

- Legend**
- Civic
  - Retail
  - Office
  - Live/Work
  - Townhouses
  - Single-Family
  - Structured Parking

## Downtown Civic Center Illustrative Concept Plan

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
1. Introduction .....	2
Purpose and Intent .....	2
Location and Context .....	2
Planning Process .....	4
2. The Plan .....	7
Overview .....	7
The Vision .....	8
The Framework .....	8
The Program .....	13
Civic Center Illustrative Concept Plan .....	17
3. Planning and Design Guidelines .....	19
General Guidelines .....	19
County Justice Center .....	19
Library .....	20
Performing Arts Center .....	20
Hotel and Conference Center .....	20
Cinema .....	21
Transit Center .....	22
Mixed-Use Buildings .....	23
Parking Structure .....	24
Live-Work .....	25
Single-Family & Townhouses .....	26
4. The Implementation Strategy .....	27
Zoning .....	27
Land Acquisition .....	27
Phases .....	29
Funding .....	29
Establish Major Civic Uses .....	30

### Maps

Map 1 - Civic Center District Location .....	3
Map 2 - Site Context .....	6
Map 3 - Framework Plan .....	10
Map 4 - Civic Spine .....	11
Map 5 - Illustrative Concept Plan .....	18
Map 6 - Existing Zoning .....	28

## Figures

Figure 1 - Mason/Howes Street Cross-Sections .....	12
Figure 2 - Program Elements .....	14

## Appendix

- A-1 Existing Plan Review  
Balloffet and Associates, Inc., November 1995
- A-2 Existing Transportation and Parking Conditions  
Balloffet and Associates, Inc., November 1995
- A-3 Market Analysis Review  
Clarion Associates of Colorado LLC, November 1995
- A-4 Existing and Future Employees Estimates  
Balloffet and Associates, Inc., June 1996

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## Executive Summary

The Civic Center Plan is a framework for strategic actions that will reinforce the role of downtown Fort Collins as the primary governmental, office, finance, specialty, neighborhood retail, cultural, and entertainment center within the community. The plan is intended to guide future development of the 12-block Civic Center area as a human-scale, walkable, mixed-use district, anchored by civic spaces and buildings, providing transportation choices and connections to the surrounding environment.

The Civic Center will be an exciting place with active street life, cultural attractions, open spaces, and areas for gatherings. The district will contain a mix of uses including government facilities, commercial, housing, retail, cultural, entertainment, transit facilities, and pedestrian areas. A balanced transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and motor vehicles will maximize travel mode choices.

The following is a summary of the actions recommended to implement the plan:

- Zoning:** Adoption of this plan should be followed up with policy work to eliminate the existing conventional zoning designations in the Civic Center District and establish a mixed-use zoning district based on this plan.
- Acquisition:** Continue with the acquisition strategies that are underway for Blocks 32 and 33. Acquire other properties on Block 32 and 33 as they become available. Plan to incorporate compatible existing uses in the plan during build-out.
- Phases:** Identify stand-alone phases that are integrated with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects.
- Funding:** City staff and City Council are currently developing an ongoing Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which addresses major government facilities and infrastructure projects. CIP elements from the Civic Center Master Plan will be sorted and prioritized, and funding sources analyzed during this process. City staff can also begin analyzing other development opportunities and funding strategies for the District.
- Major Civic Uses:** Demonstrate a commitment to the Civic Center Master Plan by designating the Civic Center District as the location for specific major civic uses during the Capital Improvements Plan process.

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# 1. Introduction

## Purpose and Intent

Early in 1995, the need for a more coordinated approach towards the use of land owned by the City and County in the downtown area was raised by citizens and elected officials. This need arose from several sources. First is Larimer County's need for improved county court and administrative facilities. The City of Fort Collins is also moving forward with implementation of its Strategic Plan for general government facilities downtown. Both the City and County desired to move forward in a coordinated manner, in accordance with a master plan for the area that provides for a creative mix of public needs with private market opportunities.

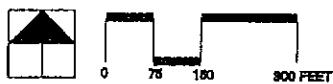
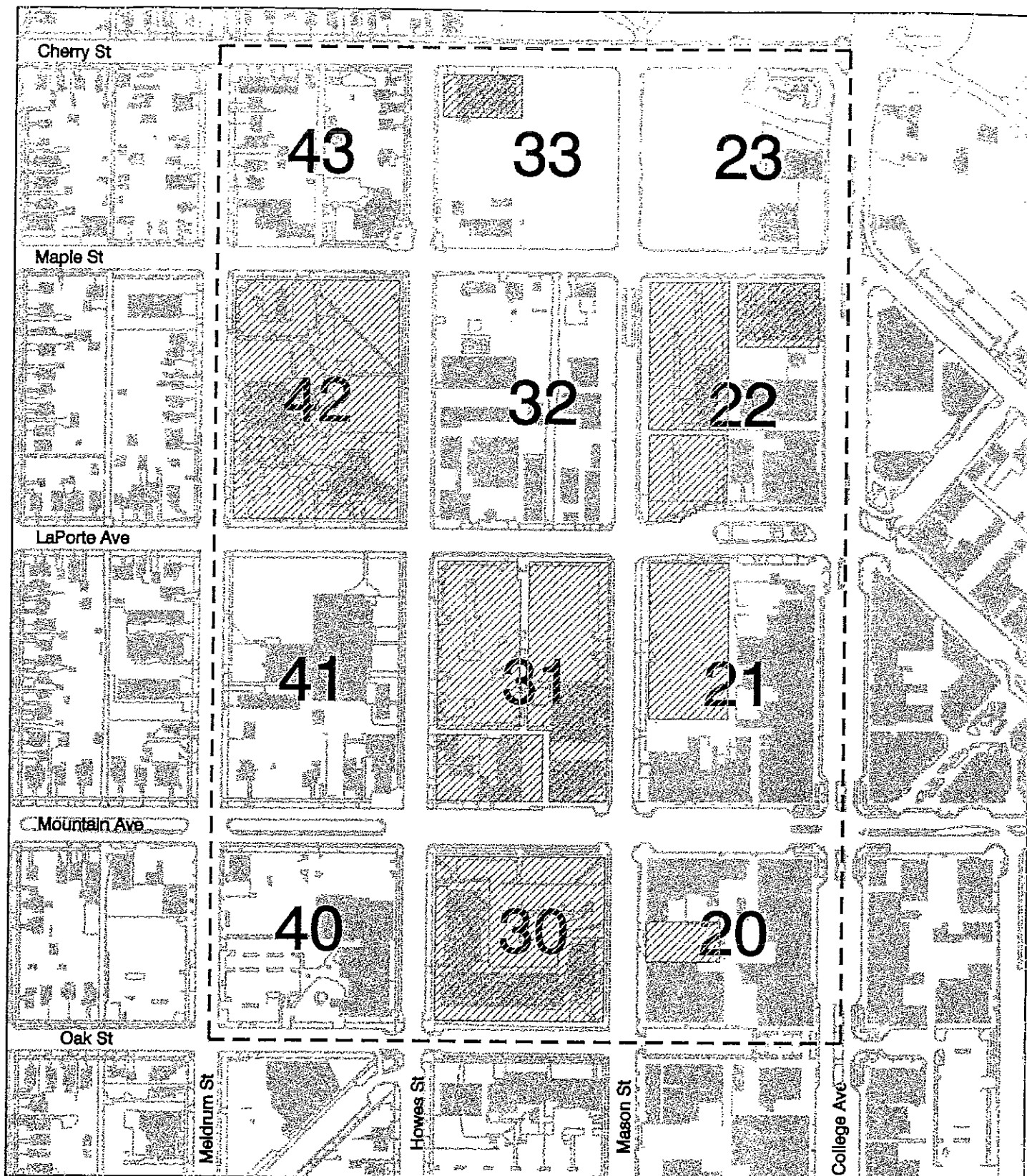
By joint resolution, City Council and the Larimer County Board of Commissioners agreed to establish a process to develop a master plan for the Civic Center District. The primary intent of this plan, as expressed by the joint resolutions, is as follows: (1) undertake joint planning for government facilities; (2) develop a master plan that brings mixes of uses together with pedestrian and transportation connections; (3) encourage participation by the private sector; and (4) develop recommendations for zoning, infrastructure improvements, financing, and phasing necessary to implement the plan.

## Location and Context

The area defined as the Civic Center District is a 12-block area in downtown Fort Collins, bounded by Cherry Street and Martinez Park on the north, College Avenue on the east, Oak Street on the south, and Meldrum Street on the west (see map 1). The Civic Center is part of the downtown business district, which contains a dynamic mix of commercial, entertainment, business services, and retail businesses. Downtown is home to one of the city's largest concentrations of employees, estimated by the Downtown Development Authority to number about 6,000 (personal interview, November 1995). The presence of City and County offices accounts for a large number of professional services, including lawyers, title companies, engineers, and architects clustering in or near the downtown area.

The Civic Center District contains a diverse mix of buildings and uses within the 12-block area, many of which are significant and will help anchor the master plan for the district. Significant existing buildings include the following:

- Fort Collins City Hall (block 42);
- St. Josephs Catholic Church and Rectory (block 41);
- St. Josephs Elementary School (block 41);
- Larimer County Courthouse (block 30);
- Historic Trolley Barn (block 33);



*Map 1: Civic Center District Location*

--- Study Area Boundary

40 Block Number

Public Ownership



- 281 N. College City Offices (block 22);
- Historic Railway Depot (block 22); and
- Opera Galleria building (block 21).

A significant portion of the Civic Center District is held in public ownership by the City or County (see map 1).

Land uses to the north include Martinez Park, a community park with active ballfields, The Farm, playgrounds, and the Poudre River trail. The west and northwest edge of the Civic Center abuts the city's west side residential neighborhood, which contains a mix of single and multi-family housing. Old Town Fort Collins, including Old Town Square, Linden and Jefferson Streets, and surrounding residential neighborhoods, are located to the east of the Civic Center District, and a diverse mix of financial institutions, offices, and retail businesses are located south, to Mulberry Street.

The central location of the Civic Center provides significant opportunities for linkages to surrounding uses and resources. These include the potential for connections to Old Town via Mountain Avenue, LaPorte Street, and Maple Street; connections to Lincoln Center, the city's performing arts complex, via Canyon Avenue; connections to Martinez Park and the Poudre River via Mason Street (see map 2).

## **Planning Process**

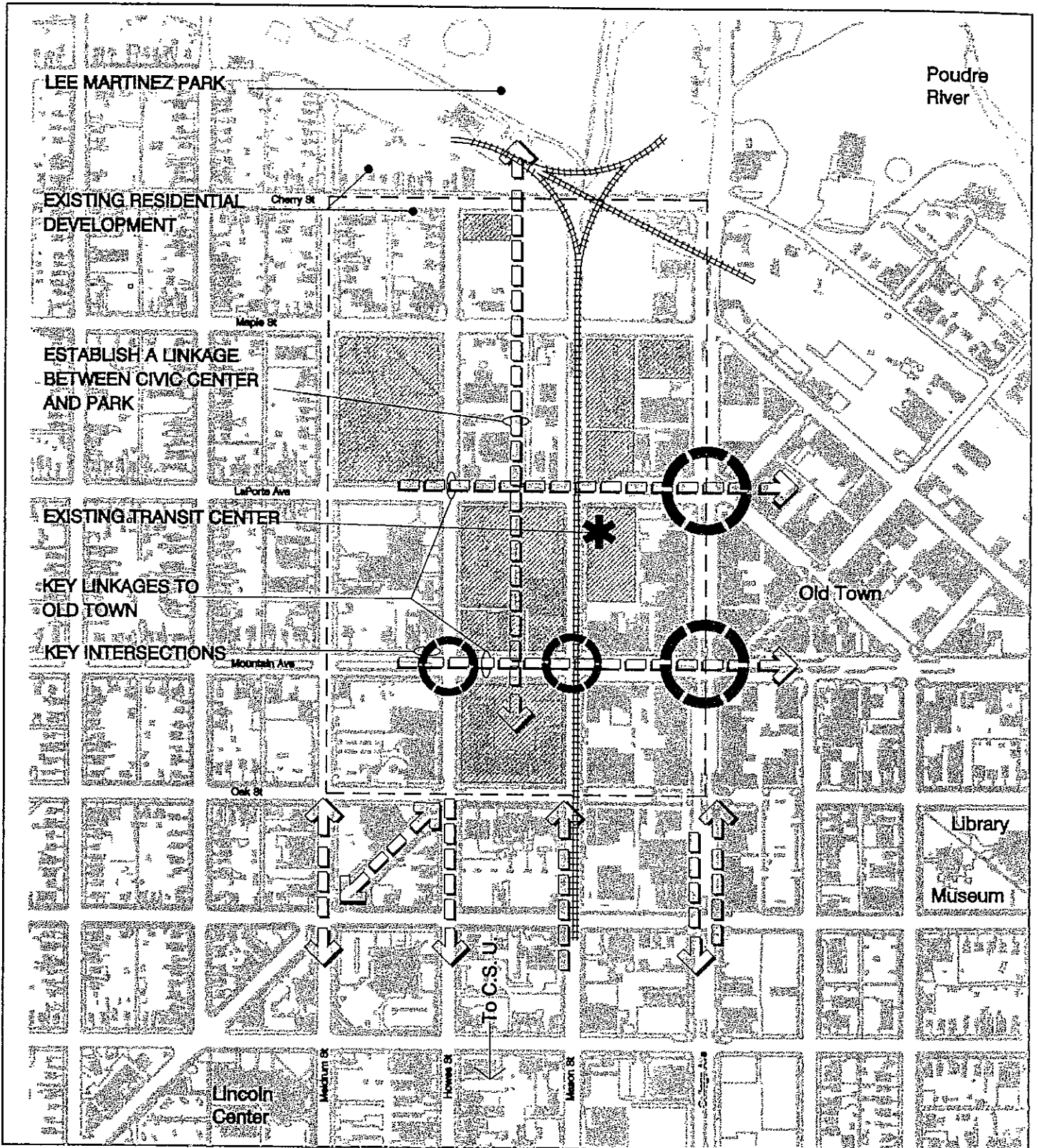
In October 1995, Fort Collins City Council appointed a 28-member Citizens Advisory Committee to assist the planning team of staff and consultants. The task was to produce a long-term plan for the physical development of the Civic Center. The process was to ensure that the public and private sector interests collaborate, and that citizens had the opportunity to participate in the process.

The Advisory Committee included representatives from neighborhoods, businesses, local merchants, and government. They represented different points of view and interests. The committee worked closely with staff and consultants, identifying the Civic Center's problems and possible solutions.

The planning process was conducted in three phases: assessment and analysis, master plan, and implementation. The assessment and analysis phase included a review of existing plans and policies in place, a review of market opportunities, a transportation and parking analysis, and public facilities programming. The products of the first phase of work are included as an appendix to this report for background purposes.

An initial public design workshop was held on November 30, 1995, to obtain input on program elements and design concepts for the Civic Center District. Workshop attendees participated in a hands-on exercise, to design their own vision of what the Civic Center could become in the future. The project team then prepared a series of alternative plans, designed to test various configurations of land uses for the study area.

A second workshop was held on February 28, 1996, as an opportunity for the public to review a preferred plan, along with the draft alternatives prepared during the planning process. The draft plan was presented to more than 20 different boards, commissions, community groups, as well as many property owners within the Civic Center District area. The plan was adopted by City Council on July 16, 1996.



*Map 2: Site Context*

--- Study Area Boundary

Public Ownership

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## 2. The Plan

### Overview

The Civic Center Plan is a framework for strategic actions that will reinforce the role of downtown Fort Collins as the primary governmental, office, finance, specialty, and neighborhood retail, cultural, and entertainment center within the community. The plan is intended to guide future development of the 12-block Civic Center area as a human-scale, walkable, mixed-use district, anchored by civic spaces and buildings, providing transportation choices and connections to the surrounding environment.

The plan is divided into four parts:

- **THE VISION** defines the primary values for the Civic Center District—the values that should guide our public and private decisions about development over time.
- **THE FRAMEWORK** is the skeleton around which development will evolve over time—the structure which links the various elements into a cohesive district.
- **THE PROGRAM** defines the uses which are *proposed* to be located in the Civic Center District, in a form that reinforces the physical framework.
- **THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY** outlines an approach towards the realization of the vision for the Civic Center District. It outlines a number of action steps to be taken by the City to help implement the plan.

The combination of these four elements forms a plan that provides for the realization of a new downtown mixed-use district.

- Activity district
- Mixed uses
- Civic-anchored
- Human, walkable scale
- Transportation choices
- Links and connections

## The Vision

The vision describes the plan's inherent values, which are intended to guide development in the Civic Center District. The combination of these values forms the foundation for making decisions consistent with the overall plan.

**Active, Mixed-Use District:** The Civic Center will be an exciting place during the day, with active street life, cultural attractions, open space, and areas for gatherings.

**Civic-Anchored:** The district will be anchored by civic activities and buildings, including City and County offices, City Hall, parks, and other major civic functions.

**Mix of Uses:** The district will contain a mix of uses including government facilities, commercial, housing, retail, cultural, entertainment, transit facilities, and pedestrian areas.

**Human, Walkable Scale:** Streets and public spaces in the Civic Center will be attractive and functional, designed to make walking easy for the pedestrian.

**Transportation Choices:** A balanced transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and motor vehicles will maximize travel mode choices.

**Links and Connections:** Links and connections to Old Town, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Poudre River will be reinforced using city streets and public spaces.

- Open space spines
- Tree-lined streets
- Civic buildings
- Diagonal parking

## The Framework

The Framework Plan (map 3) presents the structural elements of a cohesive district. It provides a logical system for development of the Civic Center. The Civic Center Master Plan uses two primary frameworks to structure the public realm: open space and pedestrian-oriented streets. Continuous spines of open space and parks extend through the major public buildings and connect them to Lee Martinez Park.

The central organizing elements of the plan are two open space spines that connect various buildings within a unified public realm of parks and plazas (map 4). The parks and plazas provide meeting and gathering places, while providing linkages for people to walk to cultural, civic, entertainment, or shopping activities.

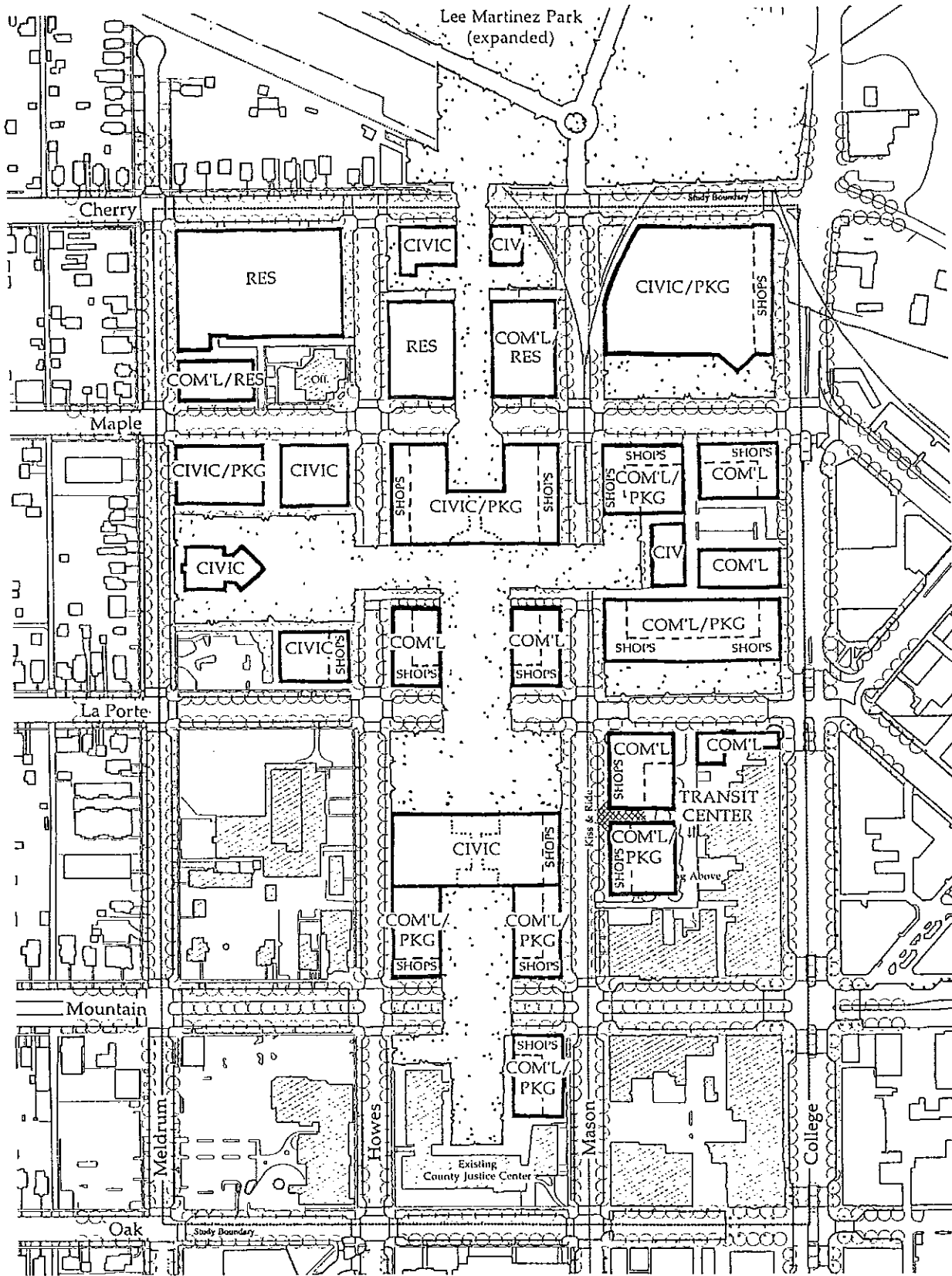
The main spine axis runs in a north-south direction, and connects the existing County offices with Lee Martinez Park, and eventually the Poudre River. This axis is anchored by two substantial civic building sites—the proposed Larimer County Justice Center north of Mountain Avenue, and a major civic use north of LaPorte Avenue, such as a proposed Fort Collins Public

Library. The second axis connects City Hall to City offices along LaPorte Avenue and the historic freight depot.

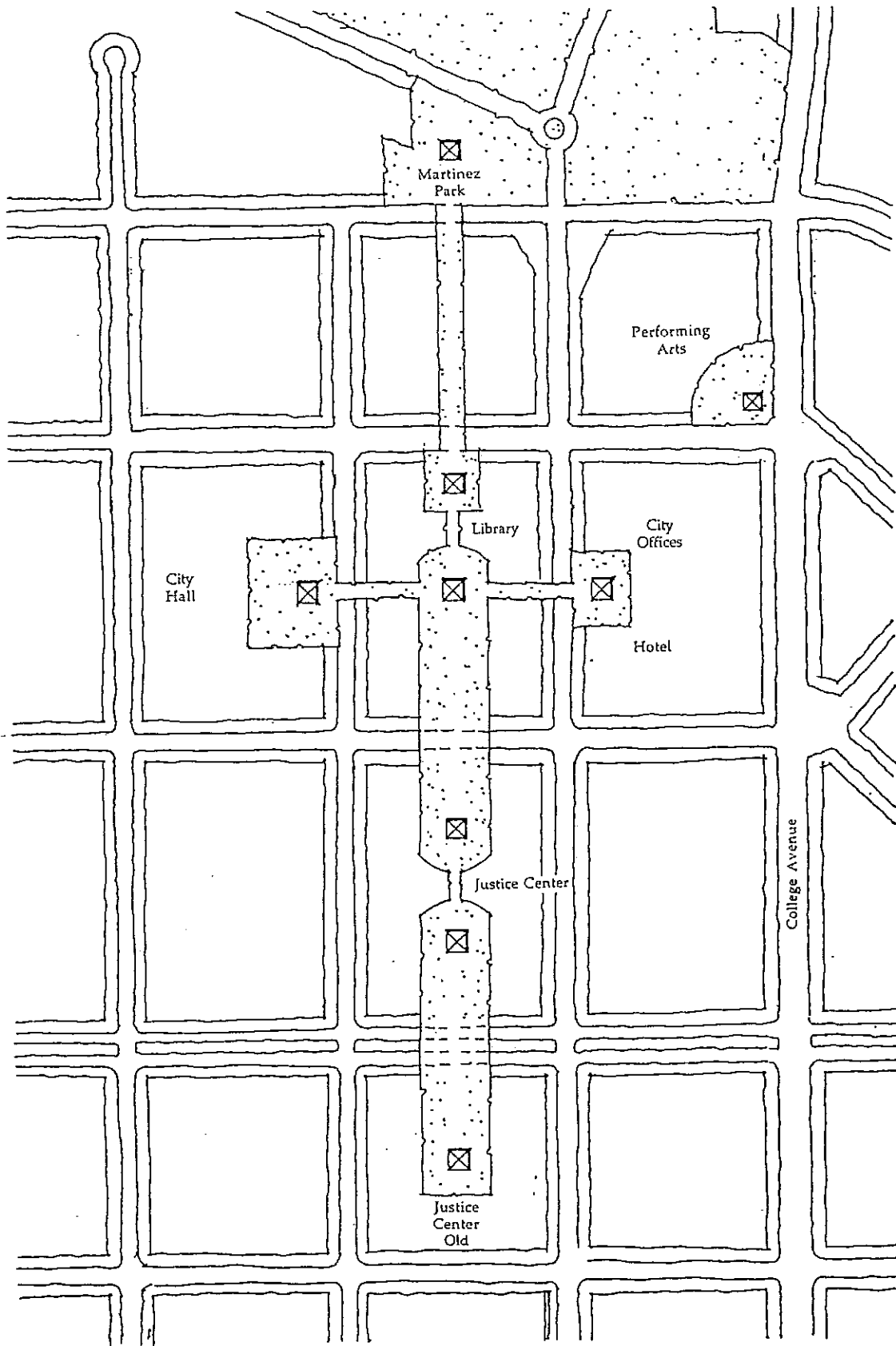
Tree-lined streets with buildings built close to the sidewalk provide a comfortable sense of enclosure for pedestrians, and ground-floor retail uses provide visual interest and activity for passersby. The demand for parking is met by mixed-use structures that combine parking with other uses; these structures have articulated facades with openings proportioned similarly to those of other buildings and include ground-floor retail to activate the street.

Diagonal parking will be a consistent feature throughout the district. It is successful and popular in downtown Fort Collins, and adds to the urban character of the area. People like it because it provides convenient parking in front of shops, creates street activity, provides a buffer between the street and the sidewalk, and slows the speed of traffic.

Mason and Howes Streets will remain one-way north and south, respectively. However, both streets will be reconfigured with two lanes for traffic, a dedicated bike lane, and parking (see figure 1). Mason Street will incorporate diagonal parking on the west side of the street, and Howes Street will incorporate diagonal parking on the east side, with parallel parking on the west.



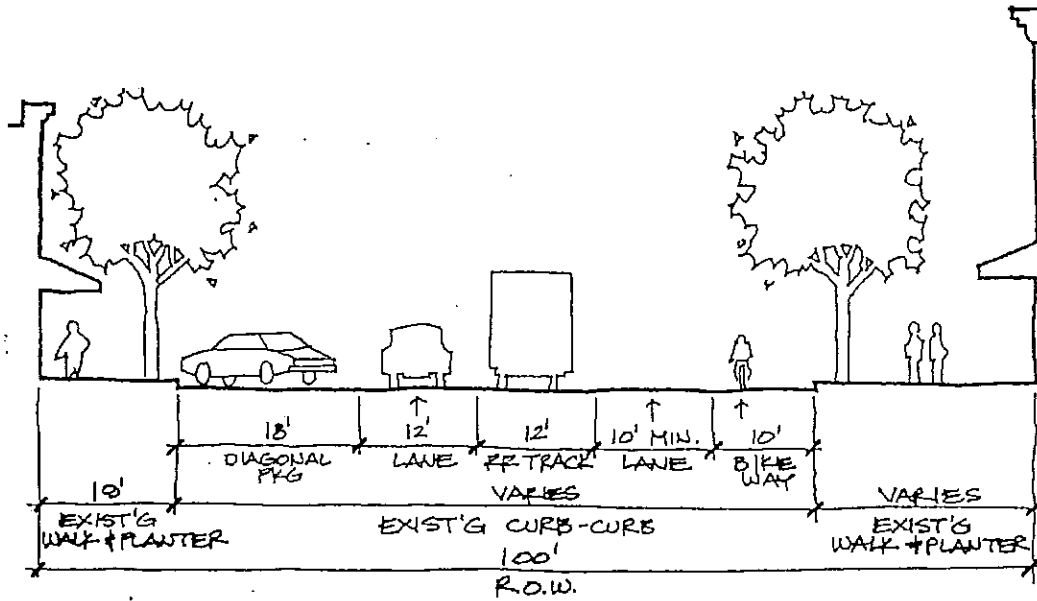
## Framework Plan



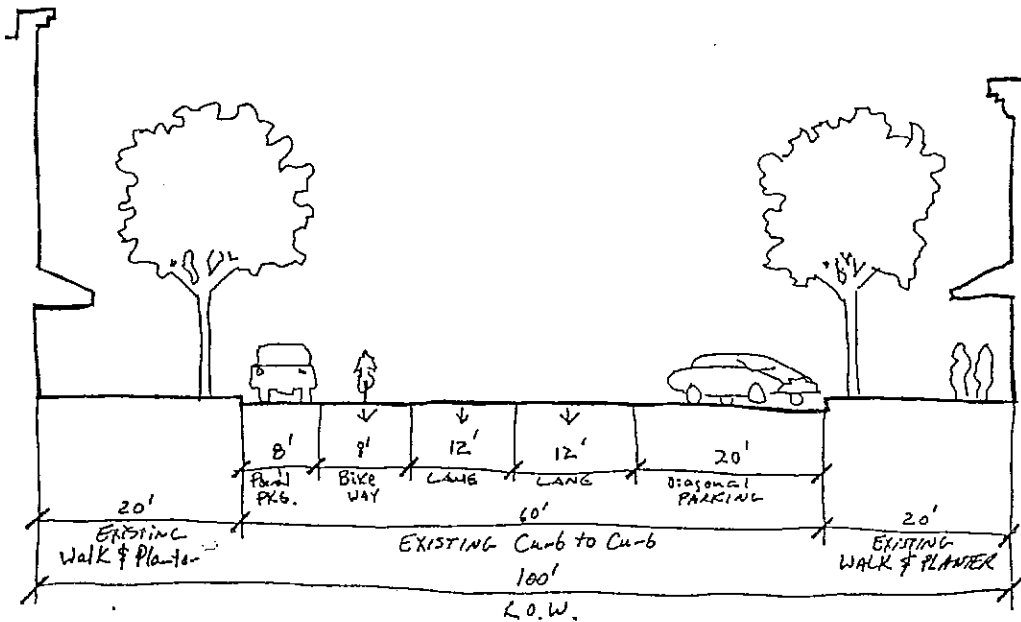
Civic Spine



Figure 1 - Mason/Howes Street Cross-sections



Mason Street



Howes Street

- Civic buildings and spaces
- Mixed use buildings
- Housing
- Transit and parking

## The Program

The proposed land use program illustrates the kinds of uses that may be consistent with the vision and the framework of the district. All uses will be subject to approval of the necessary funding and application of the City's land use regulations.

Factors considered in identifying these uses include projected needs for civic buildings based upon anticipated growth in numbers of City and County employees, requirements established by various plans such as the City's Strategic Facilities Plan, and anticipated opportunities for private development. The various program elements are summarized in figure 2. The following is a description of the elements of the program for the land use plan.

**Public Spaces and Plazas:** The central organizing elements of the plan are two open space spines that connect various buildings within a unified public realm of parks and plazas. The parks and plazas provide meeting and gathering places, while providing linkages for people to walk to cultural, civic, entertainment, or shopping activities.

**Larimer County Justice Center:** If residents of Larimer County approve Project S.A.F.E. at the ballot in November, the new Justice Center will be the first phase of development in the plan area. County officials are proposing to build a new 132,000 square-foot Justice Center and 600 space parking garage on Block 31. The development will also include mini-parks and plazas, shops, office space, and other uses. The retail uses will be located along Mason and Mountain Streets to provide pedestrian activity on the street.

**Fort Collins Public Library:** The plan calls for a 130,000 square-foot public library with structured parking located on Block 32, between LaPorte Avenue and Maple Street.

**Performing Arts Center:** Located in the northeast corner of the district at College and Maple, the performing arts center will provide a 2,200 seat, multi-purpose civic theater, with structured parking along Mason Street. Retail space will be oriented to College Avenue.

**Hotel and Conference Center:** A hotel and conference center is proposed to be located at the gateway corner of LaPorte and College. With at least 175 rooms, a conference center, retail, restaurants and underground parking, it is an opportunity for visitors to stay in a central location downtown. The hotel and conference center will link with activities on College Avenue and Old Town.

**Police Building:** The plan locates a new police building at the intersection of Howes and Maple. A new police building was identified as the top priority in the City's 1992 strategic facility plan. The feasibility study for a new police building will be completed in 1996. This study will provide direction regarding size, location, consolidation with other departments, centralized versus decentralized operations, satellite buildings, and storefront operations for the Fort Collins Police Department.

Block-by-Block Summary

Block	Land Use	ft.print	Height (stories)	Area (sq. ft.)	#Rms/Spaces
31	County Justice Center	56,500	3	162,000	na
31	Retail	7,500	1	7,500	na
31	Office Space	41,250	3	101,850	na
31	Retail	21,900	1	21,900	na
31	County Pkg Structure	55,000	4	202,000	577 spaces
31	Retail	18,000	1	18,000	na
21	Cinema (12 plex)	27,000	2	46,300	1,852 seats
21	Office	11,275	2	22,550	na
21	Retail	11,275	1	11,275	na
21	Transit Center	27,000	4	108,000	309 spaces
21	Retail	7,500	1	7,500	na
30	County Pkg. Structure	25,000	5	110,250	315 spaces
30	Retail	13,750	1	11,500	na
42	City Pkg. Structure	30,000	4	120,000	343 spaces
42	Exist'g Surface Parking		-	24,000	74 spaces
42	Police Station	24,000	3	65,400	na
42	City Hall Additions	10,800	2	21,600	na
42	City Offices	20,000	3	50,150	na
42	Retail	6,250	1	8,000	na
32	City Pkg. Structures	15,400	4	109,200	312 spaces
32	Retail	14,000	1	11,700	
32	Library	48,000	3	134,000	na
32	Retail	10,000	1	8,300	na
32	City Offices	45,600	3	108,000	na
32	Retail	28,800	1	24,000	na
22	City Pkg. Structure	32,300	4	129,200	369 spaces
22	Offices	26,600	2	39,200	na
22	Retail	14,000	1	14,000	na
22	Retail		1	10,800	na
22	Office		1	16,200	na
22	Surface Parking		na	na	72 spaces
22	Hist.Depot (incl.add'n)	15,900	1	15,900	na
22	Cafe	4,000	1	4,000	na
22	Hotel	99,800	5	160,000	175 rooms
22	Hotel Underground Pkg	99,800	1	61,500	175 spaces
22	Conference Center	58,500	1	21,600	na
22	Retail	8,500	1	10,000	na
22	Brew Pub	12,800	1	9,600	na
22	Restaurant	20,000	1	9,600	na

Block-by-Block Summary

Block	Land Use	ft.print	Height	Area	#Rms/Spaces
Park	Residential (10 du/a)		2	3.12 ac	31 units
43	Single Family	23,200	2	23,200	5 units
43	Townhouses	54,600	2	54,600	33 units
43	Live/Work	18,000	2	18,000	6 units
33	Comm.Ctr/Museum	14,000	1	14,000	one
33	Day Care	7,500	1	7,500	
33	Townhouses	48,300	2	96,600	30 units
33	Offices	18,900	2	27,700	na
23	Structured Parking	94,200	3	94,200	250 spaces
23	Retail	15,000	1	15,000	na
23	Performing Arts Center	60,000	1	60,000	na
23	Pkng under Performing Arts		1	60,000	340 spaces

**Cinema:** Entertainment is one of the driving forces in development today and generates evening and weekend activity in the district. A two-story, 12-plex cinema is located at LaPorte and Mason and is adjacent to the transit center.

**Transit Center:** The transit center along Mason Street provides a location for bus transfer, park and ride, taxi, and transit ticketing service within easy walking distance of the entire downtown. The transit center features twelve bus loading bays and 300 parking spaces within a parking structure. The concept for the transit center is to serve as a multi-modal transportation hub for the downtown area, accommodating buses, taxis, bicycles (including bicycle storage) and parking.

**City Office Buildings:** Office buildings are located along Howes Street, Mason Street, and College Avenue. These buildings provide space for City offices and ground floor retail uses.

**Mixed-Use Commercial/Office Buildings:** The plan includes sites that can accommodate mixed use buildings incorporating ground floor retail uses with offices, and possibly housing, located on upper floors.

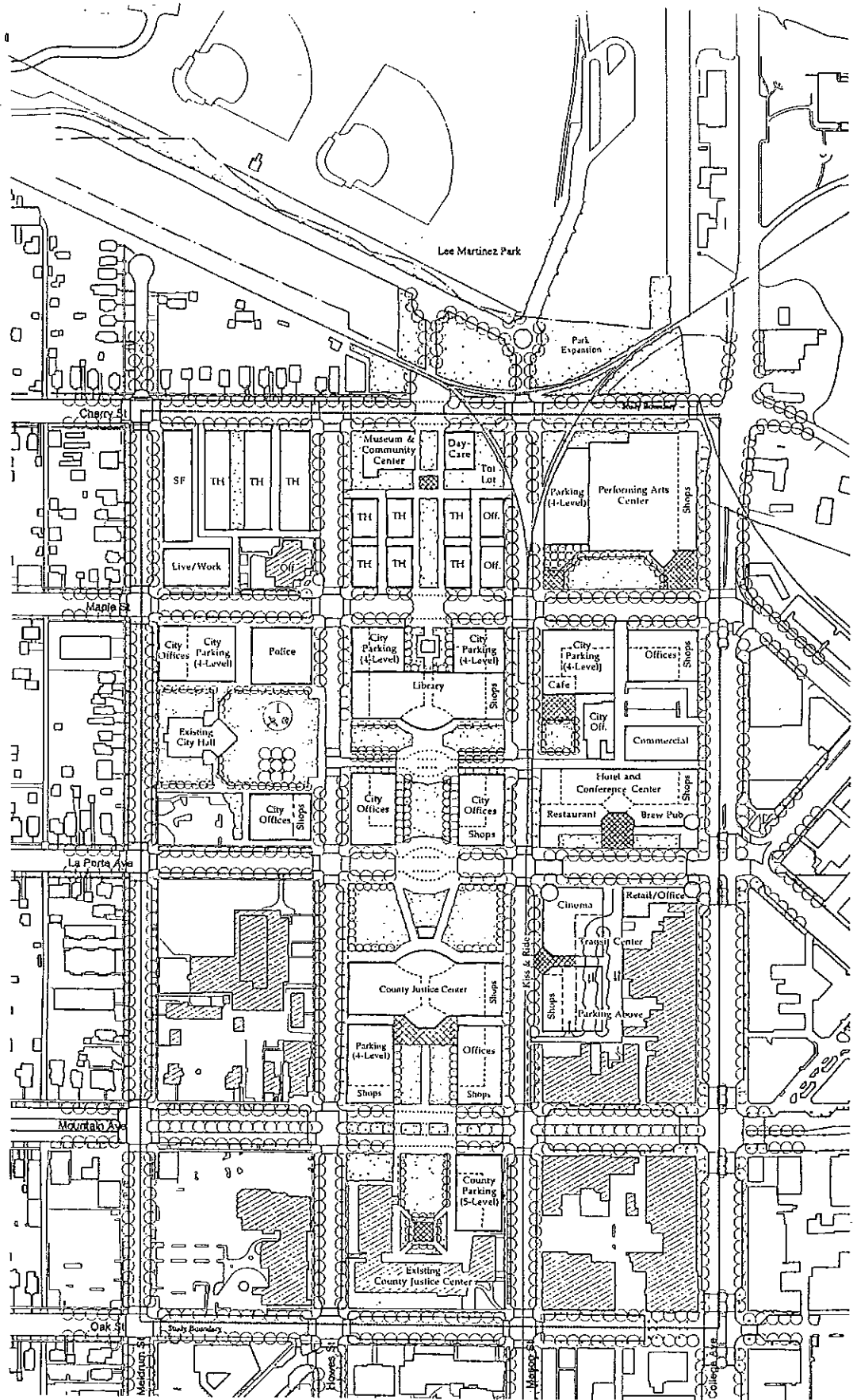
**Residential:** Single family, townhouses, and live/work units are proposed primarily in the northwest corner of the district, and encouraged in all parts of the district. Live/work units represent an opportunity for a private residence above its own ground floor shop or office; this is attractive for professionals, artists, and other small proprietors. Residential units will create attractive street and walking environments with sidewalks, tree-lined planter strips, front yards, and porches. Primary entries will be visible and accessible from the street. Garages will be located to the rear, with either an alley or driveway on the side. Housing will act as a buffer to the existing neighborhoods, and will increase security on evenings and weekends.

**Day Care:** A day care facility is proposed for Block 33. It can serve the needs of local residents as well as the large numbers of workers in the downtown.

**Historic Structures:** Six locally-designated historic landmark structures and one historic gravesite are located in the district. (1) The historic Freight Depot building on Mason Street was purchased by the City of Fort Collins' Stormwater Utility for use as an office. The renovation program began with designation of the depot as a local landmark building, along with the adjacent dog gravesite. (2) The historic Trolley Care Building at 330 North Howes is envisioned as a possible museum site or community center. (3) The recently-designated original section of the Saint Josephs Catholic School. Also included in the district are (4) the Avery House, (5) the Carriage House and (6) the Woolworth Building in the historic Welch Block. Other historically significant structures in the district will be assessed during implementation of the plan.

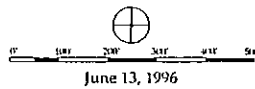
## **Civic Center Illustrative Concept Plan**

The Illustrative Concept Plan (map 5) introduces a diverse mix of uses to the downtown: a county justice center, performing arts center, a library, hotel and conference center, cinema, and office, retail and residential uses. The concept plan is not intended to illustrate proposed building footprints, but to illustrate proposed uses and relationships, as well as proposed civic spaces and linkages.



# Illustrative Concept Plan

City of Fort Collins  
Colorado



Calthorpe Associates  
Balloffet & Associates

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## 3. Planning and Design Guidelines

### General Guidelines

These general guidelines pertain to all building types within the Civic Center area. Guidelines pertaining to specific building types are described on the following pages.

- Avoid blank walls along streets, plazas, and parks. Building facades facing these public spaces should be composed of high quality materials and finishes, and should generally contain windows and entries.
- Use architectural elements to establish human scale and massing for buildings when viewed from the street. This includes providing: a cornice or "top"; a "base," and windows located and proportioned to express the structural bay dimensions of the building.
- Emphasize vertical proportions in the design of building openings, windows, and panels. Vertically proportioned features may vary in height and may consist of multiple stories if material finishes and recesses are used to create these more traditional proportions.
- Encourage the use of Colorado sandstone in all buildings, especially civic buildings, to establish a visual continuity and a local "sense of place."
- Reinforce the Civic Center's central axis by establishing a series of parks and plazas linked along this spine via clear pedestrian and visual connections.
- Establish a continuity and visual connection between new and existing buildings within and adjacent to the Civic Center District.

### County Justice Center

The County Justice Center to be located on block 31 is the southern anchor of the Civic Center's central axis.

- Locate a primary building entrance oriented to the north towards La Porte Street and the Civic Center's central axis. Locate the secondary building entrance to the south towards Mountain Avenue, also on the central axis. The building entrances shall be connected to allow pedestrians to see and walk through the building, thereby creating a continuous series of parks and plazas along the central axis.
- Locate retail uses along Mason Street to provide pedestrian activity on the street.
- Provide a substantial building mass along the southern and northern facades to provide spatial definition to the Civic Center's central axis.
- Organize the building massing and architectural elements so that higher building elements are contained in the center of the block to create a visual focus along the central axis.



## Library

The public library is proposed to be located on block 32, to serve as the northern focus of the Civic Center's central axis. The library also provides the northern edge to the east-west cross axis.

- Locate the primary building entrance oriented to the south towards LaPorte Street, along the Civic Center's central axis and cross axis. Provide a secondary entrance off Maple Street, also centered on the central axis. The building entrances shall be connected to allow pedestrians to see and walk through the building, thereby creating a continuous series of parks and plazas along the central axis.
- Locate retail uses along Mason Street and Howes Street to provide pedestrian activity on these streets.
- Provide a continuous three-story building wall along the southern and northern facades to provide spatial definition to the central axis.
- Organize the building massing and architectural elements so that higher building elements are contained in the center of the block to create a visual focus along the central axis.

## Performing Arts Center

Proposed for a location on Block 23 along College Avenue and Maple Streets, the performing arts center will provide a 2,200 seat, multi-purpose civic theater for the downtown.

- Orient the building entrance, ticketing, and lobby spaces to the corner of College Avenue and Maple Street.
- Provide a public plaza at this intersection to create a gathering space for special cultural events.
- Locate the proscenium's height and windowless facade away from the plaza and preferably at the northeastern corner of the site.
- Encourage the architectural expression through the building's massing and architectural composition.
- Provide a park along the western side of the performing arts center.
- Provide screen loading and trash enclosures to the railroad side of the building.

## Hotel and Conference Center

The hotel and conference center provides an opportunity to link activities along the south of College Avenue to the Civic Center's central axis and downtown via LaPorte Avenue. It is an opportunity for visitors to stay in a central location downtown.

- Set back the building from LaPorte Avenue approximately 55 feet to create a park and pedestrian plaza and a vista between College Avenue and the County Justice Center.
- Orient the hotel entrance and drop-off along LaPorte Avenue.
- Provide entrances and outdoor dining terraces for the restaurants along LaPorte Avenue and at the corners of Mason Street and College Avenue. Provide awnings, signage, special paving and other architectural design features to enhance visual interest of the street.

- Organize the building massing to create a building wall facing LaPorte Avenue to provide spatial definition to the street. Maintain a five story height along LaPorte Avenue.
- Provide varied roof forms to create architectural interest. Provide balconies and loggias facing the street to break up the massing of the building.

## Cinema

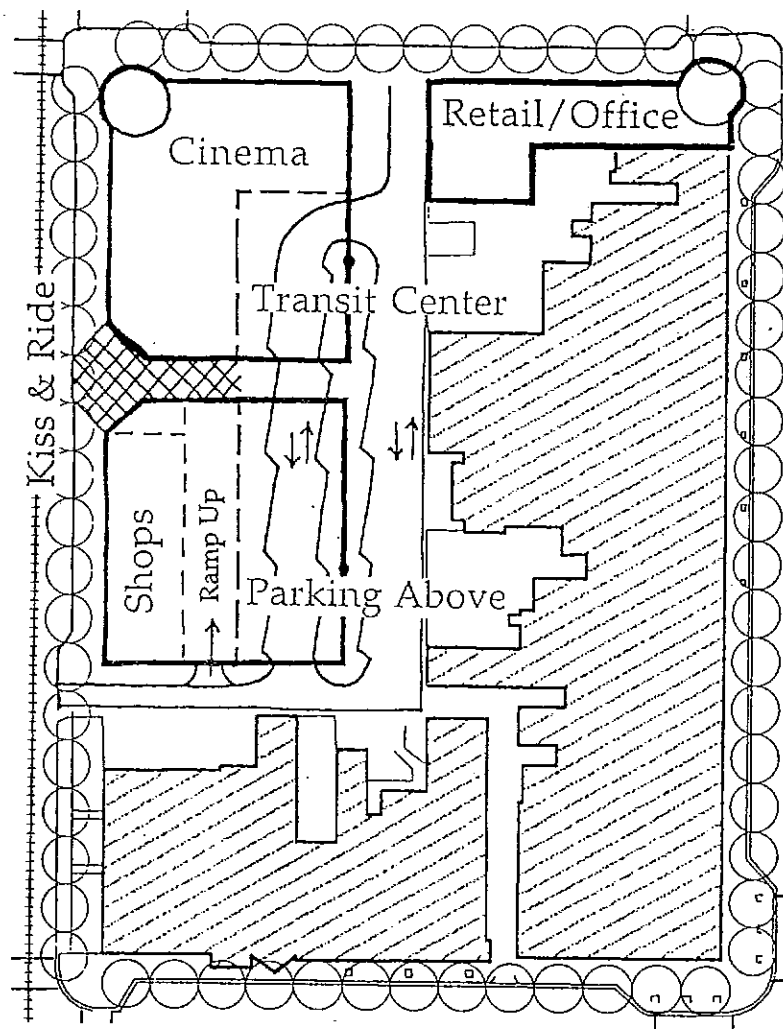
The cinema provides an opportunity for active evening and weekend use to draw people from College Avenue to the Civic Center's central axis and downtown via LaPorte Avenue. It is proposed to be located on block 21, incorporated within a mixed-use building that also houses the transit center.

- Provide a high entry tower at the corner of the building at the intersection of Mason Street and LaPorte Avenue. Locate the cinema signage and marquee on the tower, facing the intersection of Mason Street and LaPorte Avenue. Provide traditional marquee lighting.
- Provide a pedestrian arcade fronting Mason Street and LaPorte Avenue to support pedestrian activity. Use display windows at the entrance and along the pedestrian arcades to visually activate the street.
- Reduce the visual scale and massiveness of the building by the use of architectural elements such as corner roof structures, cornice lines, niches, and other human-scaled features.
- Locate loading docks and trash enclosures to the rear of the building and screen from public view.
- Coordinate the site planning and building design of the cinema with the transit center. See transit center site plan.

## Transit Center

The transit center provides a center for bus, timed bus transfer, kiss-and-ride, taxi and transit ticketing service, and future passenger rail service facilities within easy walking distance of the entire downtown.

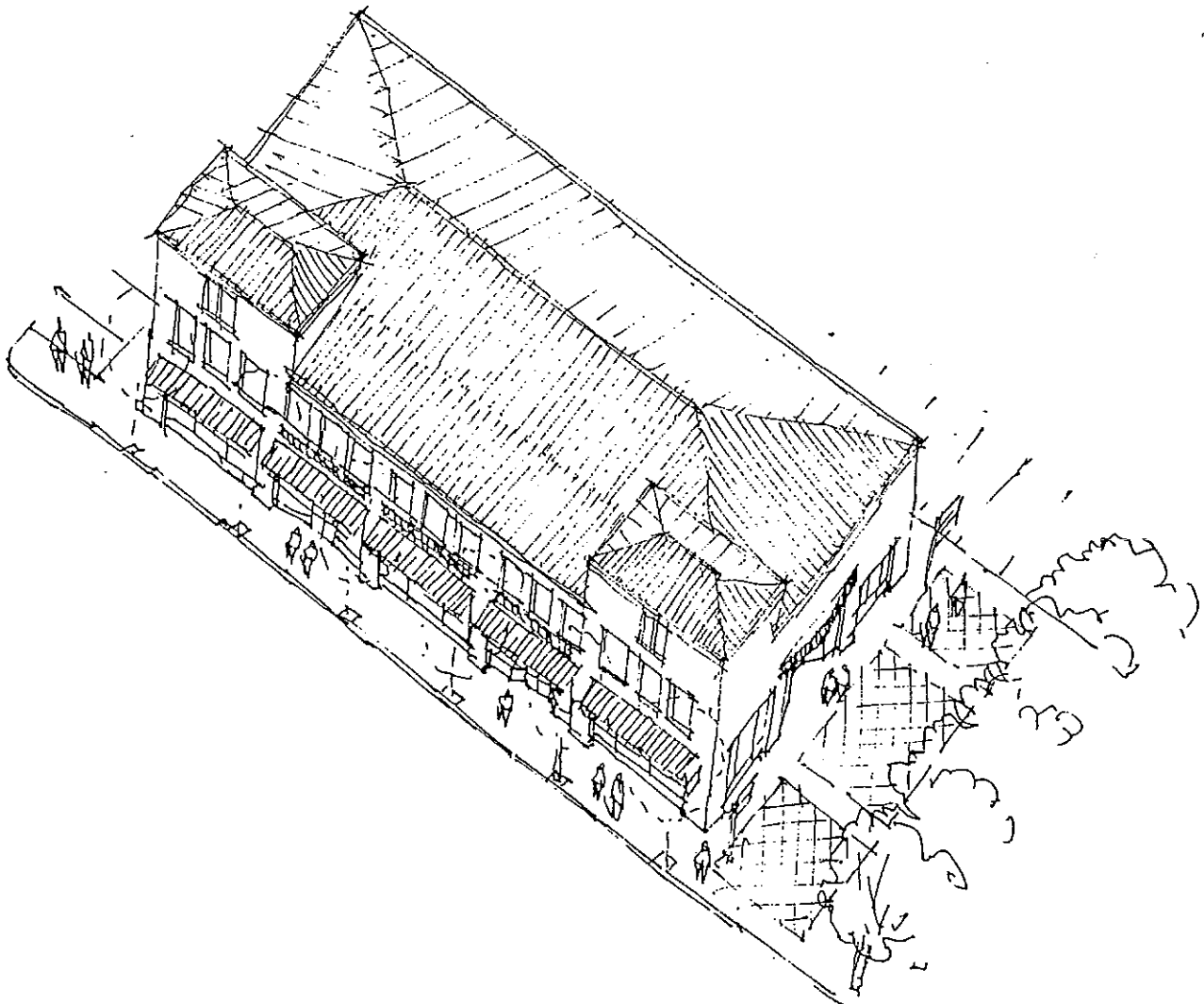
- Provide 12 bus loading bays with primary access and passenger loading off the alleys located in the middle of Block 21.
- Provide a mid-block pedestrian plaza and transit center entrance along Mason Street with an open air access to bus loading and unloading.
- Provide a parking structure fronting Mason Street, which provides parking for retail and other uses on this block. Parking structure access shall be provided off the alley.
- Provide a passenger drop-off zone on Mason Street with pedestrian access and visibility to the transit center.
- Provide a taxi stand passenger drop-off zone on LaPorte Avenue with pedestrian access and visibility to the transit center.
- Coordinate the site planning and building design of the cinema with the transit center. The transit center is located on the ground floor, below second floor cinema space.



## Mixed-Use Buildings

The commercial mixed-use buildings are located along Howes Street, Mason Street, and College Avenue. This building type applies to both municipal and privately-developed office buildings.

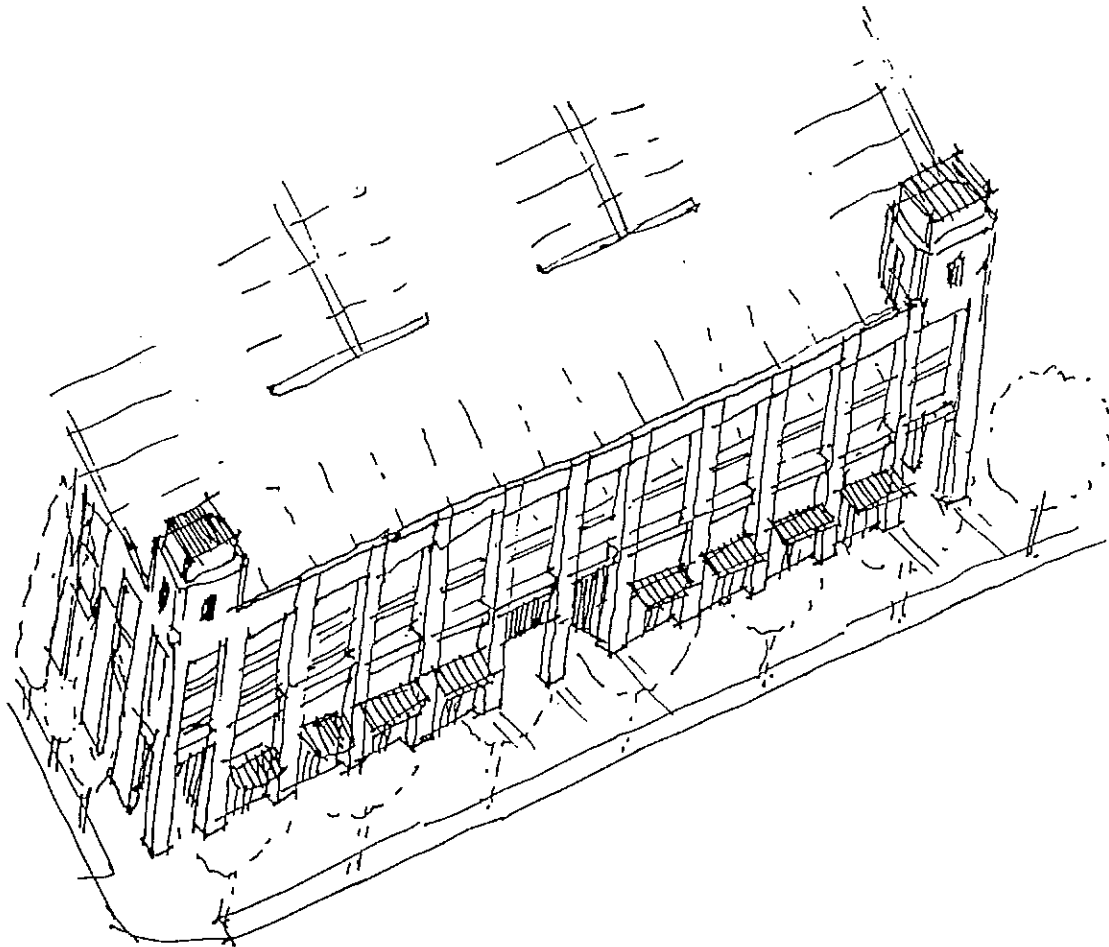
- Provide ground floor retail uses and upper floor commercial/office uses to create a "vertical" mixed use building.
- Front retail and office entrances and windows onto the street, pedestrian walkways, and plazas. Locate display windows on all sides of the building, except alleys. Blank walls are to be avoided.
- Use architectural elements to establish human scale and massing to the building when viewed from the street. This includes providing a cornice or "top", a "base," and windows located and proportioned to express the structural bay dimensions of the building.
- Integrate tenant signage with architectural design of the building.
- Decorative paving is encouraged at building entrances and pedestrian walkways.
- Loading facilities and trash enclosures shall be away from the street and screened from view. Screen mechanical equipment from view.



## Parking Structure

Above-grade structured parking is in various locations within the Civic Center District.

- Provide ground floor retail uses, awnings and signage to encourage pedestrian activity on the street.
- As with all building types, emphasize vertical proportions in the design of architectural elements by expressing posts and recessing horizontal panels; use openings, sill details and other architectural features to give the structure similarity to the Civic Center's office buildings.
- Provide corner stair towers as main entrances to the parking structure.
- Provide architectural features such as roofs and stepped parapets at the corner stair towers.
- Provide parking on top level deck.
- Locate auto entrances to minimize pedestrian/traffic conflicts.



## Live-Work

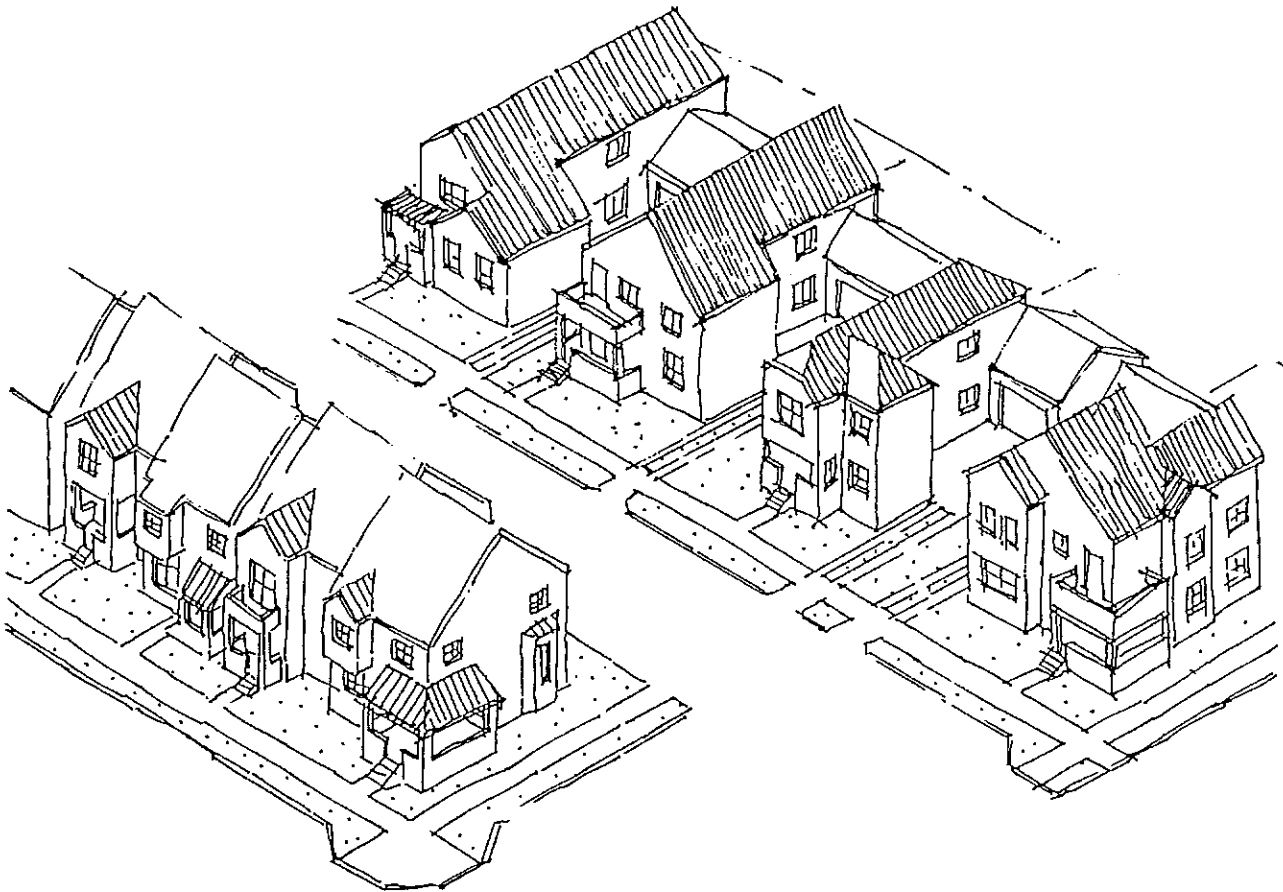
Live-work units, in which a private residence sits above a ground-floor work space, are located along Meldrum Street and Maple Avenue. This use provides a compatible transition from the more intensive uses in the downtown to the residential neighborhoods to the west.

- Design live-work units with "storefronts" along the street. Face ground floor windows, displays, and entrances onto the street.
- Provide living units above the storefront workplaces. Balconies facing the street are encouraged, as well as large divided windows in upstairs living units. Windows are to be provided on sides of the building.
- Screen trash/service area from public view.

## Single-Family & Townhouses

New single-family homes and townhouses are proposed in the northwest corner of the site to add affordable housing to the area and extend the existing residential neighborhood toward downtown. New single-family residences are proposed along the eastern side of Meldrum Street between Cherry and Maple streets. New townhouses are proposed along both sides of Howes Street between Cherry and Maple Streets. These units help establish Civic Center as a safe, "round-the-clock" place.

- Permit somewhat smaller lot sizes to enhance affordability and diversity in the area.
- Create an attractive street and walking environment with sidewalks, tree-lined planter strips, front yards, and appropriate building features. Primary entries shall be visible and accessible from the street. Front porches, window bays, and balconies shall face the street. Locate garages to the rear of the lot with either alley or side drive access.
- Hip, gable & gambrel roofs are required. Flat roofs are not permitted.
- Permit "granny flat" units above garages at rear of the lots to enhance rental opportunities while maintaining the area's single-family character. "Granny flats" can also be used as at-home offices, or as housing for older children or elderly parents.
- Permit duplex units in the single-family area so that smaller individual units have the appearance of the larger units in the neighborhood.



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## 4. The Implementation Strategy

- Zoning
- Land acquisition
- Phases
- Funding methods
- Major civic uses

The Downtown Civic Center Plan outlines a framework and principles for development of the District over the next ten to twenty years. That vision will be realized as various public agencies, developers, and corporate and community leaders use the plan to guide their individual decisions. The implementation strategy outlines an approach to begin that realization. It describes the actions that are needed to bring the plan to life, and the choices that must be made by City and County officials.

### Zoning

There are four separate zoning districts in the plan area: C-Commercial, BG-General Business, IG-General Industrial, and RH-High Density Residential (see map 6). There are discrepancies between uses permitted and uses proposed. For example, residential is not permitted in the IG zone. Some allowed uses are probably incompatible, such as heliports allowed in the BG zone. In addition, area, setback, and density regulations in these districts may interfere with development of the plan.

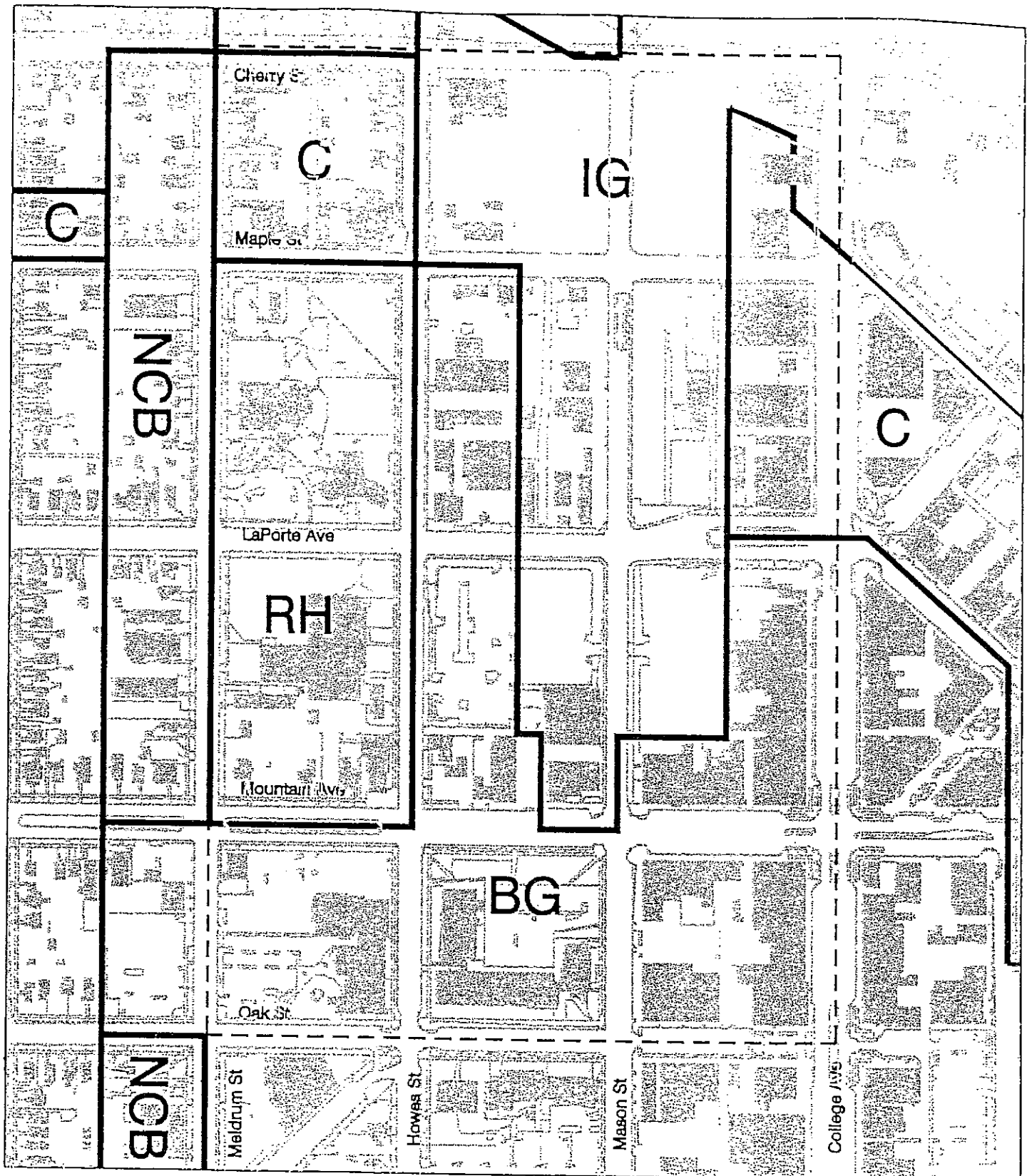
**Recommendation:** Adoption of this plan should be followed up with policy work to eliminate the existing conventional zoning designations and establish a mixed-use zoning. Any such regulatory ordinances should include design guidelines that will promote the compatibility of new development with existing historic structures within or near the district.

### Land Acquisition

Parcels on Blocks 32, 33, and 23 are for sale. The 1996 budget includes funds to purchase parcels on Blocks 32 and 33. The library and other uses on Block 32 will require acquisition of more parcels on Block 32. The inducement of residential development on Block 33 may only be achieved via City participation, such as property ownership. Other property in the plan area is already under public ownership. Blocks 30 (existing courthouse), 31, and 42 (City Hall and Police building) are owned by the City or the County. In addition, the City owns surface parking lots at LaPorte and Mason, and between Oak and Mountain on Mason. City-owned buildings also include 281 North College, the Freight Depot building, and the Trolley Car building.

**Recommendation:** Continue with the acquisition strategies that are underway for Blocks 32 and 33. Acquire other properties on Blocks 32 and 33 as they become available. Plan to incorporate compatible existing uses in the plan during build-out.





*Map 6: Existing Zoning*

- IG General Industrial District
- C Commercial District
- RH Residential High Density District
- BG General Business District
- NCB Neighborhood Conservation Buffer District

## Phases

The plan will be broken up into logical, stand-alone phases. Build-out of the phases may begin as early as 1997 and may take ten to twenty years to complete. The order in which the various phases build out may not be chronological and will be dominated by market forces, citizen approved capital improvement plans, and private/public funded projects.

**Recommendation:** Identify stand-alone phases that are integrated with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. City staff and City Council are currently developing an ongoing CIP to address major government facilities and infrastructure projects. CIP elements from the Civic Center Master Plan will be sorted, prioritized, and funding sources analyzed during this process.

## Funding

There are various methods available to finance the public facilities and improvements envisioned in this plan. Generally they include the following:

*General Obligation Bonds* - Bonds maturing beyond the current year that are backed by the full faith and credit of the municipality and secured in part by the pledge of the issuer's general taxing power. Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution requires voter approval and a complex checklist of things to be done regarding the election. Interest rates are ordinarily lower on general obligation bonds than other types of bonds.

*Revenue Bonds* - Revenue bonds are payable from a special bond fund containing the net income or revenue of the project or facility financed with bond proceeds. They may include funds from a specific or limited source other than general property taxes, such as sales or use tax. Revenue bonds require voter approval.

*Special Assessment Bonds* - Special assessment bonds are obligations issued by the municipality for the purpose of constructing or installing improvements in connection with a special improvement district. Special assessment bonds require voter approval.

*Lease-Purchase Agreements* - In a lease-purchase transaction, the municipality leases designated property from another entity. Under the lease, the municipality makes periodic rent payments for the use of the leased property. Generally the municipality obtains clear title to the leased property at the time the aggregate rent set forth in the lease has been paid in full. Case law has determined that certain lease-purchase arrangements did not create a multiple-fiscal year debt because they did not obligate elected officials to appropriate funds in future years. Therefore these arrangements were not subject to voter approval.

*General Improvement Districts* - With City Council acting as the governing body, the district has the authority to issue general obligation bonds and revenue bonds.

*Downtown Development Authority* - A separate corporate body with the power to acquire property, construct, lease, and sell property and levy a general property tax.

*Business Improvement District* - The district has the power to enter into contracts, acquire and operate improvements, collect property taxes, and issue general obligation bonds.

*Urban Renewal Authority (URA)* - A URA may be established to eliminate slum or blighted areas within a municipality and clear areas for development or redevelopment. The URA has the power to acquire property by purchase or condemnation.

*Public Building Authority* - A not-for-profit public building authority established by City Council. A building authority can issue certificates of participation to obtain financing. Lease payments, by the City to the authority, would be subject to annual appropriation only. Staff is currently researching the recent use of public building authorities by other front range municipalities.

*Private Sector* - Several forms of public-private partnerships exist including: private funding, joint funding, leasing, franchises, sale of assets, and contracting out.

*Pay-As-You-Go Financing* - Paying for improvements from existing funds, saved up over time, and not extending a burden on future taxpayers.

*Targeted Incentives* - Incentives such as tax credits or tax increment financing are possible.

**Recommendation:** City staff and City Council are currently developing an ongoing Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which addresses major government facilities and infrastructure projects. CIP elements from the Civic Center Master Plan will be sorted, prioritized, and funding sources analyzed during this process. Also, the City and County will soon begin renegotiating their Inter-Governmental Agreement because of the plans to develop the new Justice Center. City staff will be looking at opportunities for participation in the Justice Center project. City staff can also begin analyzing other opportunities for development and analyzing funding strategies for the Civic Center District.

## **Establish Major Civic Uses**

Civic uses anchor the public spaces and the plan's framework. A commitment to the location of major civic uses within the Civic Center District is necessary and essential to the success of the plan itself.

**Recommendation:** Demonstrate a commitment to the Civic Center Master Plan by designating the Civic Center District as the location for specific major civic uses during the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) process.