the options to travel in the City. With one single app, you can see clearly how long it takes to get somewhere by car, cycle, transit and a mix of modes. In addition, other applications can provide real-time parking information.

Downtown Parking Community Dialogue



Public engagement

As an element of the Downtown Plan, the public engagement effort has included thousands of people through numerous engagement methods such as open houses, focus groups, public events, workshops, charrettes, boards and commissions, community groups, and online and text message questionnaires. In addition, collaborating with the Downtown Business Association (DBA), some parking-specific outreach has been targeted at Downtown business and property owners.

The difficulty of finding convenient parking Downtown was a common theme heard during the public outreach process. A comprehensive community dialogue about parking was undertaken, which included a discussion about how to increase parking turnover to reduce unnecessary hunting for parking spaces and to make it easy for people to park in a location that is most appropriate for their trip, whether short-term or long-term.

Feedback

Parking has been identified as one of the biggest challenges for continued economic health and vibrancy in Downtown. There is a perception that a lack of convenient parking is available, however, we do not currently have the funding or tools to collect data that could verify this perception. Feedback about potential solutions to the perceived lack of parking Downtown reveal divergent opinions across the board. Some agree that on-street paid parking would effectively manage parking demand and also create a revenue source for future investment, while others think paid parking would change the welcoming character of Downtown. Others are concerned that paid parking could negatively affect businesses in the retail sector, especially with the Foothills Mall redevelopment opening in 2016. A continued problem as identified in past plans is the management of employee parking Downtown. Employees often park in the most convenient on-street parking spaces and then "game the system" by moving their cars every two hours to avoid receiving a ticket. Because parking structures charge a fee and are typically less convenient, employees and visitors alike avoid them and will "troll" around for free on-street parking. The 2013 Parking Plan identified "upside down pricing" as a contributor to parking structure avoidance. On-street parking spaces should be available for those visiting Downtown for shorter trips, while the parking garages are appropriate for those staying longer.

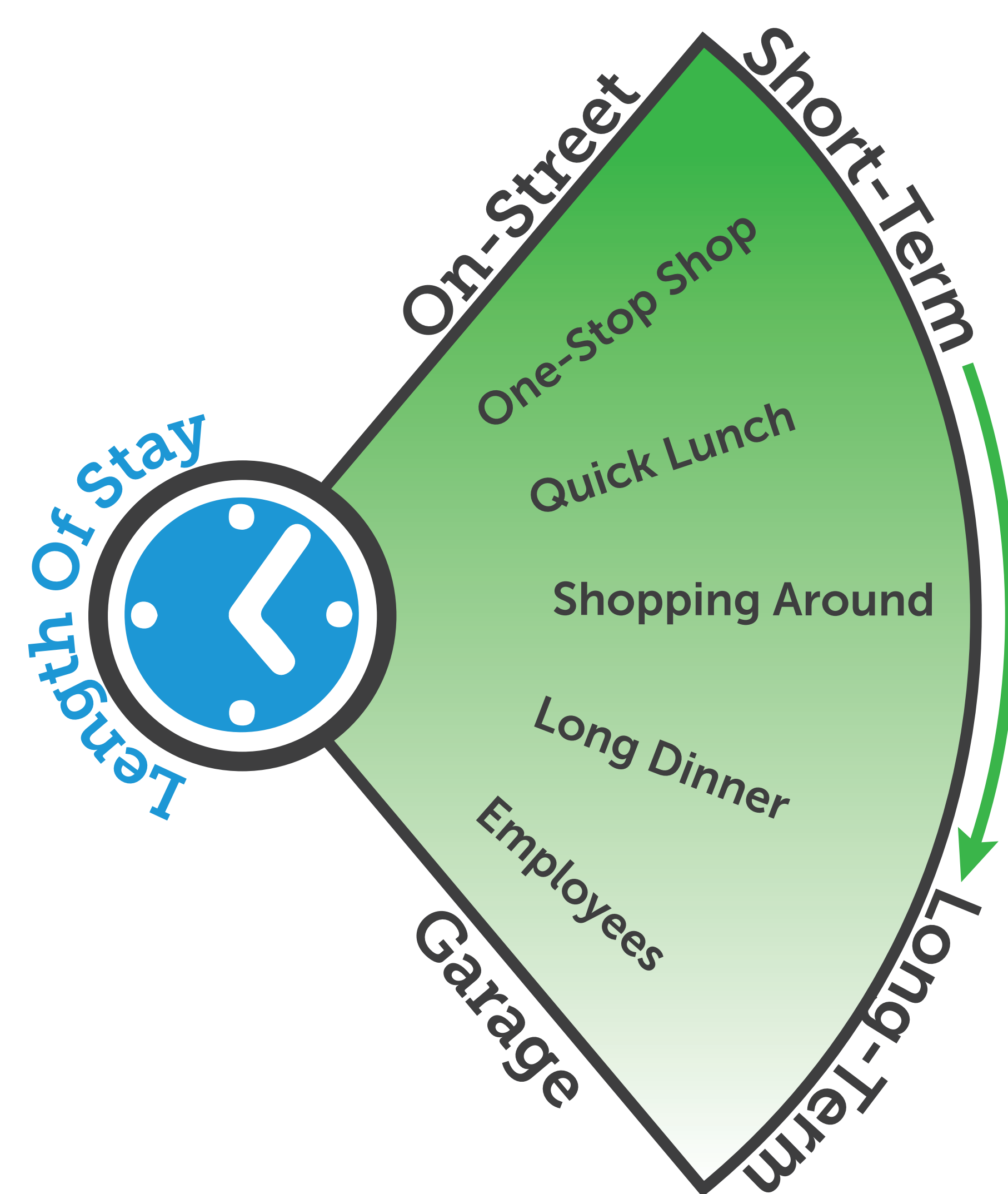
Summary

Stakeholders are eager for change in Downtown parking but are adamant that the change should not "shock the system". Employees should be required to park in the parking garages and demand for parking should be reduced by increasing transit ridership and bike commuting. Alternatives should be exhausted before implementing an on-street paid parking program. Some alternatives to investigate include adjusting enforcement so people can no longer "game the system", creating a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to reduce employee parking demand, and to continue studying the problem to understand when and where parking demand is highest. City Council and the Planning and Zoning board agree that the above measures should be taken prior to an on-street paid parking program. However, the Parking Advisory Board was in favor of implementing an on-street paid parking pilot program.

Key direction from City Council

- Move forward with monitoring sensors to gather parking data
- Increase parking enforcement
- Support public/private and public/public partnerships to provide parking
- Evaluate revenue options and pricing policy
- Use data collected to re-evaluate on-street paid parking

Issues:	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived lack of adequate parking turnover and accessibility. • Concern about potential neighborhood impacts due to the increased pace of development. • Need for better communication about parking locations and availability. • Desire to move away from a punitive, enforcement-driven funding model. • Methods for adding on-street bike parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability, ease of access to and turnover of on-street parking. • Develop a parking management system that is supportive of businesses, neighborhoods, and visitors. • Provide and communicate a variety of options for parking and for traveling to and around Downtown. • Encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation to reduce parking demand. • Identify a sustainable funding source for future access and transportation infrastructure investment.



Parking on-street is appropriate for a short trip to Downtown and spaces should be available in convenient locations. Garage parking is appropriate for long trips (extended shopping, dining and employees).



Transportation + Parking

Principles & Policies



Principle TP 1: Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable travel options to, from, and around Downtown for all modes of travel and people of all ages and abilities. Focus on biking, walking, and riding transit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through longer-term modal shift.

Policy TP 1a: Complete Pedestrian Network. Continue to actively prioritize a complete pedestrian network that meets Americans with Disabilities (ADA) act standards, given the large pedestrian volumes and sales tax generated in this project area, especially completing sidewalks in areas with gaps.

Policy TP 1b: Multi-modal Intersection Improvements. Identify key intersections for improvements to the function, operations, safety, and comfort for all modes.

Policy TP 1c: Multi-modal Corridor Improvements. Identify key corridors and street segments for redesign/improvements to improve safety and accommodate the travel, parking, and access needs for all modes of transportation.

Policy TP 1d: Adopted Corridor Plan Implementation. Work towards implementation of various adopted corridor plans in the Downtown area.

Policy TP 1e: Mobility Sharing Programs. Incorporate and integrate mobility sharing programs (e.g., bike share, car share, ride share) into Downtown planning.

Policy TP 1f: Complete Bicycle Network. Continue to develop and implement the Low-Stress Network from the Bicycle Master Plan, and strive to add bike lanes or provide alternate routes for areas with bike lane gaps.

Policy TP 1g: Downtown Circulator. Explore regularly-scheduled transit service to connect key destinations in the Downtown area.

Policy TP 1h: Additional Transit Service. Explore enhancements to existing service including increased frequencies, longer span of service, and more efficient route alignments as well as the potential for new routes to serve Downtown.

Policy TP 1i: Additional Park-n-Rides. Explore additional parking opportunities outside of Downtown for transit routes that serve Downtown.

Policy TP 1j: Develop a Citywide Parking Plan. Including a menu of options outlining parking and access district typologies, funding mechanisms, organizational structure and stakeholder involvement (e.g., parking benefit district).

Policy TP 1k: Downtown Transit Center (DTC) Access Improvements. Explore improvements to the Downtown Transit Center and surrounding streets that make bus arrivals and departures safer and more efficient.

Policy TP 1l: Bus Stop Improvements. Continue to implement the Transport Bus Stop Improvement program to upgrade bus stops to Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards and to provide amenities and next bus wayfinding for patrons.

Policy TP 1m: Downtown-Specific Transportation Improvement Funding. Explore additional funding sources for parking and transportation improvements specific to Downtown.

Policy TP 1n: Monitoring Travel Behavior. Monitor mode split and travel behavior Downtown to assess trends.

Principle TP 2: Manage parking facilities for all users in a way that adequately balances supply and demand, and plan for infrastructure to support future growth.

Policy TP 2a: Bicycle Parking. Provide adequate bicycle parking and management of facilities.

Policy TP 2b: Parking Utilization Data. Implement a system to collect parking utilization data on occupancy and turnover, and communicate parking availability to the public.

Policy TP 2c: Parking Enforcement Adjustments. Explore adjusting enforcement of the 2-hour limited parking spaces to weekends and evenings after 5 p.m., and limit 2-hour parking to a specific subdistrict.

Policy TP 2d: Parking Demand Reduction. Research creative options that reduce parking demand, educate the parking public about alternatives to driving alone, and provide greater options to businesses and employees.

Policy TP 2e: Partnerships. Engage in public-private partnerships to use under-utilized private parking lots and in parking structures.

Policy TP 2f: On-Street Paid Parking. Implement an on-street paid parking program that further manages parking demand and generates revenue to invest in future parking infrastructure at the time that parking utilization data indicates occupancy has met its threshold.

Policy TP 2g: Parking Structures. Develop additional parking structures in locations identified in the 2013 Parking Plan, and continue to evaluate additional locations throughout Downtown.

Policy TP 2h: Parking Fee in Lieu. When a sustainable funding source for creating new parking supply is created, provide an option for developers to pay a fee-in-lieu instead of providing on-site parking.

Policy TP 2i: Public Parking Management. Create policies that dictate off-site and parking structure leasing for new development, private citizens, and Downtown employees in lieu of providing on-site parking, and policies that dictate the locations and quantity of time-limited parking spaces (15 minute, 2-hour, loading zones, and similar limited spaces) and parking for people with disabilities.

Policy TP 2j: Safety. Implement safety measures to ensure on-street and structure parking are safe at all times of day for all users.

Principle TP 3: Provide timely and informative communications about real-time travel/parking conditions and options.

Policy TP 3a: Real-Time Travel Information. Explore opportunities to continue, enhance, and add real-time travel information (e.g., transit, parking availability).

Policy TP 3b: Wayfinding. Continue to implement wayfinding for all users, including identifying parking garages and other key destinations, using the City's Downtown Wayfinding Sign System Schematic Design document as a unifying guide.

Policy TP 3c: Marketing. Market Downtown as a destination that is easy to reach and get around.

Policy TP 3d: Employers. Work with employers to provide information on travel options to employees.

Market + Economy



Vision

Downtown Fort Collins is a key economic engine for the region and one of the most distinctive small Downtowns in the nation. Downtown has become a diverse employment center where retail, finance, technology startups, government, and services thrive. Residents and visitors experience Downtown as a center for creativity featuring a wide variety of local retail shops, high-quality dining and entertainment options, a unique sense of place, well preserved history and a strong local business community. A broad range of housing types is available to meet the needs of diverse age groups, lifestyles, and incomes. Downtown is also recognized as a center for innovation, where businesses partner with Colorado State University to advance knowledge-based industries.



Current Conditions

Downtown Fort Collins enjoys a thriving economy and is one of the community's economic engines. Though the Downtown area comprises less than two percent (1.9%) of the City's total land area, it generated approximately 15% of sales tax revenues City-wide in 2015. Downtown's vibrancy comes in part from its mix of retail, services, government, and primary employers contained within a relatively small geographic area; as well as a close-in residential population in the Old Town Neighborhoods, for whom Downtown is a neighborhood shopping center.

The current state of the Downtown economy is strong. Residential and commercial vacancies are at all-time lows (1% and 2.5% respectively). Major redevelopment projects like the Elizabeth Hotel continue to develop Downtown's reputation as a shopping, tourism, and employment destination. In addition, decades of intentional private and public investment have created a unique sense of place.

Well-preserved historic buildings, public spaces for the community to enjoy, and infrastructure to help support future growth all contribute to the unique feel and character of the Downtown area.

Over the time frame of the Downtown Plan, Market and Economy policies will guide the development of Downtown in several key areas:

- Affordability
- Housing and Mix of Uses
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Investment

Downtown by the Numbers



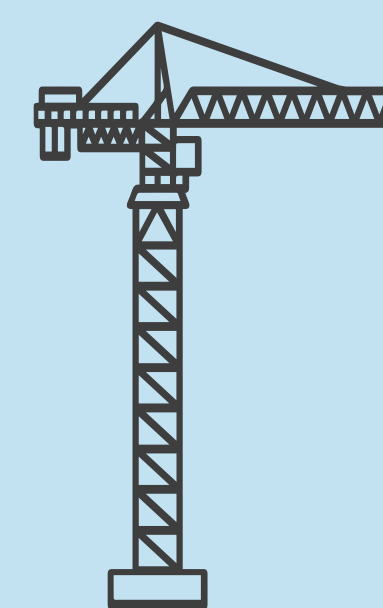
Vacancy

1989: 14% retail
11% commercial
2015: 1% retail
2.5% commercial



Sales Tax Revenues

1989: \$4 Million
2014: \$16 Million



Recent Development

Last 5 Years: 405,000 s.f. Commercial
300+ Residential Units

Currently proposed

~850,000 s.f. commercial space
226 residential units

Key Considerations

Housing and Mix of Uses:

To keep Downtown vibrant and economically strong in future decades, it is critical to maintain an appropriate mix of business and employment opportunities. Encouraging a complementary mix of uses Downtown has been a primary approach to land use in the Downtown area since the 1989 Downtown Plan. For over 25 years, the community has recognized that the maintenance of a healthy combination of retail, commercial, and residential spaces is a key element of Downtown's economic success.

To further strengthen Downtown's economic health in the future, the Land Use Code and fee structures for redevelopment will be analyzed to better encourage the development of smaller, more affordable housing options and mixed-use buildings throughout Downtown. Particular development types to encourage include:

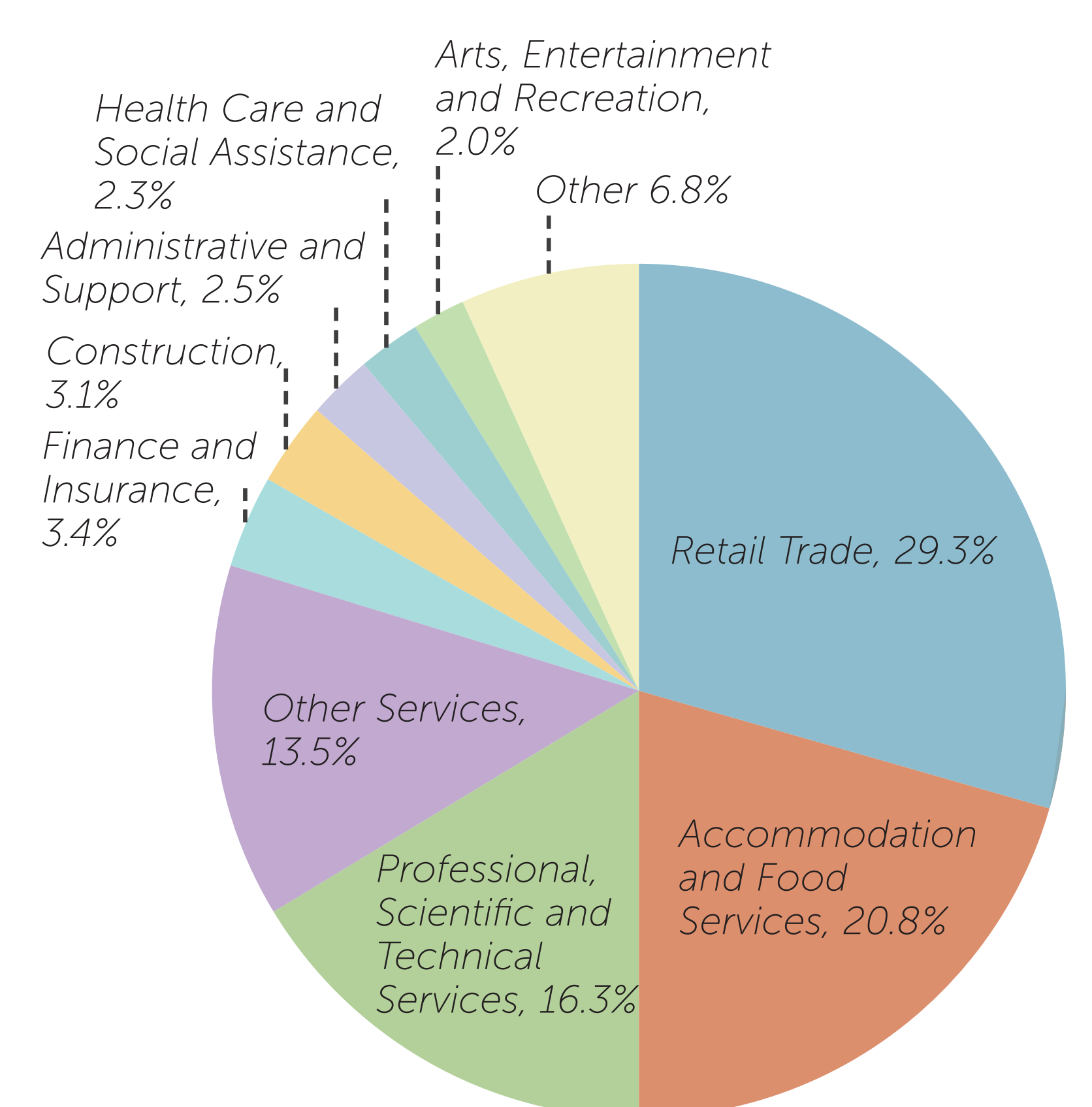
- Live/work spaces
- Creative studio spaces
- Micro housing units
- Small format retail and commercial spaces
- Mixed-use buildings

Investment:

Private and public investment will continue to be important for sustaining Downtown's success, and will help achieve broader community goals for sustainable building design, affordability, and mixed-use buildings. In 2031, the authority of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) will expire.

To provide funding for Downtown improvements that maintains or exceeds today's current levels, the amount of the tax increment currently used by the DDA (approximately \$3.2 million annually in 2015 dollars) will need to be directed to Downtown improvements through another funding source.

- An **economic development fund** could be established by the City of Fort Collins to set aside money for specific economic development activities in the Downtown area. The amount of this fund, its funding source, eligibility requirements, and goals would need to be clearly defined.
- A **Business Improvement District (BID)** is both an organization and a financing tool. Property owners within a particular area (in this case, Downtown) could petition to form a BID and vote to tax themselves with an additional assessment on commercial properties within the BID boundary.
- The **General Improvement District (GID)** assesses an additional property tax on property owners within its boundaries. The GID is authorized to issue bonds to pay for larger projects, while smaller projects are funded on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. The boundaries of the GID could be expanded to encompass a larger portion of the Downtown Plan area as development expands. Expansion would require outreach to property owners and City Council approval.



Today, Downtown has a diverse mix of housing, employment, and entertainment options. This balance of uses elevates Downtown above just a retail and business destination and cultivates a pedestrian oriented neighborhood feel with options to live, work and play. This vibrancy strengthens the 24/7 economy, and contributes to enhanced place making throughout the area.

Market + Economy

Principles & Policies



Principle ME 1: Strengthen Downtown's business mix by addressing market opportunities in the residential, commercial, retail, industrial, and visitor sectors.

Policy ME 1a: Marketing. Support Downtown businesses with marketing and promotions that highlight retail and dining offerings to local, regional, and visitor markets.

Policy ME 1b: Commercial Space. Increase the supply of high-quality commercial space in the Downtown area.

Policy ME 1c: Employment. Strengthen primary employment, innovation and entrepreneurship in the Downtown area.

Policy ME 1d: Retail Mix. Sustain existing local retail businesses, encourage new local retail, and strategically recruit regional and national retail to maintain a healthy mix of Downtown shopping options.

Policy ME 1e: Mixed-Use Development. Encourage mixed-use buildings in the Downtown area.

Policy ME 1f: Housing. Increase the supply of housing in the Downtown area and encourage diverse housing types, including housing choices for a variety of income levels, demographics and lifestyles.

Policy ME 1g: Government Facilities. Continue to centralize government facilities and services Downtown. Bring life to civic areas at all times of day.

Policy ME 1h: Economic Metrics. Monitor, evaluate, and adjust to changes in the Downtown economy over time.

Principle ME 2: Identify and create sustainable funding sources to incentivize desirable development, including unique retail, employment centers, diverse housing types and high-quality design.

Policy ME 2a: Funding. Investigate alternative funding mechanisms to prepare for the expiration of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)'s Tax Increment Financing (TIF) resources.

Policy ME 2b: Special Districts. Strategically expand public investment in the Downtown Plan area through the General Improvement District (GID) and other special districts.

Principle ME 3: Encourage new investment in Downtown while continuing to ensure that new development fits into the overall Downtown context.

Policy ME 3a: Density and Intensity. Encourage increased density and intensity in strategic locations.

Arts + Culture



Vision

Downtown remains the hub of artistic and cultural activity in the region and is a national and global destination for a diverse range of creative and social offerings that are accessible to many different audiences. Local artists benefit from affordable studio, performance and live-work spaces in addition to a variety of accessible and well-supported venues and resources. Vibrant social spaces and unique cultural assets enrich the lives of residents, the economic health of the Downtown area, and the experiences of visitors.



Key Considerations

Downtown seems the picture of success. In 2016, it is a challenge to find gaps in the thriving creative culture. However, ask an artist how many jobs they have, where they go with new ideas, or whether they can afford to live and work Downtown, and it becomes evident that support and resources are necessary to continue the creative atmosphere that has been a key Downtown's revitalization.

- With significant investment in Downtown and economic success, rents are rising and spaces for living and working that were formerly affordable are becoming out of reach for artists and creatives, bringing new needs for affordable working and living space solutions.
- With a large number of creative efforts happening, there is a strong need for greater coordination, communication networks and support resources, a physical place to "start here" in making these connections for working, learning, and marketing.
- There are a few particular needs and opportunities for strengthening and supporting the 24-hour creative economy of Downtown, including a larger regional Performing Arts Center; a year-round multi-use marketplace; and evolution of transportation, parking, management, and maintenance programs related to balance vibrancy with safety and quality of life.

Lessons Learned

Several arts and culture coordinating organizations have come and gone, some lasting longer than others, with each ultimately closing their doors. The absence of these entities does not mean the needs they were striving to address no longer exist. Their missions focused on advancing arts and culture

to develop Fort Collins into a nationally recognized arts and cultural center and destination, distinguishing Fort Collins as a vital community that fosters, celebrates, and inspires human creativity for the artistic, educational, and economic benefit of the community.

Achieving the missions involved providing resources and advocacy, ensuring financial stability, developing venues and facilities, and offering education and business support for creative people. These goals are as relevant and necessary today as ever. In fact, these needs are exacerbated as artists and creatives are priced out of the market, as quality of life and community vitality increasingly rely on creatives living in our midst, and as diversification, creativity, and innovation are critical to education and economies.

We've learned that these needs are still not being met and that a support organization would be of great benefit. And for such an organization to be successful, it requires its own financial stability, political support, effective communication, and buy-in from the creative community. Previous efforts may have been supported politically or initially garnered buy-in from the community, but none have had ongoing sustainable funding. Even a modest amount of dependable year-after-year funding would allow such a coordinating entity to leverage that reliable funding towards forwarding the goals of industry instead of chasing money to stay afloat.



Inner Workings of a Healthy Creative Network

This artist's concept depicts a network of connectivity among eight primary elements shown as yellow and orange bursts which were identified as critical to a healthy creative ecosystem. The interconnectedness of these elements to the creative individual at the center, to one another, and to the broader community illustrates how the system depends on all the moving parts working together to survive. The ecosystem and its creative energy are intertwined with the community and creates complex and mutually beneficial impacts shown as emanating from the network.

Arts + Culture

Principles & Policies



Principle AC 1: Develop the Creative Network for artists, creative people, and creative businesses in Downtown.

Policy AC 1a: Networks. Establish and sustain networks for artists and creatives.

Policy 1B: Around the Clock. Recognize and support Downtown's 24-hour creative economy.

Policy 1C: Collaborative Decision-making. Involve creatives in decision making and policy creation.

Policy 1D: Sustainability. Recognize culture as an element of sustainability.

Principle AC 2: Support the creation of an Office of Creative Culture and centralized resources for the creative industries and community as an essential component to achieving the vision.

Policy 2A: Creative Culture Office. Create an Office of Creative Culture and support a staff position that will be dedicated to supporting creative industry professionals, implementing collective goals to forward the industry, coordinating with various resources, and bringing all resources/information into one centralized location.

Policy 2B: Creative Industry Partnership. An organizational structure will be created by the Director of Creative Culture that will engage a membership of creative industry professionals.

Policy 2C: Community Creative Center. Develop centralized resources for creatives at the Community Creative Center at the Carnegie Building.

Policy AC 2d: Business Education. Support business education for creatives as vital to the mission of the centralized resource.

Principle AC 3: Support arts, culture, and creative enterprises with facilities, promotion, expanded program opportunities, and funding.

Policy AC 3a: Cultural Facilities Plan. Invest in updating and implementing the highest priority facilities outlined in the Cultural Facilities Plan.

Policy AC 3b: Cultural Marketing. Promote and market the Downtown arts and culture scene.

Policy AC 3c: Innovative Arts. Support the creation of innovative and risk-taking arts programs to enhance creative placemaking Downtown.

Policy AC 3d: Cultural Tax Support. Support the creation of a regional sales tax or other funding mechanisms to support and sustain arts and culture [SCFD, GID, BID, 1% voluntary sales tax (Crested Butte)].

Principle AC 4: Sustain and improve affordability and availability of live/work and studio space for artists and creative people.

Policy AC 4a: Partnerships. Support public-private partnerships for development of creative start-up spaces and affordable live and work spaces for creatives.

Policy AC 4b: Incentives. Explore ways to educate and incentivize creative live/work spaces, venues, and galleries in private development projects.

Principle AC 5: Explore opportunities to incorporate more art into Downtown properties, businesses, and public spaces.

Policy AC 5a: Public Spaces to Support Art: Develop a plan for better utilization of public spaces and alleys to support arts and culture related uses.

Policy AC 5b: Public Art Initiative: Develop and expand public arts initiatives that results in more art installations throughout the entire Downtown.

Policy AC 5c: Subcultural Art: Explore opportunities for expression through subcultural art, such as graffiti, flier-art, busking, and performance and impromptu art.

Policy AC 5d: Incorporating Art into Development: Incentivize art in new development and redevelopment.

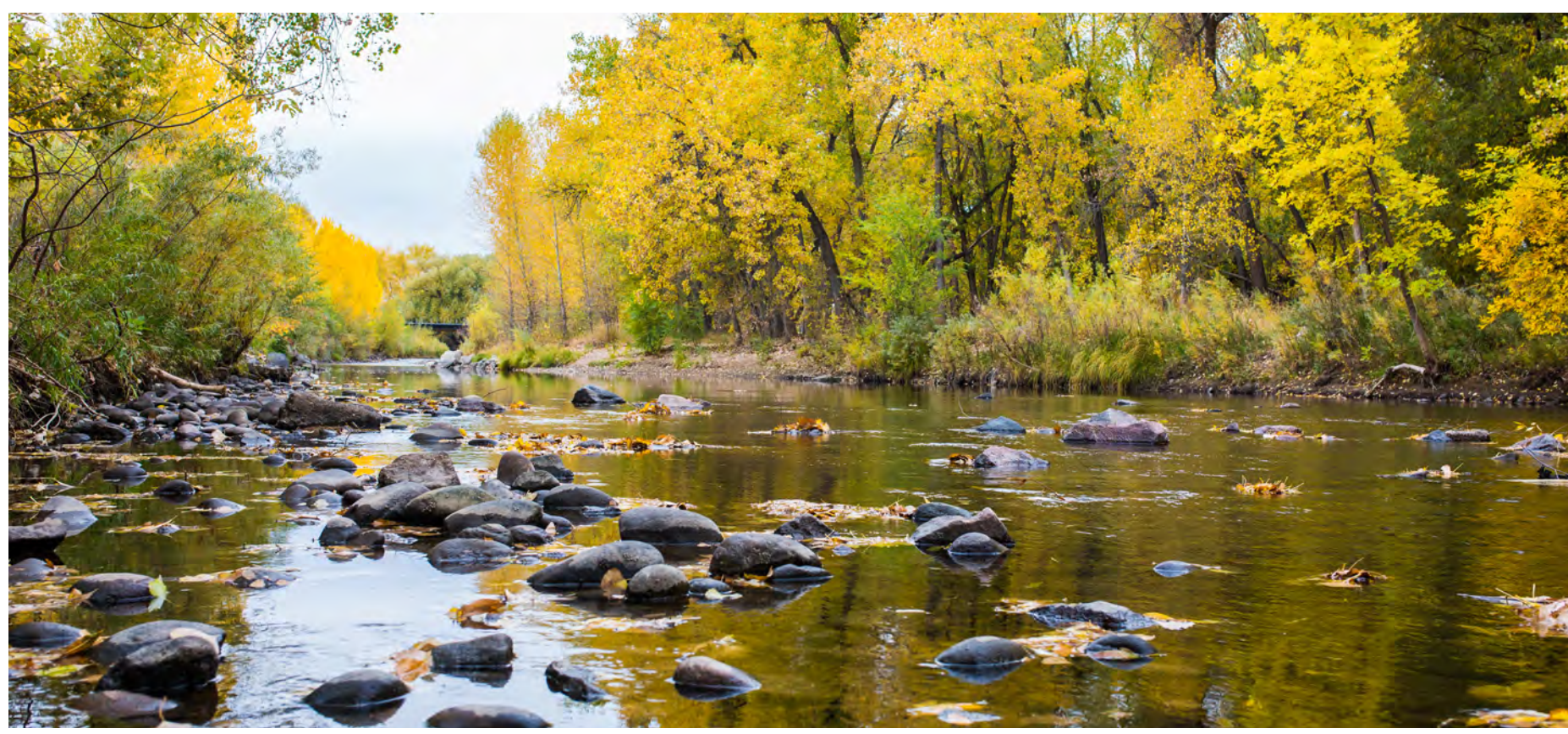
Energy + Environment



Vision

Downtown Fort Collins actively pursues sustainability in all operations and development projects. Downtown is exemplary of City-wide climate protection efforts, having incorporated innovative strategies for energy conservation, production, enhanced mobility and resiliency. From any Downtown location, people can easily access the Poudre River, parks and natural areas. The presence of nature is felt even in Downtown's most urban spaces and is cultivated as an essential amenity. Recreational access to nature is balanced with the need to preserve and protect natural resources, while stormwater management and utility infrastructure ensure existing and future community needs are met.

Key Considerations:



Poudre River Corridor

The Poudre River is a defining natural feature that not only supports public and environmental health, but also has deep historic and cultural significance for Fort Collins residents. Conserving and enhancing the river corridor have been top community priorities for many years. Recreational access on and along the river, as well as new urban development near the river, should remain secondary to the protection of the river's important ecological functions.

The 2014 Downtown Poudre River Master Plan identifies improvements that support and connect wildlife habitat, provide high quality and safe recreational experiences, and protect against flood damage in the Downtown section of the Poudre River corridor.

Climate Resiliency & Innovation

Downtown is ideally positioned to test and demonstrate advanced strategies for protecting natural resources and achieving emissions reduction goals. Sustainable projects and programs should be recognized and visibly showcased to celebrate innovation.

The City of Fort Collins should set an example for environmental stewardship and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including testing energy efficiency approaches, clean energy technologies, and funding models that could be applicable to the private sector.

Downtown presents significant opportunities for:

- Energy efficiency
- Renewable energy production, storage and use
- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings
- Smart grid technologies
- Green building
- Indoor environmental quality
- Air and water quality
- Waste reduction and management
- Electric vehicle use
- Water conservation



Nature in the City

Access to nature and the conservation of wildlife habitat as part of a connected open space network are particularly important in the Downtown core, where there are more people and businesses but fewer opportunities for public parks and natural areas.

Public entities and private property owners should both play a role in advancing the community's Nature in the City goals – including:

- New and enhanced outdoor spaces that provide access to natural settings or a respite from the busy urban setting
- Additional habitat for birds, butterflies, pollinators and other species
- Expansion of the Downtown tree canopy
- Sensitivity of nighttime lighting to human and wildlife health
- Opportunities for urban agriculture

Utility Infrastructure

Utility infrastructure is a critical, but often forgotten, factor in Downtown's vitality. Fort Collins has a long and storied history of flooding along the Poudre River and other stream corridors. New development and redevelopment will continue to have impacts on Downtown's ability to manage flooding and storm runoff.

In addition to stormwater management, Downtown cannot thrive without functioning water and wastewater systems - with adequate capacity to respond to new land uses and development projects. Fort Collins Utilities has prioritized upgrades and replacement of water and wastewater infrastructure for the Downtown area, which also presents new opportunities. As trenches are dug and pipes are replaced, the City has a chance to test and implement related projects that align with other community goals, such as adding broadband infrastructure, piloting new smart grid technologies, or incorporating solar production and ground-source geexchange into (or underneath) Downtown's roadways.



Energy + Environment

Principles & Policies



Principle EE 1: Celebrate, preserve and enhance the Poudre River Corridor and other unique natural resources.

Policy EE 1a: Poudre River Resource Protection. Protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Poudre River corridor as a valuable and irreplaceable resource as it flows through Downtown.

Policy EE-1b: Urban Transition to the Poudre River. Create a transition in the character of the Poudre River corridor from the higher intensity Downtown core to a more naturalized context away from the core.

Policy EE-1c: Connections to the Poudre River. Strengthen visual and pedestrian connections between Downtown and the river.

Policy EE-1d: Brownfield Sites. Support the remediation of contaminated brownfield sites along the Poudre River corridor.

Principle EE-2: Demonstrate and showcase technologies, strategies and innovative approaches that advance the City's climate action goals.

Policy EE-2a: Renewable Energy Production. Collaborate with business and institutional partners to lead the way in piloting and advancing renewable energy production, storage and use in the Downtown area.

Policy EE-2b: Energy Efficiency. Retrofit existing buildings to improve energy efficiency.

Policy EE-2c: Showcase Innovation. Demonstrate, showcase, measure, and engage the community around innovative approaches to environmental stewardship and energy management.

Policy EE-2d: Green Building. Encourage and support above-code green building practices for all Downtown construction and development.

Policy EE-2e: Building Reuse. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings and consider the lifecycle of all materials in the construction and demolition process. Avoid the environmental costs of demolition and new construction whenever possible.

Policy EE-2f: Environmental Quality. Support programs and initiatives to improve indoor and outdoor environmental health Downtown.

Policy EE-2g: Electric Vehicles. Provide infrastructure and policy support for electric vehicles in the Downtown area.

Principle EE-3: Incorporate opportunities to find respite and enjoy nature throughout Downtown.

Policy EE-3a: Nature in the City. Continue to implement the actions identified in the Nature in the City Strategic Plan as applicable to the Downtown area.

Policy EE-3b: Tree Canopy. Maintain and expand the Downtown tree canopy.

Policy EE-3c: Night Sky Protection. Reduce the impact of Downtown lighting on dark night skies.

Policy EE-3d: Edible Landscapes. Incorporate edible gardening on vacant sites and shared community spaces to increase food access and provide education on urban agriculture.

Principle EE-4: Ensure that Downtown utility infrastructure meets the needs of current and future property owners, businesses, residents and visitors.

Policy EE-4a: Innovation in Utility Improvements. Identify opportunities to achieve energy production, transportation, and urban design goals in tandem with utility improvements.

Policy EE-4b: Stormwater Management. Enhance Downtown's capacity to manage and respond to rain, snow and flood events.

Policy EE-4c: Water and Wastewater Utilities. Proactively improve and replace the aging water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the Downtown area.

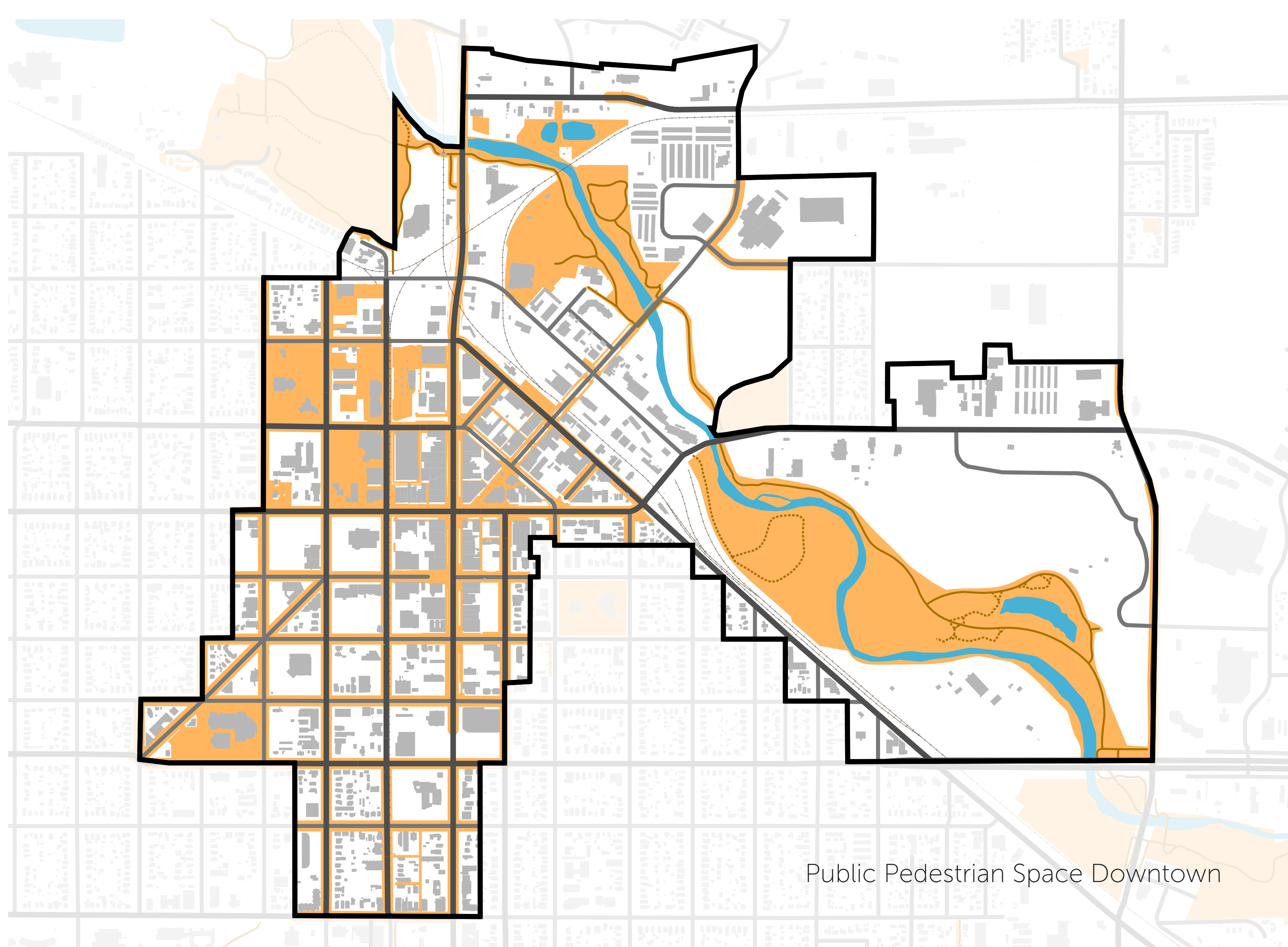
Policy EE-4d: Water Conservation. Incorporate water conservation techniques into both existing properties and new development sites.

Management + Maintenance



Vision

Downtown remains safe, clean, and inviting for walking, where people of all ages and backgrounds can feel welcome and comfortable. Management, policing, and maintenance of public space remain highly responsive, detail-oriented, and innovative in support of commerce, socializing, community gatherings, civic participation, and downtown living. Nightlife remains a key aspect of Downtown's vitality, and its special needs and impacts are recognized and addressed with responsible, collaborative efforts in the interest of safety and quality of life for the community. Mutual understanding and relationships continue to develop among all providers of services and affected interests as a key to managing overlapping and sometimes competing interests in the spectrum of activity throughout the day and into the night.



Public Pedestrian Space

The fabric of pervasive public pedestrian space Downtown is like nowhere else in the city or region. It brings a whole spectrum of people and activity. Programs and services are already in place for all issues, focused mostly in the core. Parks and Police lead; many others collaborate.

Key Considerations:

Keep up with growth: both physical growth of improvements; and activity growth with increasing popularity.

- Don't allow growth to diminish or dilute efforts in the core.
- Support a larger Parks Maintenance shop – location, programming, budgeting, design & construction. (Existing shop's days are numbered).

Continue proactive efforts to minimize illegal and disruptive behaviors.

- Increase understanding of the distinctions between illegal behaviors, undesirable behaviors, and complex homelessness-related issues.
- Explore needs for a larger Police District One substation – current location is approaching capacity; locations involve competing objectives to be explored further.

Management + Maintenance

Principles & Policies



Principle MM 1: Downtown's public pedestrian space should be managed to emphasize walkability and pedestrian priority. Inviting people to walk around Downtown with ease and comfort is the primary function of Downtown's sidewalks; additional uses of the sidewalk right of way add vitality and interest but need to be carefully managed.

Policy MM 1a: *Encroachments into the sidewalk right-of-way.* Revisit the 7-foot minimum sidewalk clearance requirement to recognize other factors affecting ease of movement in specific contexts.

Policy MM 1b: *Understanding and Relationships.* Maintain understanding and cooperation between City staff and private owners and managers, on ease of movement where private items in the sidewalk right-of-way create pinch points.

Policy MM 1c: *Universal Access to Older Buildings.* Promote portable ramps, with informed outreach to owners or managers of buildings that do not provide universal access.

Policy MM 1d: *Pedestrian Wayfinding.* Provide locational and directional information for visitors at key locations for pedestrians. Various forms of physical and digital wayfinding should be considered on an ongoing basis as appropriate for users and the physical environment.

Principle MM 2: A sense of safety in a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere is crucial to all other aspects of Downtown's success.

Policy MM 2a: *Problematic public behavior.* Continue to recognize, discuss, and manage the competing interests and disruptive public behavior that comes with the broad spectrum of people and activity in Downtown's public space during the daytime, evening and nighttime.

Policy MM 2b: *Community Policing.* Maintain the District One substation and continue support for the Community Policing practices tailored to Downtown's daily and seasonal cycles.

Policy MM 2c: *Police District 1 substation location.* Identify a stable, highly functional location for effective Community Policing operations tailored to Downtown's unique needs.

Policy MM 2d: *Street Outreach Team.* Continue Support for the development of a staffed program to proactively build relationships and understanding regarding homeless-related issues, and assist in reducing conflicts in public space related to disruptive behavior. (Intrinsic to Policy 3b.)

Policy MM 2e: *Ambassador/Host Program.* Develop program to boost the sense of safety and a welcoming environment, tailored to users.

Principle MM 3: Improving understanding of homeless-related issues among all those affected, and supporting efforts to address needs, are crucial to addressing the realities of homelessness in Downtown.

Policy MM 3a: *Right to be in public space.* Publicize and promulgate information about equal rights to be present in public space while behaving lawfully.

Policy MM 3b: *Street Outreach Team.* Support the development of a team to proactively build relationships and understanding regarding homeless-related issues, and assist in reducing conflicts in public space related to disruptive behavior. (Intrinsic to Policy 2d).

Policy MM 3c: *Homeward 2020.* Support local leadership on homelessness initiatives.

Principle MM 4: Expand maintenance capabilities to keep up growth and success.

Policy MM 4a: *Continue success.* The successful maintenance and beautification programs established by the Parks Department will be supported, budgeted, and augmented by other efforts as appropriate to keep up with growth and expansion of enhanced pedestrian space Downtown.

Policy MM 4b: *Parks maintenance and storage shop.* Identify a stable, functional location for effective continuation of successful maintenance programs by the Parks Department.

Policy MM 4c: *Repairs and Replacements.* Convene new discussions among entities with various responsibilities as needed to clarify approach, roles, priorities, and budgeting for repairs and replacements to existing improvements as they age.

Policy MM 4d: *Cohesive themes and character areas.* Coordinate Downtown maintenance programs with the whole planning and design approach to different character subdistricts within Downtown.

Policy MM 4e: *Solid Waste Reduction.* Work with Downtown businesses and property owners to reduce waste and more efficiently manage trash, recycling, and composting to contribute to maintenance and cleanliness in the Downtown area.

Principle MM 5: Address issues and tradeoffs related to community events and festivals, balancing the number and scale to avoid 'large event fatigue'.

Policy MM 5a: *Overall approach.* Create and maintain a philosophy and approach on number, scale, and type of events.

Policy MM 5b: *Alternative venues.* Study suitability of Downtown venues for various festivals considering infrastructure and transportation needs, and suitability of potential alternative venues throughout the City.

Principle MM 6: Coordinate overall communications and messaging about Downtown.

Policy MM 6a: *Continue state-of-the-art coordination.* Maintain and adapt the alliance between the DDA and DBA that has been developed over the years.

Policy MM 6b: *Explore a BID.* Study the feasibility of a BID – pros, cons, other implications, layering with the DDA and GID tax districts, and fit with different subdistricts.

Downtown Character Subdistricts

