

WEST CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN

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WEST CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The West Central Neighborhoods -- Past, Present, and Future

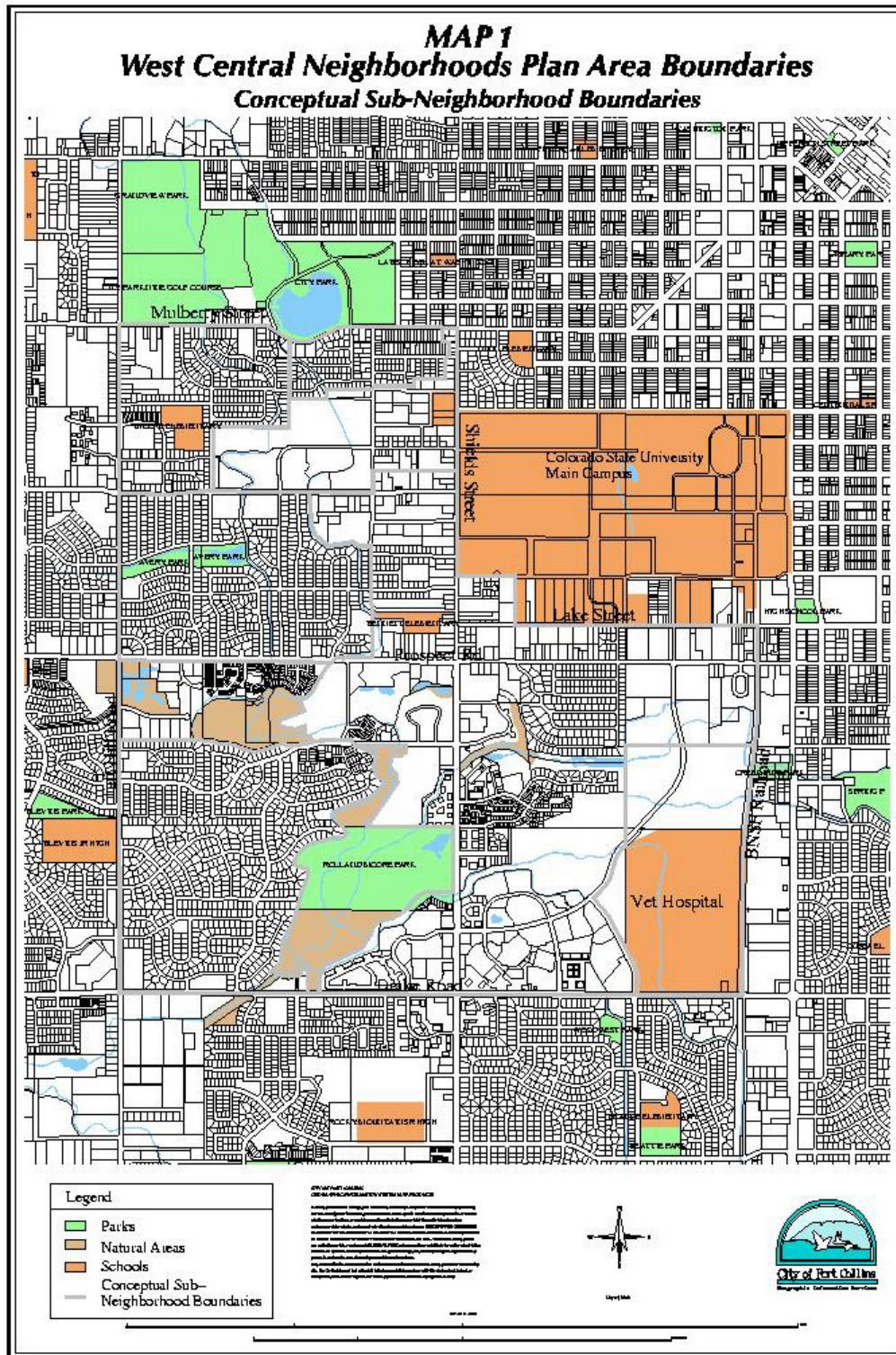
The West Central Neighborhoods are a composite of several individual neighborhoods that have been grouped together for broader planning purposes. The general boundaries of the “L” shaped planning area are as follows: Mulberry Street on the north, Shields Street and the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad Tracks on the east, Drake Road on the south, and Taft Hill Road on the west. If “neighborhood” is defined as an area having some distinguishing set of common characteristics, there are perhaps as many as seven neighborhoods included within the West Central Neighborhoods Plan area (see Map 1). While these boundaries are somewhat artificial in terms of the way the planning area relates to surrounding areas and the City as a whole, such limits are a practical necessity in the planning process. The bounding arterial streets and railroad have existed in substantially the present form and location throughout the area’s development, as has the Colorado State University’s Main Campus. They have significantly influenced the planning area’s land use and character in the past and are expected to continue to do so in the future.

The area is a mix of older and newer neighborhoods that have evolved over 125 years of largely opportunistic development. Most of the land covered by the West Central Neighborhoods Plan, until very recent decades, was devoted to agriculture. Now, due to rapid growth of the community in the past 40 years, the planning area has reached differing stages of urban development and is considered part of the core area of the City, as newer developments surround it on the south and west.

Because of its mix of age, origins, and uses, the planning area does not reflect any composite character. Instead, individual parts of the area have characteristics that may be defined as separate neighborhoods. Recognizing and developing a neighborhood character should therefore focus on these individual areas with common characteristics. Even so, there may be opportunities to create some semblance of character that applies to the entire area, particularly with respect to the area's unique relationship to Colorado State University. Regardless of other planning efforts, the University is, and will remain, a predominant influence on the area's character. The Main Campus of Colorado State University adjoins and anchors the northeast corner of the planning area. Its influence is felt in several different ways, including:

- The need for housing and services proximate to the campus;
- The negative impact as a physical barrier to efficient transportation and utility patterns;
- The release of large acreages of the former farm campus for private development;
- The generation of much of the area's population and postwar growth of this population --

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- students, faculty, staff, employees of related agencies, and families of these groups;
- The wide cultural diversity the University provides; and
 - The University's role as the principal economic contributor to the area.

Given the generally fortuitous nature of the planning area's development and its existing ambiguous character, a major challenge in the planning process is to envision a coherent future character. Such a vision initially suggests that the following be determined: what is good about the area's characteristics that should be preserved; what can be added that will improve the current state of the area and allow it to function better; and what facilities within the area have outlived their usefulness under present or projected conditions and should be revamped for future use. From these considerations it should be possible to construct an overall vision of the area's future character and to address the more specific character that each neighborhood could achieve.

A significant fact relating to the present and future character of the West Central Neighborhoods is its population density. The area already has the highest population density of any area in Fort Collins. The resident population is approximately 22,000. With a land area of approximately 3.3 square miles, the average density of these neighborhoods and the contiguous residential portions of CSU's campus is about 6,700 residents per square mile. This means that the area presently houses about 20% of the City's entire population (108,981 in 1998) on about 8% of its total land area. Even higher densities can be expected in the future as Colorado State University enrollments grow and City policies take effect that encourage population concentrations in core areas. Besides housing, it will also be necessary to provide a higher level of support services for this growth. Increasingly intense usage can be expected from projected growth and it is this growing intensity that perhaps more than anything else may characterize the area's neighborhoods in the future. Such intensity can be either exciting and rewarding or degrading and devastating, depending on how it is managed. Therefore, the West Central Neighborhoods Plan must assure that the standards and guidelines for such intensity will be explicitly drawn and rigorously implemented. Without such assurances, the Plan will be virtually worthless in establishing or preserving neighborhood character. But wisely conceived and carried out, this Plan can make the West Central Neighborhoods a paradigm for the positive character the City hopes to achieve in all of its neighborhoods.

Planning Process

The development of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan had its beginnings in March of 1995 when a group of citizens, composed of business owners, property owners, residents, developers, Planning and Zoning Board members, and the general public, formed a Citizens Advisory Committee to work with City staff on the "Prospect/Shields Neighborhood Plan." After some

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initial team building and other organizational type actions, the Committee started work on the plan by reviewing background information and Census data on the planning area. By June, the name of the plan had changed to the West Central Neighborhoods Plan and the committee had divided into three subcommittees to review topics and issues within three broad categories known as Character of the Neighborhoods, Housing, and Transportation.

The three subcommittees worked independently and submitted reports to the entire Advisory Committee for review, comment, and modification. These reports form the backbone of the Plan. The West Central Neighborhoods Plan was thus literally developed by the residents and constituents of the neighborhoods. Their reports are based on research, discussion, and analysis conducted primarily by committee members. City staff played a resource and advisory role in development of this Plan.

Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C are essentially the final reports of the subcommittees on the Character of the Neighborhoods, Housing, and Transportation respectively. These appendices set out in some detail the problems, analysis, optional solutions, and recommended actions on the issues as investigated by the members of the subcommittees. The goals, plans, policies, and implementation actions, which are the heart and soul of the Plan, are based on the subcommittee reports but have been reviewed, refined, and, in some cases, modified through the planning process. Chapters 2, 3, and 4, present the goals, policies, plans, and implementation actions of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. The statements in these chapters find their roots in the work of the three subcommittees but, their final form, in some cases, has been subjected to the compromises and trade-offs typical of a planning process and, therefore, the statements may not match exactly the statements made initially by the subcommittees.

A draft version of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan (dated October 1, 1998) was subjected to reviews by City Departments, reviews by City Boards and Commissions, public review at an Open House (October 21, 1998), and comment at a public Forum (October 28, 1998). A second draft of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan (dated February 8, 1999) was also subjected to reviews by City Departments, reviews by City Boards and Commissions, and public review at an Open House (February 18, 1999).

On March 4, 1999, the Planning and Zoning Board conducted a public hearing to review, solicit comments, and formulate a recommendation to the City Council on the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. The Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Plan and forwarded recommendations for amendments regarding the addition of a separate Historic Preservation section, delaying land use decisions on the “Young’s Pasture” property, and deleting all references to the proposed development of a West Central Neighborhoods Caucus.

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On March 16, 1999 the City Council adopted the West Central Neighborhoods Plan as an element of **City Plan**, the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Relationship to City Plan

In March of 1997, the City Council took the final steps to complete a two-year long process to update the City's Comprehensive Plan, known as **City Plan**, with the passage of Resolution 97-25 which adopted the *Community Visions and Goals* document, the *City Structure Plan* map, and the *City Plan Principles and Policies* document. **City Plan** essentially presents a blueprint for consistent decision making about the future of Fort Collins. **City Plan** demonstrates a comprehensive view of what the City can be - and how to make it happen - over the next 20 years, to the year 2015.

While **City Plan** deals with city-wide policies, neighborhood plans are needed to help implement **City Plan** by applying the general, city-wide policies to a specific neighborhood (or subarea). Several **City Plan** principles and policies place in context the connection between the overall Comprehensive Plan and the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.

PRINCIPLE EXN-1, states the following:

Most existing residential developments will remain largely unaffected by these **City Plan** Principles and Policies.

And, Policy EXN-1.1, states:

Changes to Existing Residential Developments. No significant changes to the character of existing residential developments will be initiated by **City Plan**. Changes, if any, will be carefully planned and will result from initiative by residents or from a specific subarea (neighborhood) plan prepared in collaboration with residents.

PRINCIPLE LU-4, states:

More specific subarea planning efforts will follow the adoption of these *City Plan Principles and Policies* which tailor **City Plan's** city-wide perspective to individual neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and edges.

Policy LU-4.1 Planning within the Context of **City Plan**, states:

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City Plan establishes city-wide policies. Subarea plans are needed to help implement **City Plan** by applying its general, city-wide policies to a specific subarea. Through the process of subarea planning, **City Plan** may be amended over time to respect differing subarea needs and characteristics, incorporating new ideas that are consistent with **City Plan's** core values, vision and goals. Consistency between subarea plans and **City Plan** will be achieved through the process of adopting subarea plans. In adopting a subarea plan, the City Council determines the actions that the City will take that stem from the subarea plan. **City Plan** can be amended by the City Council to reflect a change in policy recommended by the subarea plan.

And, finally, Policy LU-4.5 lists the West Central Neighborhoods Plan as a priority for future subarea planning.

Thus, the West Central Neighborhoods Plan in many ways constitutes a refinement, or proposals for the refinement, of **City Plan** for the planning area's boundaries. Upon adoption of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan, various elements of **City Plan** (e.g., the *City Structure Plan* map) may need to be updated based on the policy positions presented in this plan, while other elements (e.g., the *Master Street Plan* map) may need additional study before they are changed. Portions of **City Code** (e.g., the **Land Use Code** and Zoning Map) may also need revision.

City Plan Principles and Policies' Policy LU-4.5 also lists the need for a subarea plan for the Campus West Community Commercial District which is within the boundaries of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. While the West Central Neighborhoods Plan recognizes and supports this opportunity, detailed planning for the Campus West Community Commercial District will be accomplished through a separate process and will not be included in the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. For further discussion concerning existing neighborhoods and subarea planning, readers are referred to the various **City Plan** documents.

Chapter 2 - Visioning and Goals

The West Central Neighborhoods Plan is a guide to aid decision making as choices present themselves, in order to arrive at a desired future state for the neighborhoods. Establishing a core overall **vision** and broad **goals** is essential to guide decisions as the neighborhood ages, grows, and changes through development and redevelopment activities. The Plan thus represents a blueprint for the preferred future of the West Central Neighborhoods.

Visioning

The Citizen's Advisory Committee established the following vision statement for the West Central Neighborhoods Plan:

Maintain and enhance the diverse character of the West Central Neighborhoods, comprised of long- and short-term residents such as families, senior citizens, and students, as well as small businesses, schools, and public/private institutions and facilities. Strengthen the collaboration between the City, Colorado State University, and the West Central Neighborhoods. Continue to provide housing opportunities, infrastructure, and lifestyle options to meet the needs of this diverse group of neighborhoods. Facilitate and improve existing transportation systems to allow all residents to have good, safe, convenient, and multi-modal transportation options. Adapt to meet the needs of the dynamic and ever-changing West Central Neighborhoods and provide balanced opportunities in development, redevelopment, and maintenance.

Goals

Presented below are the goals of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. The goals are, by design, general in nature in order to allow flexibility in ways to achieve them. The goals are presented in the following three major topical areas:

1. Character of the Neighborhoods
2. Housing
3. Transportation

There are several sub-sections within each major topical area. Chapter 3 presents a series of policies and plans, and Chapter 4 presents implementation actions designed to achieve these goals. A discussion of the problems, opportunities, and analyses that led to these goals and the plans, policies, and specific implementation actions recommended to achieve them, is included in

Appendices A through C, which represent the major work of the three subcommittees of neighborhood residents who developed this Plan.

CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS GOALS

Land Use

- LU 1 Project a central vision for future land use of the planning area to strengthen and preserve existing characteristics of the West Central Neighborhoods to guide and manage their future growth and development and redevelopment.
- LU 2 Utilize the planning area's land more efficiently to meet and accommodate the growing demands of Colorado State University and the City as a whole without destroying the positive characteristics of existing neighborhoods.
- LU 3 Integrate land use planning within the West Central Neighborhoods Plan with implementation tools (e.g., the City's **Land Use Code**) and further define and interpret the West Central Neighborhoods land uses in the spirit of **City Plan**. Anticipate present and future requirements of the area's neighborhoods and provide for these needs with greater precision in the **Land Use Code**.
- LU 4 Provide land use designations in the West Central Neighborhoods Plan which will recommend amendments to **City Plan**'s *Structure Plan* map and provide guidance for selective rezonings of the West Central Neighborhoods.
- LU 5 Provide a basis for design standards and guidelines that reflect categories of land use specified in the West Central Neighborhoods Plan and that define the desired character of individual neighborhoods and the area as a whole, including historic characteristics. A set of specific design standards for the West Central Neighborhoods may be needed if the review criteria contained in the City's **Land Use Code** are found to be inadequate.
- LU 6 Strive to reinforce the existing development characteristics of the West Central Neighborhoods that are positive and encourage improvement of those that are negative.
- LU 7 Insure that high density infill development is sensitive to existing neighborhoods, preserves appropriate open space, and creates or maintains a desirable character for the neighborhoods.

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- LU 8 Make the development review process more predictable in terms of land use outcomes to reduce uncertainties for property owners, residents, and developers by designating the appropriate land uses, housing densities, etc., at specific locations throughout the neighborhoods.
- LU 9 Define and enforce the responsibility of property owners, property managers, and tenants toward rental properties as a means of stabilizing and enhancing the character of the neighborhoods.
- LU 10 Provide an array of basic neighborhood commercial services, such as grocery stores, banking facilities, primary health services, mailing and shipping facilities, and personal services to the neighborhoods that are available within convenient walking or bicycling distances.
- LU 11 Identify opportunities for mixed-use redevelopment, revitalization, and economic growth in existing underutilized areas to encourage more efficient use of land.
- LU 12 Sustain or increase the inventory of affordable rental housing near campus without destroying the positive residential characteristics of the neighborhoods.
- LU 13 Clarify the differences between “density” (housing units per acre) and “intensity” and the related impacts of each.
- LU 14 Develop a measurement of intensity of use in residential zoning.
- LU 15 Evaluate options for amending the existing definition of “family” and its impacts in dealing with intensity of use.
- LU 16 New development and redevelopment should be designed in such a way that minimizes impacts on the area’s natural areas, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, as well as impacts on historic structures and landscapes.
- LU 17 In the context of the city’s overall Clean Air Program, the City should determine if the Spring Creek Basin has unique micro-climate conditions that increase pollutant concentrations sufficiently to require unique air quality management measures that differ from those implemented in the rest of the community.
- LU 18 Historic properties and buildings should be preserved and protected, to the extent reasonable and practical, from development and redevelopment activities.

LU 19 Explore financial incentives for revitalization, including historic preservation incentives.

Public Services

- PB 1 Insure that the provision of police services is maintained at acceptable levels as the population base increases.
- PB 2 Insure that the provision of fire and emergency medical services is maintained at acceptable levels as the population base increases.
- PB 3 Encourage better bus service to commercial and service facilities.
- PB 4 Integrate and redevelop existing public service facilities to provide a more definable, serviceable, and attractive neighborhood character.
- PB 5 Insure that future development within Colorado State University Research Foundation's lands does not compromise the Spring Creek Basin's Storm Drainage Plan.
- PB 6 Review the adequacy of stormwater protection and provide additional stormwater protection where needed.
- PB 7 Reflect stormwater concerns in all future land use planning for the area.
- PB 8 Reevaluate the role of major irrigation canals from the standpoint of their use as storm drainage conduits and as carriers of flood water to abutting neighborhoods and streets.

Private Sector Services

- PV 1 Develop needed commercial and service facilities that are lacking in parts of the West Central Neighborhoods.
- PV 2 Provide convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access to all commercial and service facilities and developments and link pedestrian and bicycle access to existing sidewalks and trails.
- PV 3 Integrate and redevelop existing private service facilities to provide a more definable, serviceable, and attractive neighborhood character.

- PV 4 New development and redevelopment should be designed as “people-friendly” with “neighborhood-oriented” meeting places which encourage and support personal interaction with neighbors.
- PV 5 Neighborhood scale centers should be designed to serve the surrounding neighborhood and discourage community-wide use, so that the traffic on arterial streets is not impacted to a greater level.
- PV 6 Unnecessary deterioration of neighborhood streets by private sector service vehicles, such as trash hauling trucks, should be discouraged through such means as encouraging neighborhoods to voluntarily consolidate waste collection services with one provider, thereby limiting the number and frequency of service vehicles in the neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Appearance and Design

Visual Character

- VC 1 Identify which of the unique and pleasing visual and/or historic characteristics in the West Central Neighborhoods should be conserved and improved upon during development/redevelopment activities.
- VC 2 Review and provide neighborhood input on specific development projects for site design, landscaping, building design and off-site impacts (e.g., through the use of a Neighborhood Design Review Committee).
- VC 3 Encourage property owners to maintain, and commit to improving individual property appearance and landscaping.
- VC 4 Identify, foster, and maintain the significant historical, architectural, and geographical characteristics of each neighborhood.

Streetscape Design

- SD 1 Provide landscape screening/buffering between streets and residential neighborhoods and between adjacent land uses.
- SD 2 Provide additional bicycle/pedestrian connections between residential neighborhoods and destinations for shopping, work, recreation, and civic places. These links should have attractive landscaping and lighting to provide a visually appealing design.

- SD 3 Retrofit existing streets, where appropriate, to provide new planted medians, detached sidewalks with planted parkways, and specialized pedestrian crossings at key intersections including South Shields Street, South Taft Hill Road, West Prospect Street, and West Elizabeth Street.
- SD 4 Maintain and enhance the positive visual character of the streetscape environment.

Sense of Community

- SC 1 Provide common activities and facilities for those living in the West Central Neighborhoods to encourage a feeling of connection, sense of belonging, and means for interaction. Colorado State University, the Poudre School District, and the area's places of worship and cultural institutions can serve as a focal point providing facilities, cultural events, academic events, sporting events, etc. which can enhance community cohesion.
- SC 2 As feasible, design or redesign infrastructure (such as streets and sidewalks) to encourage more interaction among neighborhood residents, Colorado State University students, and area business personnel.
- SC 3 Seek solutions to problems associated with short-term tenancy, differing lifestyles, and overcrowded living conditions in areas within the West Central Neighborhoods.
- SC 4 Respect and accommodate cultural, social, and economic diversity in the West Central Neighborhoods. Identify opportunities for creating an awareness of and promoting acceptance for the diversity of the West Central Neighborhoods and its integral role in neighborhood-building.
- SC 5 Celebrate particular individuals or groups of people by embracing city-wide initiatives toward neighborhood-building and neighborhood cohesion and establish the expectations that all individuals and groups will adhere to acceptable neighborhood behavioral norms and foster respect for other individuals' lifestyles.
- SC 6 Encourage and accept residential and non-residential development that accommodates a wide variety of land uses and encourages population diversity, including age, disability, and other social and economic characteristics, insofar as such a mix of land uses and population diversity does not destabilize the physical or economic balance or structure of future neighborhoods.

Parks and Open Lands

- OL 1 Implement recommended specific improvements needed for existing parks, natural areas and open lands, including recreational trails.
- OL 2 Identify areas suitable for new neighborhood or pocket parks and sites where natural areas should be preserved or enhanced and acquire them.
- OL 3 Conserve the Spring Creek drainage in a way that takes maximum advantage of the natural amenities it offers and does not compromise its role in flood control.

HOUSING GOALS

- HO 1 Maintain and/or improve overall housing mix of the neighborhoods through maintenance, development, redevelopment, and historic preservation activities.
- HO 2 Preserve existing housing and the single-family character of the neighborhoods in designated areas by ensuring that new development is compatible with the positive values of surrounding buildings and the urban landscape. A development must be evaluated in the context of its compatibility with the entire neighborhood rather than just its compatibility with immediately adjacent parcels.
- HO 3 Housing in most neighborhoods should remain fine-grained in nature (i.e., small versus large structures, attention to architectural detail, etc.).
- HO 4 Create development opportunities for multi-family housing in appropriate locations, including but not limited to, vacant and/or deteriorated properties close to Colorado State University.
- HO 5 Encourage creative redevelopment of underutilized or deteriorated properties. Explore new commercial opportunities in redevelopment of areas such as the Campus West Shopping Area and new housing opportunities on underutilized single-family lots.
- HO 6 Encourage mixed-use housing as a component of redevelopment activities within the Campus West Shopping Area.
- HO 7 Develop specific Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Standards where necessary to insure new development and redevelopment activities are compatible with existing development, including historically significant resources. Housing changes should be

accomplished in a manner that results in positive influences on the overall quality, integrity, and character of the area.

- HO 8 Differentiate between permitted densities of housing units and the type of occupancy (“intensity”) that can be expected in the units so that a more accurate accounting of potential impacts can be made.
- HO 9 Maintain a wide range of housing opportunities for households of all economic levels in the West Central Neighborhoods and plan to accommodate innovative housing solutions.
- HO 10 Support home-ownership for households of all economic levels in the West Central Neighborhoods.
- HO 11 Promote in-home businesses as a way to encourage retention of home-ownership in the neighborhoods which will improve neighborhood safety and livability.
- HO 12 Enforce the in-home business code to protect the residential integrity of the neighborhoods by eliminating over-intensive uses.
- HO 13 Foster and strengthen the relationship between Colorado State University and the neighborhoods.
- HO 14 Encourage and support Colorado State University in development of student housing on Colorado State University and Colorado State University Research Foundation property.
- HO 15 Encourage the distribution of student housing in other appropriate locations throughout Fort Collins to help avoid over concentrations of short-term residents that have tended to destabilize certain West Central Neighborhoods.
- HO 16 Encourage responsible rental property ownership, occupancy, and management within the West Central Neighborhoods.
- HO 17 Ensure that additional infrastructure and services are provided to sustain any increase in housing density and intensity.
- HO 18 In selected areas, encourage re-use rather than demolition of existing buildings for redevelopment activities.
- HO 19 Identify historic, and potentially historic, resources within the West Central Neighborhoods through a comprehensive cultural resource inventory.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

This section contains transportation goals which cover all modes of travel within the neighborhoods, i.e., automobiles, bicycles, pedestrian, and mass transit. Promoting safety of travel within these modes, which often conflict with one another, is paramount. Another high priority is the encouragement of alternative modes of travel to the private automobile. The following are general transportation goals within the neighborhoods. Goals for specific modes are located in their own sections.

- T1 There should be clear, distinctive rights-of-way for all modes of travel.
- T2 Facilities, signage, separation devices, etc., should be clear for the respective rights-of-way for all modes.
- T3 Ordinances governing the safety of travel by all modes should be enforceable and enforced.

Auto Traffic

- AT 1 Promote the utilization of the area's arterial streets (Taft Hill, Shields, Mulberry, Elizabeth, Prospect, and Drake) and Centre, when completed for through traffic movements and reserve, to the greatest extent possible, neighborhood collector, connector, and local streets for internal traffic movements.
- AT 2 All major street intersections (i.e., arterial/arterial and arterial/collector within the neighborhood), especially the Prospect Road/Shields Street intersection, should have the highest Level of Service possible for all modes of travel (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian).
- AT 3 The construction of Centre Avenue should be completed as soon as possible. The design of the street should include bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Spring Creek Trail and include a bridge over Spring Creek of sufficient size to allow the bike trail to pass uninterrupted under the street.
- AT 4 Encourage the enforcement of speed laws on neighborhood streets.
- AT 5 Maintain safe access for children to neighborhood schools (Blevins Jr. High, Bennett and Moore Elementary Schools) by all travel modes.

- AT 6 Develop a plan for improving facilities for alternative travel modes within the West Central Neighborhoods as a means of reducing auto traffic and assuring the safety and regulation of alternative modes.
- AT 7 Improve the flow of traffic, safety and convenience of inter-modal travel in new developments and redevelopment of existing areas within the West Central Neighborhoods.
- AT 8 The design standards of new streets should create a better sense of “neighborhood” through attributes which encourage alternative travel modes - especially those that foster pleasant walking experiences on local streets and better interaction between neighborhood residents. Street designs should be discouraged that disrupt travel linkages or create barriers that adversely affects neighborhood cohesion.
- AT 9 Streets of the neighborhoods should be adequately maintained on a regular schedule or when there is a demonstrated need.

Bicycling

- BY 1 Bicyclists must be able to move freely, conveniently, and efficiently within and between the neighborhoods and surrounding areas.
- BY 2 Safety, convenience, and efficiency of bicycle movement is an important element in the transportation system and must be given strong consideration in all transportation planning decisions.
- BY 3 Bicycle infrastructure should receive maintenance and snow removal comparable to the levels provided for auto travel.

Pedestrians

- PD 1 Insure that pedestrians are safe at all locations in the area by enforcing traffic laws, providing adequate signs, signals, and crosswalk markings, etc. Pedestrians should be encouraged to cross arterial streets at signalized intersections (arterial/arterial or arterial/collector).
- PD 2 Improve and maintain safe access to and through the neighborhoods for pedestrians with special attention to links with neighborhood focal points and destinations including neighborhood schools, shopping areas, Colorado State University, and parks/trails.

- PD 3 Insure that all pedestrian routes, especially those to Colorado State University and neighborhood schools, are maintained at a high standard at all times by removing snow and debris.
- PD 4 Eliminate the discontinuity in the sidewalk system by adding sidewalks where they do not exist and widening them where necessary for greater safety and convenience.

Mass Transit

- MT 1 The size of busses and frequency of their schedules should be consistent with the demand for services along specific routes within the neighborhood and the City as a whole.
- MT 2 Bus routes should be designed to be safe, convenient, and efficiently organized to encourage utilization of the system to meet the demands of the people in the neighborhoods.
- MT 3 Develop ways of making the existing transit system more user-friendly, by increasing the areas served within the neighborhoods, frequency of service, and expanding hours of operation.
- MT 4 Increase the number of trips by neighborhood residents using alternative modes, including mass transit.

Parking

- PK 1 The provision of adequate parking, in both single-family and multi-family residential areas and in commercial/business areas within the context of the City's Congestion Management Plan's goals, is critical to maintaining the character of the West Central Neighborhoods.
- PK 2 The City should strongly encourage Colorado State University to solve its parking problems by implementing its parking plan which calls for the construction of parking garages for faculty, staff, and students.
- PK 3 Overflow parking from Colorado State University, shopping areas, and events at Rolland Moore Park along residential streets should be limited to the extent practical to permit reasonable access to street parking for area residents.
- PK 4 The design and provision of parking in residential and non-residential areas should take into consideration the aesthetic impacts on surrounding uses.

Chapter 3 - Policies and Plans

This chapter presents a series of policies and plans, primarily dealing with the physical changes in the neighborhoods, based on the goals presented in Chapter 2. Unlike goals, which are by design general in nature, policies and plans are more specific and are designed to guide decisions regarding the variety of development and redevelopment issues facing the West Central Neighborhoods in the future.

Land Use Policies and Plans

A. Conservation, Development, and Redevelopment Areas

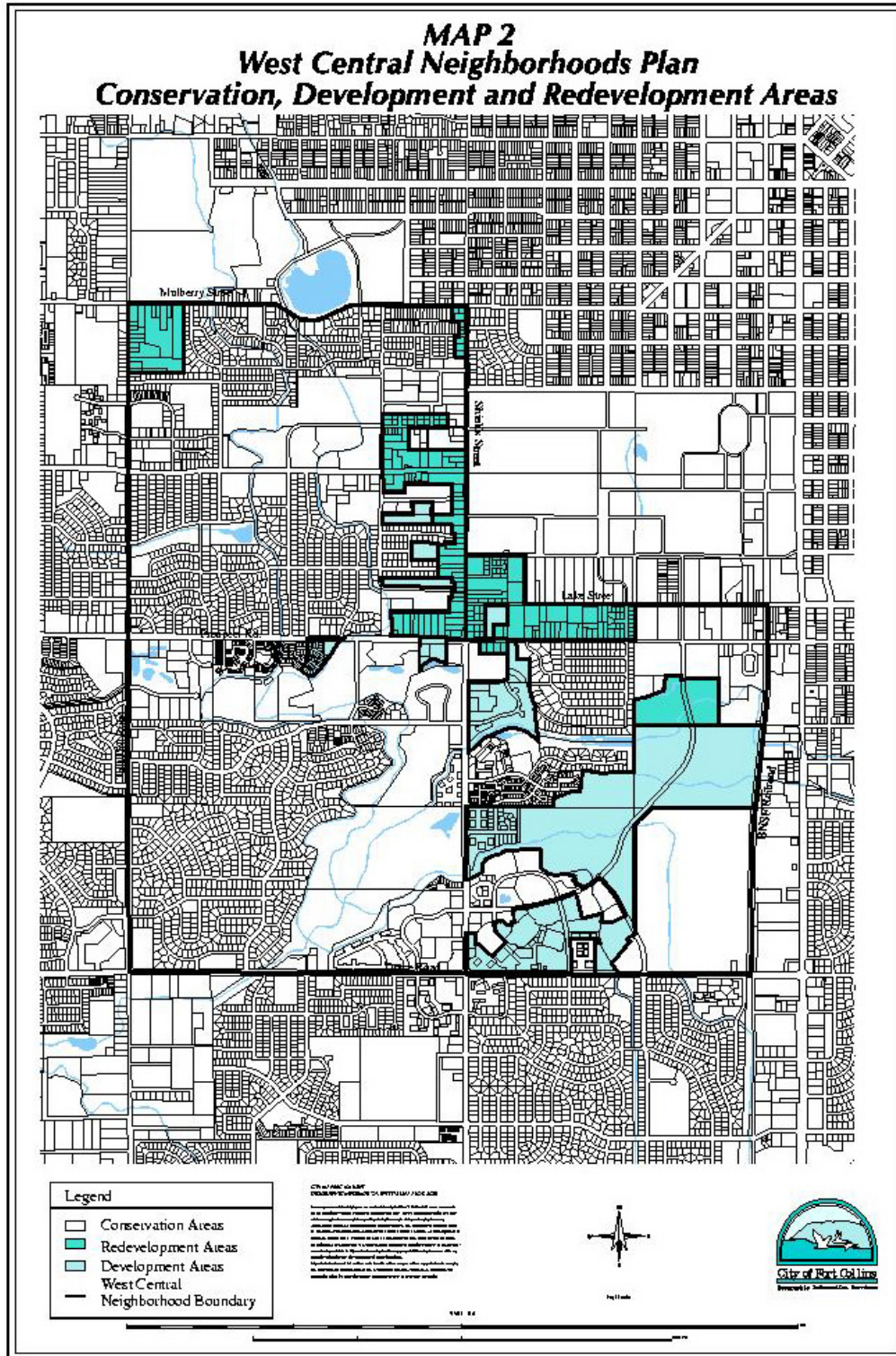
Policy A1

In conjunction with the vision statement and goals to maintain and enhance the diverse character of the planning area, new development and redevelopment activities will be encouraged only in selective areas. The West Central Neighborhoods are, therefore, divided into three areas, Conservation, Development, and Redevelopment areas, as defined and discussed below and shown on Map 2.

Conservation Areas - Areas for which the predominant current uses are considered to be the most appropriate uses of land. Conservation areas include single-family subdivisions, multi-family developments, public facilities and institutional uses, parks, natural areas, and lands devoted to commercial, service, and employment uses.

New Development Areas - Areas now essentially vacant that are available, or potentially available, for new development; areas for which new development is underway but only partially completed; and areas for which new development has been approved in final form but actual construction has not yet begun. The following discusses the planned uses of these areas.

With the exception of the large undeveloped tracts of land within the Centre for Advanced Technology, the West Central Neighborhoods do not contain much vacant land, especially west of Shields Street, available for new development. Two small parcels, one north of Bennett Road, and one east of Del Mar Street between Springfield Drive and Westward Drive, are parts of single-family neighborhoods and eventual development of these sites should be restricted to single-family residential uses. A third parcel, east of City Park Avenue and between Westward Drive and University Avenue, should be used to provide a



buffer between the intense commercial development of the Campus West Community Commercial Area and the single-family neighborhoods located to the south and west.

Two undeveloped parcels currently exist on the south side of Prospect Road west of Shields Street. The parcel furthest to the west has been platted (Bridgefield PUD) and is developing with low intensity multi-family residential uses. The parcel adjacent to the existing drug store at the southeast corner of the Prospect/Shields intersection should be reserved for additional neighborhood related commercial development.

The small parcel of vacant land east of Shields Street between Prospect Road and Lake Street should be utilized for high density housing.

Perhaps the most significant (based on past history of neighborhood resident concerns) piece of undeveloped land in the West Central Neighborhoods is located east of Shields Street just south of the Landmark Apartments. This parcel should be reserved for additional neighborhood related commercial development.

Redevelopment Areas - Areas for which predominant current uses are not considered to be the most appropriate for the future and which have potential for selective conversion to more efficient uses. This category does not presume that all existing uses of individual properties are inappropriate for future uses but that the area's predominant uses fail to make the best use of the land. As a caution, such areas would be highly sensitive to over-development and great care will be required in converting existing uses to avoid dislocation within the area and incompatibility with surrounding areas. Redevelopment areas include areas currently devoted to single-family and multi-family residential uses, institutional uses, and lands devoted to commercial and service uses.

The area located southeast of the Mulberry/Taft Hill intersection currently contains single-family residential uses on relatively large parcels. The area has not been officially subdivided. This area offers opportunities for the intensification of residential densities and the provision of additional neighborhood related commercial uses.

The Campus West Community Commercial Area is a prime candidate for redevelopment, as has been identified in **City Plan** with the call for its own special subarea plan. This area should redevelop as a more pedestrian friendly environment containing uses designed to meet the student consumer market as well as consumer demands from the neighborhoods and the community as a whole.

The areas along the west side of Shields Street, including the area south of Campus West to Prospect Road and the area north of Campus West to Mulberry Street, are candidates for redevelopment in a manner that allows conversion from residential to multi-family residential and lower intensity commercial uses (offices, clinics, etc.) with a strong encouragement to utilize existing structures to maintain the residential “feel” of the areas. These areas would buffer the single-family residential neighborhoods to the west from Shields Street.

The area northwest of the Prospect/Shields intersection is similar to the area located southeast of the Mulberry/Taft Hill intersection in that it currently contains single-family residential uses on relatively large parcels. This area has been officially subdivided as the Maxfield Subdivision and offers opportunities for intensification of residential densities and the provision of additional neighborhood related commercial uses.

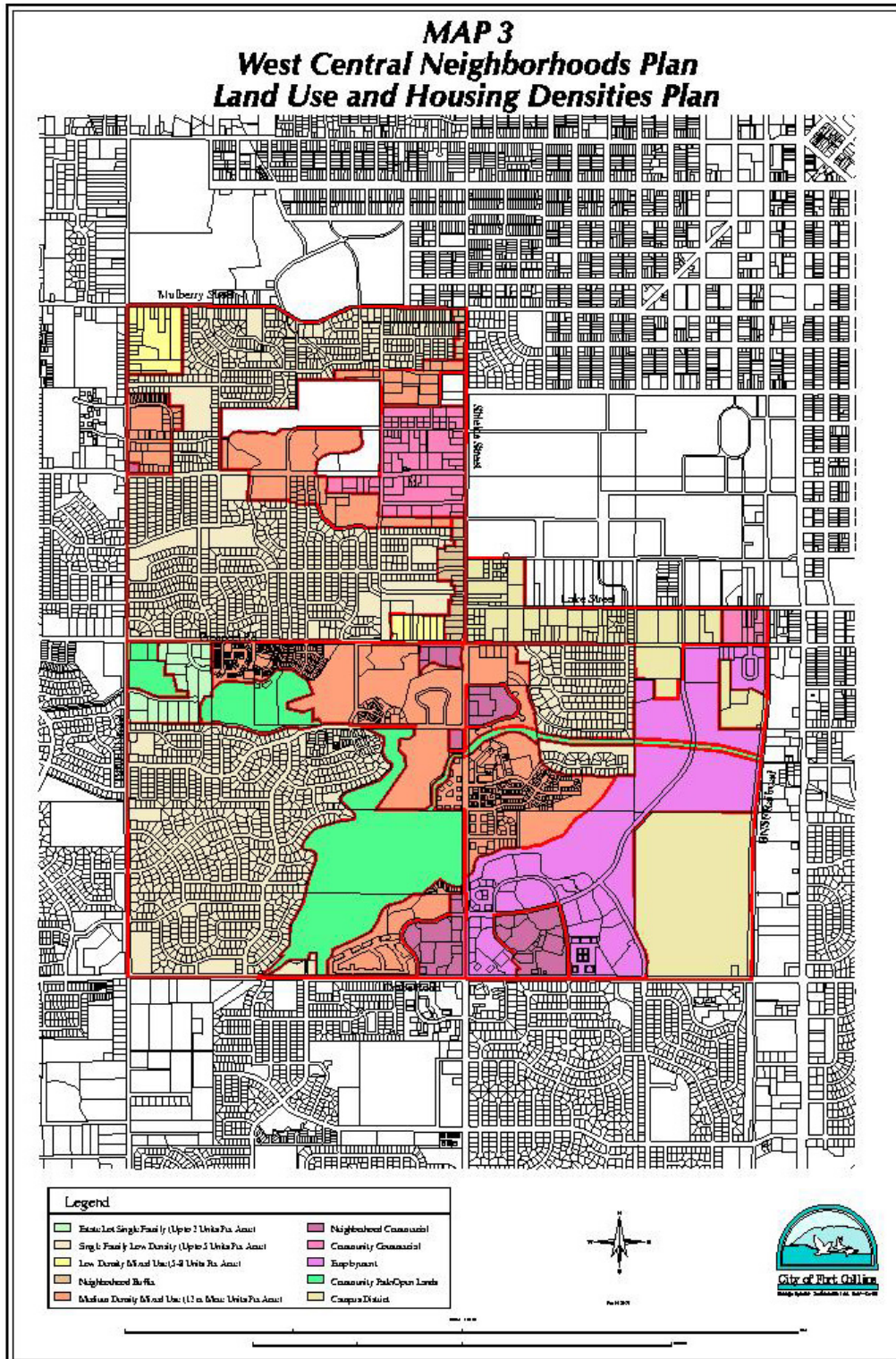
And finally, the area east of Shields Street and extending to Whitcomb Street between Prospect Road and the CSU Main Campus should redevelop with high density multi-family residential uses to provide student housing in close proximity to Colorado State University. In order to achieve this goal, redevelopment of this area would require demolition of some existing structures to be replaced with higher intensity structures up to five stories in height. This area should be viewed as an area which will eventually be incorporated into Colorado State University’s Main Campus, as its inclusion is depicted as part of the Campus District in **City Plan’s** *City Structure Plan* map. While care needs to be taken so that taller structures up to five stories in height have adequate setbacks from Shields Street and Prospect Road, modifications to compatibility requirements in the City’s **Land Use Code** with existing uses should be granted so that the area can intensify as envisioned in this Plan.

B. Land Use and Housing Densities Plan

Policy B1

A variety of land use classifications are planned within the West Central Neighborhoods. These areas refine the designated conservation, development, and redevelopment areas of Policy A1 above, for specific land uses and housing densities, and are shown on Map 3 and described below.

Estate Lot Single-Family Residential Areas (up to 2 units per acre) - Areas where the exclusive use is detached single-family residential structures on larger lots.



There is only one area designated as an estate lot single-family area within the West Central Neighborhoods and that is the existing larger lot subdivision (Sonoran View Estates) located at the southeast corner of the Prospect/Taft Hill intersection. The existing UE, Urban Estate, Zoning District applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997, should be retained for this area.

Low Density Single-Family Residential Areas (up to 5 units per acre) - Areas where the predominant residential use is detached single-family residential homes, but also include supporting uses such as schools, churches, parks, etc.

Existing single-family subdivisions including, but not limited to, the following are included in the designated low density single-family residential areas and should retain their current R-L, Low Density Residential, Zone:

North of Elizabeth and West of City Park Avenue: Miller Brothers, Poudre Valley, Rosco Johnson, Slade Acres, Lakeside Terrace, Broam, and Cook Subdivisions.

South of Elizabeth and North of Prospect: Miller Brothers, Fairview, and Western Heights Subdivisions.

South of Prospect and East of Shields: Sheely, Spring Valley, and Hill Pond Subdivisions and the Windtrail on Spring Creek PUD.

South of Prospect and North of Drake: Lexington Green, Village West, Aspen Knolls, Foothills Green, and Foothills Village Subdivisions.

Low Density Mixed-Use Residential Areas (between 5 and 8 units per acre) - Areas where the predominant residential use is detached single-family residential homes but, in the future, could also include some lower intensity multi-family units (not more than 6 units per building) to provide for a mix of housing types. These areas can also have supporting uses such as schools, churches, parks, etc., along with neighborhood-serving commercial and service uses.

The designated redevelopment areas southeast of the Mulberry/Taft Hill intersection and northwest of the Prospect/Shields intersection should be encouraged over time to change from their current uses into mixed-use areas. The existing L-M-N, Low-Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood, Zoning District applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997, for the area

southeast of the Mulberry/Taft Hill intersection should be retained. And, the area northwest of the Prospect/Shields intersection should be rezoned from its current R-L, Low Density Residential, Zone into the L-M-N Zone.

The L-M-N Zone should also be applied to the parcels of land located north of the single-family homes in the Western Heights Subdivision along Westward Drive and the Campus West Community Commercial Area to act as a buffer area between these differing land use areas.

Lower Intensity Multi-Family Residential Areas (6 - 12 units per acre) - Areas where the predominant residential use is lower density/intensity multi-family units (not more than 6 units per building), condominiums, townhomes, etc., along with supporting uses such as schools, churches, parks, etc.

Several already developed areas and one relatively large developing area should fall into this category. The existing developed areas within this designation should include the Woodbox Condos on Elizabeth Street and the duplexes along Constitution and South Bryant Avenues, the Village Park Court PUD on Stuart Street, the Underhill, Somerville, Bridges, and Bridgefield PUDs along Prospect Road, and the Hill Pond, Sundering Townhomes and Windtrail Townhomes PUDs east of Shields Street. These areas should retain their current M-M-N, Medium-Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood, Zone as it is the zone which best fits these developed areas.

Medium Density Mixed Use Residential Areas (12 or more units per acre) - Areas currently devoted to, or in the future developed/redeveloped into, higher density and intensity multi-family residential uses including apartment complexes, condominiums, townhomes, fraternity and sorority houses, and other types of group quarters, and mixed-use dwellings (residential units located with non-residential uses, e.g., units on the upper floors of non-residential uses) along with supporting uses such as schools, churches, parks, etc.

The existing developments include the Sleepy Willows area east of Taft Hill Road, Fort Ram Village north of Elizabeth Street, the Matador Apartments west of City Park Avenue, the Heatheridge, New Colony, and Northwood Apartments, and Prospect II PUD located southeast of the Prospect/Shields intersection, and the Preserve Apartments PUDs north of Drake Road. These areas should either retain their current M-M-N Zoning applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997, or, as in the case of Fort Ram Village, be rezoned from its current C-C, Community Commercial, Zone to the M-M-N Zone.

The small Seaman Subdivision on the south side of Prospect Road and just east of Shields Street also falls into this category and should retain its current M-M-N Zone.

Another redevelopment area, located in the northern portion of the Centre for Advanced Technology just south of Prospect Road, also falls into this land use classification. However, the land use conversion types differ from other areas discussed in the previous paragraph. This area is currently utilized for uses associated with the academic functions of Colorado State University. The area should intensify and provide opportunities for student housing in close proximity to Colorado State University. This area could retain its current E, Employment, Zone applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997, if the residential redevelopment of the area can be considered part of the allowed 25% of “secondary uses” within the E Zone. Otherwise, it may be more appropriate to rezone the area from the E Zone to the M-M-N Zone.

The only significantly sized undeveloped parcel of land within this land use classification is located south and east of the Landmark Apartments and would provide for additional residential support for the adjacent neighborhood commercial center (see below). This area should retain its current M-M-N Zoning applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997.

Neighborhood Related Commercial Areas - These areas would provide locations for commercial, business, and service establishments designed to meet consumer demands for daily goods and services from neighborhood residents, including grocery stores, drug stores, banking facilities, etc.

The existing Raintree Shopping Center and Spring Creek Plaza and the Market Centre (Steele’s Market and associated uses) are examples of this land use classification. A major portion of the undeveloped land south of the Landmark Apartments and east of Shields Street is also a desired site for this land use classification. All of these sites were placed into the N-C, Neighborhood Commercial, Zone during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997. The drug store at the southwest corner of the Prospect/Shields intersection and vacant parcel to the west is also part of this land use classification and should be rezoned from their current M-M-N Zoning to the N-C Zone.

Campus West/Community Commercial Area - This area would provide locations for commercial, business, and service establishments designed to meet consumer demands from Colorado State University students, neighborhood residents, and the community as a

whole including restaurants, clothing stores, music stores, entertainment and nightlife businesses, etc.

The Campus West Community Commercial Area is the only area within this designation and the existing C-C, Community Commercial, Zoning District applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997, should be retained.

Campus District - This is a portion of the much larger activity center, the Main Campus of Colorado State University, designated as “Campus District” in **City Plan**. The Main Campus is the largest activity center in the city, consisting of an employment center with 8,000 jobs and an educational institution for over 22,000 students. The portion of this activity center within the West Central Neighborhoods Plan boundaries would provide locations for residential and commercial, business, and service establishments closely related to the university. Residential uses should be higher density uses, such as large apartment complexes, dormitories, fraternities, sororities, etc. Greater height in structures (up to 5 stories) should be allowed in this area provided adequate setbacks are maintained from Prospect Road and Shields Street.

A new zoning district should be developed and applied to this area to allow for the redevelopment of the area into the high intensity of uses envisioned in this Plan.

Employment Center - This area would provide locations for light industrial, research and development activities, offices, etc., and support uses such as hotels, restaurants, convenience shopping, childcare and housing.

The Centre for Advanced Technology is the other major employment area located within the West Central Neighborhoods Plan boundaries. The Centre for Advanced Technology is anticipated to be a major employment center in Fort Collins. This mixed-use area currently contains the Colorado State University Veterinary Hospital, research firms, offices, financial services, group quarter residential uses (congregate care and nursing home), and commercial uses. This area should retain its existing E, Employment, Zoning District applied during the **City Plan** community-wide rezoning effort in March 1997.

Policy B2

The residents of the West Central Neighborhoods, through proper planning and strategic utilization of the City’s **Land Use Code**, specifically the listing of permitted uses within zoning districts and the placement of zoning district boundaries, have a legitimate interest in assisting

City Council in determining what private sector services are needed in the neighborhoods and where they should locate.

Policy B3

New development and redevelopment activities should build upon and reinforce the positive visual qualities of individual neighborhoods. If the City's **Land Use Code** lacks sufficient guidance and protection, a specific set of design standards and guidelines for the various land use categories within the neighborhoods should be developed.

Policy B4

Impacts of new residential development and redevelopment activities must be evaluated from the perspective of both *density* (traditionally, housing units per acre) and *intensity*. An amended zoning definition of "family" may also be necessary.

Policy B5

Conversions from residential to commercial land uses in buffer areas must maintain the residential "feel" and character of the area and surrounding land uses. Buffer areas are the types of areas which may need a specific set of Design Standards and Guidelines if the City's **Land Use Code**'s criteria are found to be inadequate.

Policy B6

New development should not be permitted to occur in designated 100-year floodplains unless designed in such a way as to mitigate potential flood hazards both upstream and downstream from the development site.

Policy B7

Development and redevelopment activities must mitigate negative impacts on historic properties and buildings.

C. Zoning District Plan

Policy C1

In conjunction with the conservation, development, and redevelopment areas, as defined and discussed above (Policy A1) and shown on Map 2, and the variety of land use classifications

defined and discussed above (Policy B1) and shown on Map 3, a Zoning District Plan has been developed and is shown on Map 4 and discussed below. Areas designated as conservation areas are proposed to be retained or placed in zoning districts which recognize their current uses and will stabilize those uses into the future. Areas designated as development areas are proposed to be placed in zoning districts which allow development on undeveloped/vacant parcels in accordance with the land use classifications shown on Map 3. And finally, areas designated as redevelopment areas are proposed to be placed in zoning districts which will encourage redevelopment from existing uses to uses within the land use classifications shown on Map 3.

The Zoning District Plan anticipates, for the most part, utilization of existing zoning districts currently within the City's **Land Use Code**. New zoning districts are being proposed only for the Campus District and the buffer area located on the west side of Shields Street, south of Elizabeth Street. Readers are referred to the City's **Land Use Code** for the specific listings of permitted uses, prohibited uses, land use standards, and development standards of each district. The basic purpose of the zoning districts for the West Central Neighborhoods is discussed below.

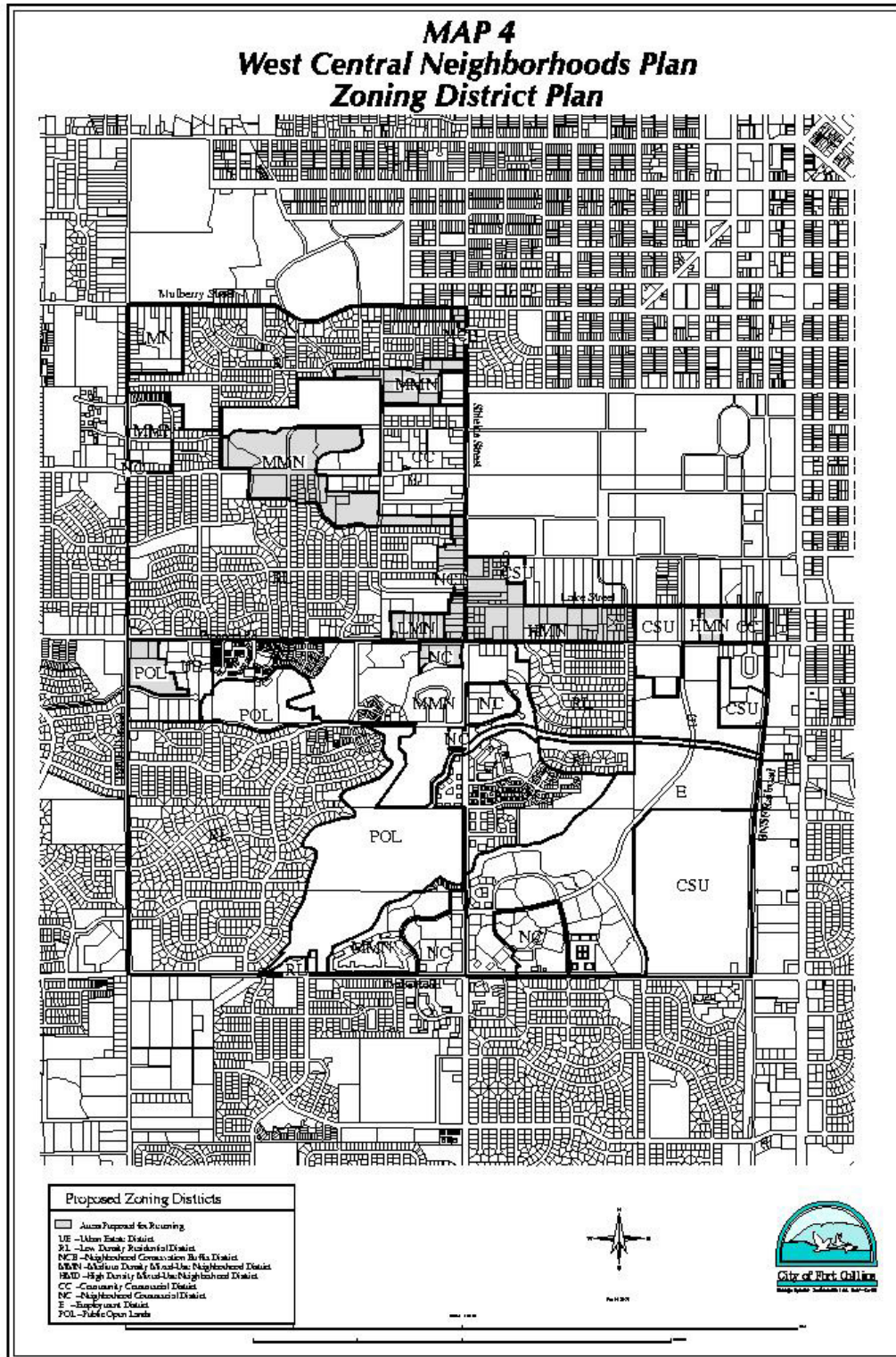
Urban Estate District (U-E). The Urban Estate District is intended to be a setting for a predominance of low density, large-lot housing. The main purpose of this district is to acknowledge the presence of existing subdivisions which have developed in these uses and function as part of the neighborhoods.

Low Density Residential District (R-L). The Low Density Residential District is intended for predominantly single-family residential areas which are planned to remain stable over the planning period and which existed at the time of adoption of the City's **Land Use Code**.

Neighborhood Conservation Buffer (N-C-B). The Neighborhood Conservation Buffer District is intended for areas that are a transition between residential neighborhoods and more intense commercial-use areas or high traffic zones and that have been given this designation in accordance with an adopted subarea plan.

A separate set of land use and development standards will need to be developed for the area located on the west side of Shields Street, south of Elizabeth Street. These standards will need to reflect the lot sizes, lot widths, and setbacks of the current structures on these properties.

Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District (L-M-N). The Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District is intended to be a setting for a predominance of low density housing combined with complimentary and supporting land uses the serve the



neighborhood and are developed and operated in harmony with the residential characteristics of the neighborhood.

Medium Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District (M-M-N). The Medium Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District is intended to be a setting for concentrated housing within easy walking distance of transit and a commercial district. These neighborhoods form a transition and link between surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas.

High Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District (H-M-N). The High Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District is intended to be the location for higher density multi-family apartment and group quarter (dormitories, fraternity, sororities, etc.) residential uses closely associated with, and in close proximity to, the Colorado State University Main Campus. Multi-story buildings (up to 5 stories) are encouraged in order to promote efficient utilization of the land and the use of alternative modes of travel.

Community Commercial District (C-C). The Community Commercial District provides a combination of retail, office, services, cultural facilities, civic uses and higher density housing. Multi-story buildings are encouraged to provide a mix of residential and non-residential uses with offices and dwellings locating above ground-floor retail and service uses.

Neighborhood Commercial District (N-C). The Neighborhood Commercial District is intended to be a mixed-use commercial core area anchored by a grocery store and a primary transit stop. The main purpose of this District is to meet consumer demands for frequently needed goods and services.

Employment District (E). The Employment District is intended to provide locations for a variety of workplaces including light industry, research and development activities, offices and institutions, with secondary uses such as hotels, restaurants, convenience shopping, childcare and housing.

Public Open Lands (P-O-L). The Public Open Lands District is for large publicly owned parks and open lands which have a community-wide emphasis.

D. Parks, Natural Areas, and Public Facilities and Services Plan

Policy D1

Acceptable Levels of Service from public facilities and services should be maintained as development and redevelopment activities add increased population and commercial uses into

the neighborhoods. Public facilities and services include, but are not limited to, police and fire protection, parks and natural areas, mass transit, and water, sewer, electric, and storm drainage utilities.

Neighborhood/Pocket Parks - Three additional neighborhood/pocket parks should be developed within the planning area as follows: 1) in conjunction with student housing development within the Centre for Advanced Technology, most likely within the northern portion of the Centre for Advanced Technology property; 2) across from Bennett Elementary School; and 3) the “Young’s Pasture” property, southeast of the Prospect/Shields intersection. These sites are generally shown on Map 5.

Fire Station - Close monitoring of fire protection and emergency health services should be maintained to insure that Levels of Service stay within acceptable limits. Long range planning should anticipate and prepare for the potential need for a new fire station to serve the planning area to be located within the Centre for Advanced Technology property.

Natural Area - An additional public Natural Area should be acquired, if possible, along Spring Creek within the Centre for Advanced Technology property. The Natural Area boundary should be within the Spring Creek floodplain and should be determined jointly with planning efforts for the Horticulture Center and Neighborhood Park planned for the same general location.

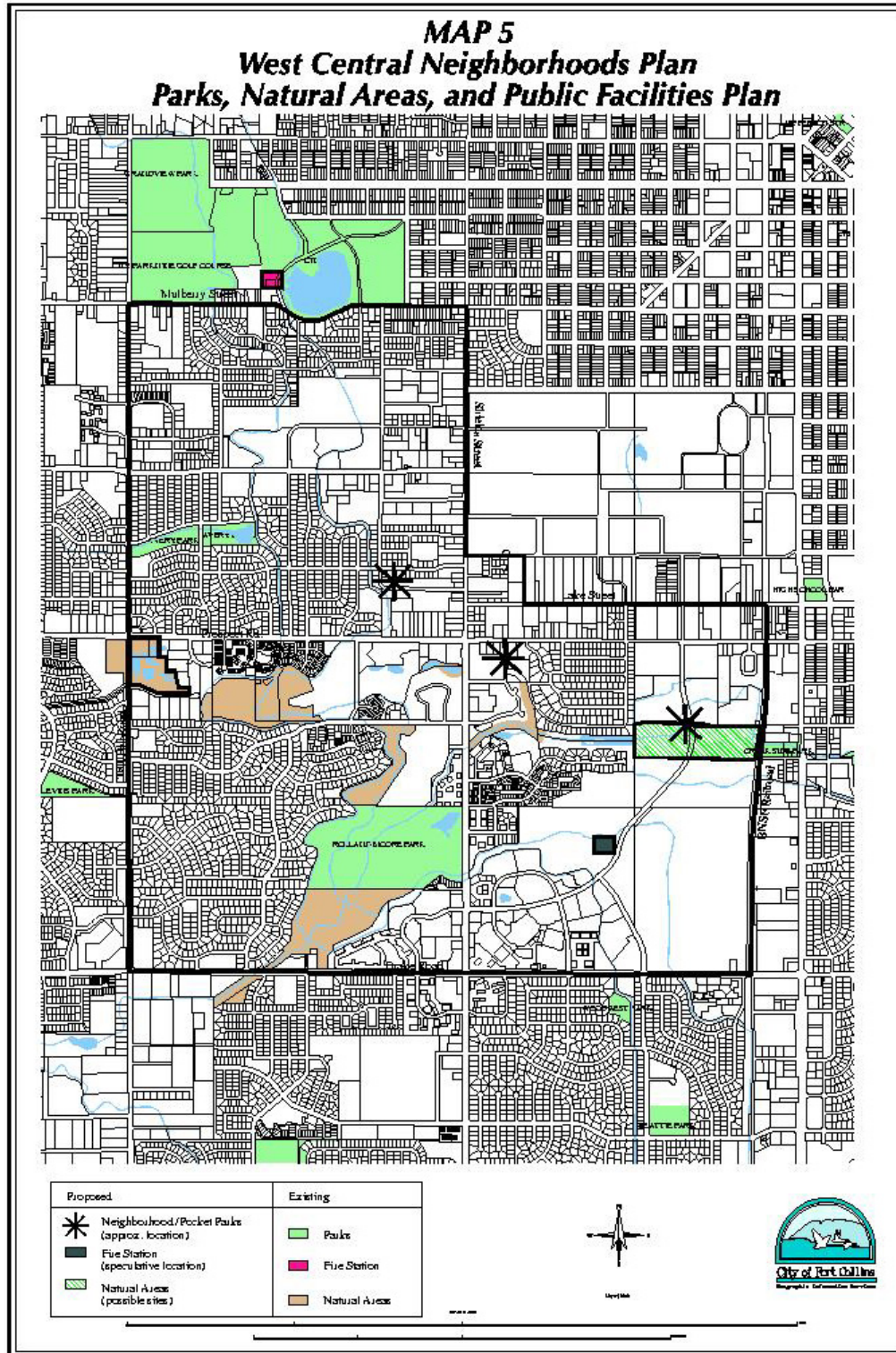
Policy D2

In the context of the city’s overall Clean Air Program, the City should determine if the Spring Creek Basin has unique micro-climate conditions that increase pollutant concentrations sufficiently to require unique air quality management measures that differ from those implemented in the rest of the community. If such a finding is made, then the City should consider implementing additional standards for development or redevelopment.

E. Urban Design and Neighborhood Compatibility Policies

Policy E1

New development/redevelopment activities should preserve and enhance the most attractive visual characteristics of the neighborhoods. The Development Standards in the City’s **Land Use Code** should be reviewed and if found to be inadequate, a special set of design standards and guidelines should be developed to assure compatibility between new and adjacent existing land uses to retain and enhance the visual and historic character of the neighborhoods.



Policy E2

A neighborhood-based development review structure and process should be established to provide input and comments to the City's Planning and Zoning Board regarding the impacts of development and redevelopment activities within the neighborhoods.

Policy E3

Development and redevelopment activities should conform to **City Plan**'s design standards, especially in the Campus West Community Commercial Area.

Policy E4

Public/private cooperation should be encouraged for development or redevelopments which meet the goals and policies of this Plan.

Housing Policies and Plans

F. Housing Policies

Policy F1

Housing densities should conform to the land use classifications and housing densities plan presented in Section B (Policy B1) of this chapter and shown on Map 3.

Policy F2

Housing opportunities should be provided to meet the diverse housing needs of the residents of the neighborhoods.

Policy F3

New multi-family structures must be designed and managed in such a way that reduces conflicts with single-family neighborhood character and lessens infrastructure impacts on single-family neighborhoods.

Policy F4

Multi-family apartments, townhomes, or other attached dwelling unit buildings must be designed to a scale appropriate to their surroundings and that promotes the positive characteristics of the area.

Policy F5

Innovative housing design solutions will be encouraged.

Policy F6

Property owners, property managers, and tenants should be held responsible for proper property maintenance and appearances.

Policy F7

The City should encourage the development of additional student housing by Colorado State University (either by the university or some public/private partnership) on, or adjacent to, the Main Campus.

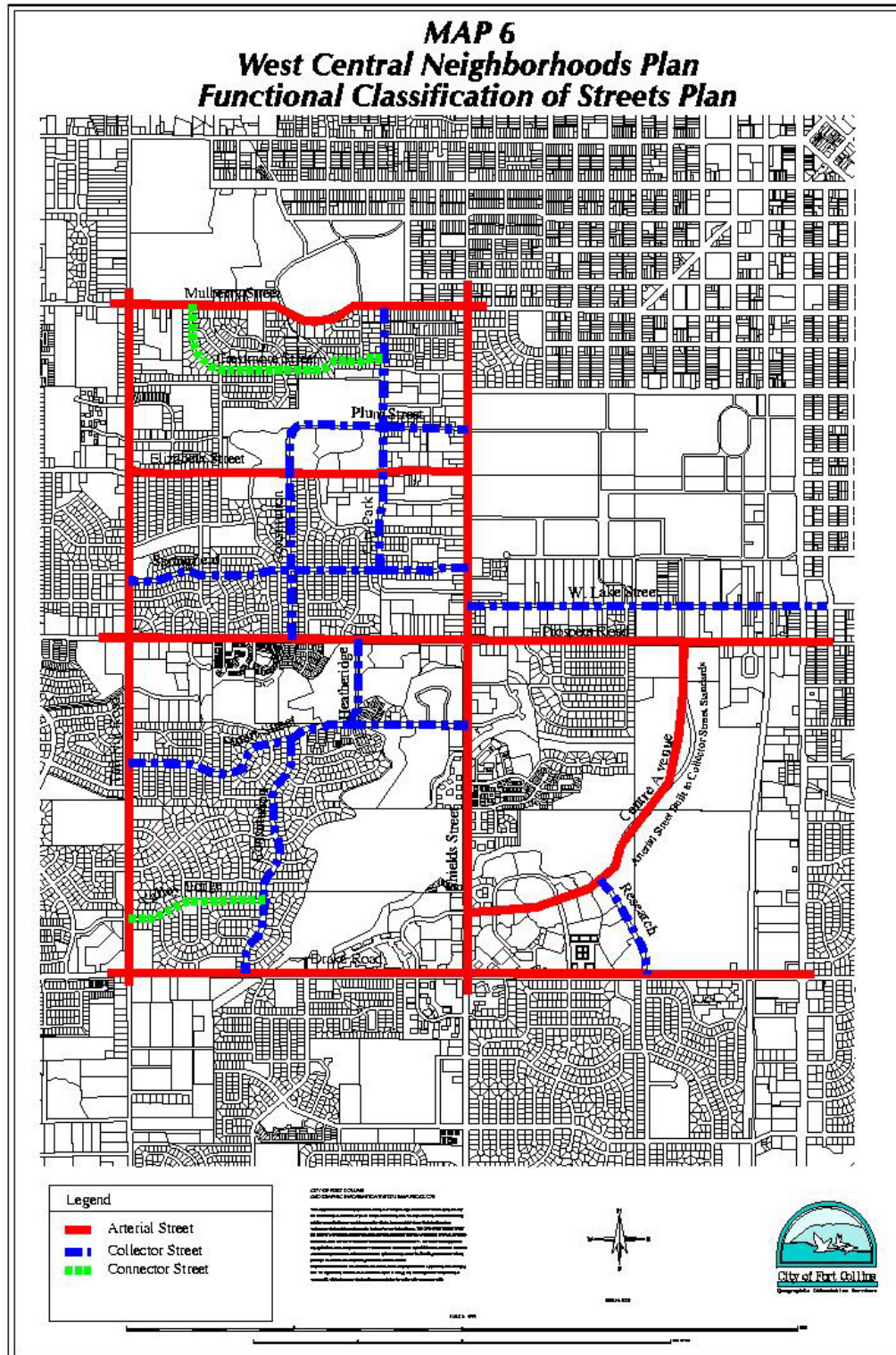
Transportation Policies and Plans

The following transportation policies and plans, Sections G, H, and I, are designed to help facilitate the movement of goods, services, and people within and through the planning area in a safe and efficient manner and to help encourage the use of alternative transportation modes. It is recognized that the West Central Neighborhoods are a part of a larger metropolitan-scale transportation network involving all modes of travel. Appropriate infrastructure must be provided for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as that needed for autos and mass transit.

G. Street Facilities Plan

Policy G1

Coordinated with the Future Land Use and Housing Densities Plan (Map 3) is a recommended functional classification system for streets in the planning area (see Map 6) that serves neighborhood needs and is compatible with the community-wide transportation system. Differences between the designations on Map 6 and the adopted **Master Street Plan** map should



be evaluated to determine if modifications to the adopted plan are needed. The functional classification of streets within the neighborhood are as follows:

Arterial Streets - Streets designated to serve intra- and inter-city travel demands. These streets are designed to handle large volumes of traffic passing through the neighborhoods. Providing for mobility is the primary function of arterial streets.

Arterial streets in the neighborhoods include Taft Hill Road, Shields Street, Mulberry Street, Prospect Road, Drake Road, and Elizabeth Street.

Centre Avenue is one street, in particular, which should be re-evaluated at to its appropriate functional classification on the Master Street Plan. Centre Avenue should be evaluated to see if it can function as an arterial street even though it is only constructed to collector street standards. Examples of other streets which function as arterials but are constructed to collector standards include McClelland Drive and Mason Street south of Horsetooth Road.

Collector Streets - Streets which act as a transition between arterial and local streets serving primarily traffic generated by the neighborhoods and distributing it to the arterial street system. Collector streets provide both mobility and access functions.

Collector streets in the neighborhoods include Constitution Avenue, Stuart Street, Heatheridge Road, Springfield Drive, City Park Avenue, Plum Street, Research Boulevard, and Lake Street.

Connector Streets - Local streets which connect with collector and arterial streets and adjoining neighborhoods.

Examples of connectors in the neighborhoods include Valley Forge Avenue, Crestmore Place, and Plum Street.

Local Streets - Streets whose primary function is to provide access to adjoining properties. Providing for mobility is not a primary function of local streets.

Policy G2

Intra-city traffic movement should be limited to arterial streets to the maximum extent possible.

Policy G3

For increased safety for all modes of travel, speed laws should be rigorously enforced on neighborhood streets.

Policy G4

Priority should be given to creating safe and convenient alternatives to auto use in new development and redevelopment areas.

Policy G5

New streets, limited as they may be in the neighborhoods, should conform to the new street design standards as developed as part of the **City Plan** process.

Policy G6

Neighborhood residents should explore opportunities to retrofit new street design standards on existing streets, including beautification and the screening/buffering of adjacent land uses.

Policy G7

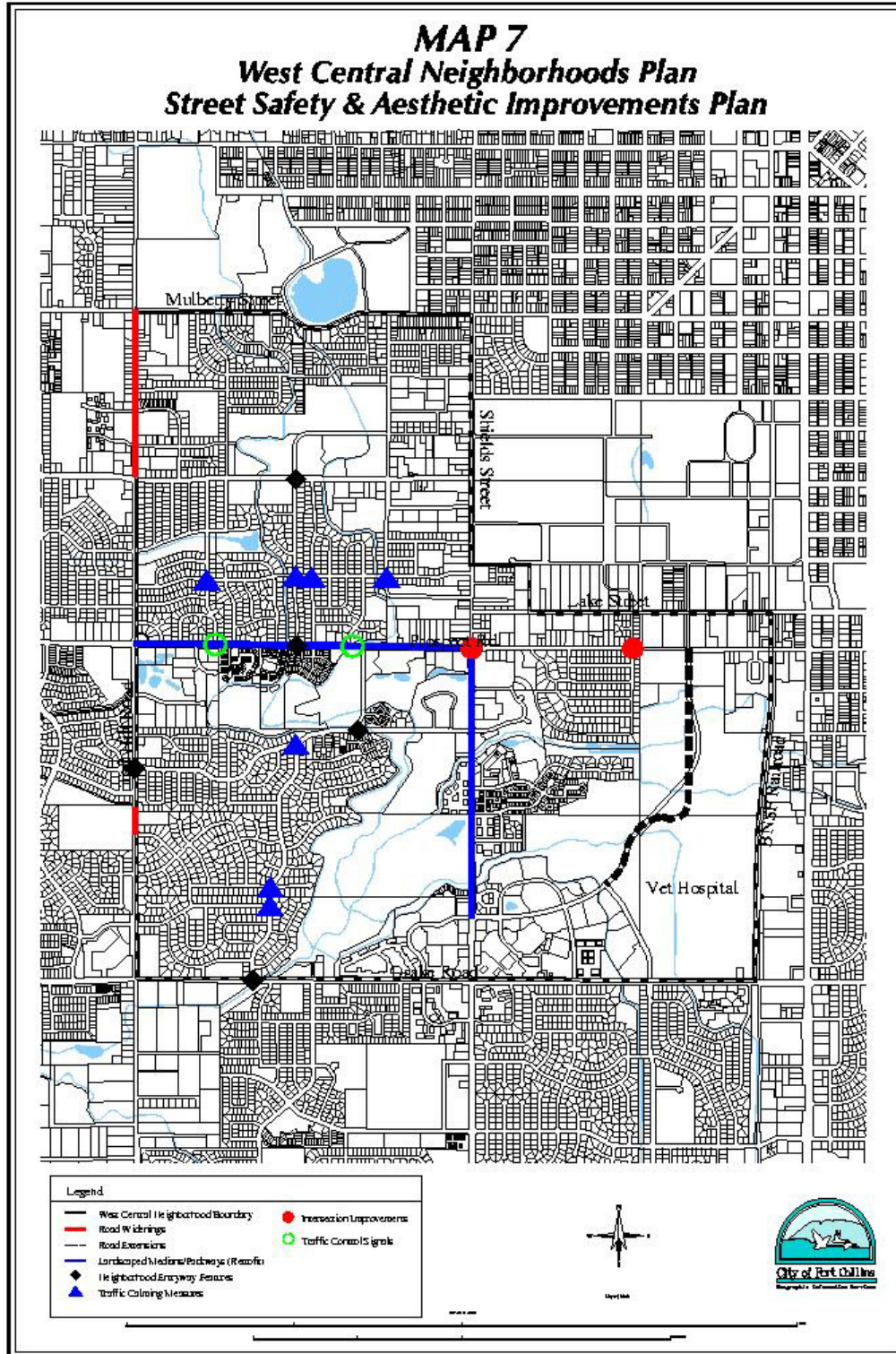
Street design standards should primarily help reinforce public safety and secondarily improve the visual character of the neighborhoods. Map 7 presents a Streets Safety and Aesthetic Improvements Plan which shows the recommended location of additional traffic control signals, road extensions and widenings, intersection improvements, neighborhood entryway features, landscaped medians, and traffic calming devices. The recommendations need to be further evaluated for their effects on increasing public safety and, as needed, over time eventually placed into future capital improvement programs for construction.

Policy G8

Proposed intersection improvements, based on increased auto traffic demands, should also be evaluated as to the impacts on bicycle and pedestrian Levels of Service and trade-offs noted and considered in the decision-making process.

Policy G9

Changes in street design should not affect existing historic and visual features.



H. Bicycle Routes Plan

Policy H1

Coordinated with the City's Bikeways Plan, the Bicycle Route Plan (Map 8) shows existing and recommended additional bikeway designations which could be made to the City's Bikeway system. The recommendations need to be further evaluated and, if determined to be needed, placed into future capital improvement programs for construction. The designation of some streets as part of the bikeway system may take no more than placing a sign along the street, incorporating it into the system.

Policy H2

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be made to encourage the use of alternative modes of travel within and to/from the neighborhoods.

Policy H3

Maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities should receive equal attention to those for motor vehicles.

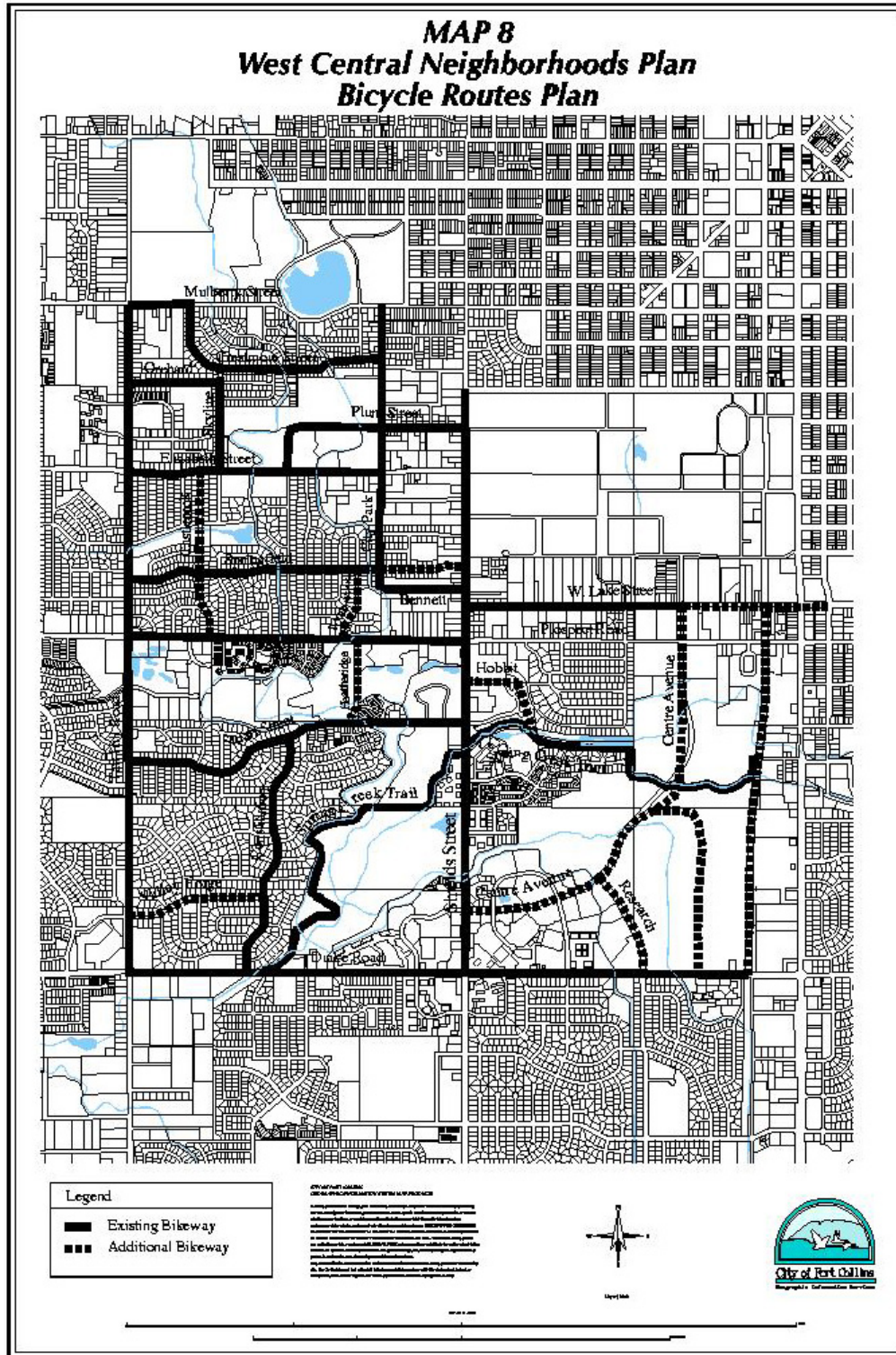
Policy H4

Bicycle route planning needs to account for both the transportation and recreational uses of the bicycle. Some routes must be planned and designed for their specific separate functions and not combined in a single facility.

I. Pedestrian Improvements Plan

Policy I1

Coordinated with the City's Pedestrian Plan, the Pedestrian Improvements Plan (Map 9) shows recommended sidewalk and/or trail improvements which could be added to the pedestrian system. The recommendations need to be further evaluated and, if determined to be needed, placed into future capital improvement programs for construction.



Policy I2

Pedestrian movements and safety should be the highest concern in evaluating any transportation facility improvement. This is especially true when an improvement includes the movement of children to neighborhood schools.

J. Parking Policies

Policy J1

Adequate parking should be required in all development and redevelopment projects.

Policy J2

Parking areas should be designed to consider the aesthetic impacts on the visual quality of the neighborhoods.

Policy J3

Colorado State University should solve its own parking problems by providing adequate parking on, or adjacent to, the Main Campus for faculty, staff, and students.

Policy J4

Parking along neighborhood streets by non-residents should be limited to the extent practical.

K. Mass Transit Policies

Policy K1

Bus routes and service schedules should account for the diverse needs of neighborhood residents.

Policy K2

Innovative supplements to the bus system, such as para-transit vans, should be tried in the neighborhoods.

Policy K3

Proposed pedestrian linkages and improvements should highly consider connections to the mass transit system in determining priorities for funding.

Historic Preservation Policies

Policy L1

A comprehensive cultural resource inventory should be undertaken within the West Central Neighborhoods to identify and preserve resources with historical, architectural and/or geographic significance, and to identify the significant historical characteristics of each neighborhood.

Policy L2

Design standards and guidelines for neighborhoods within the West Central Neighborhoods will take into account the significant historical characteristics of that neighborhood, and will make every effort to preserve these characteristics.

Policy L3

Development and redevelopment in the West Central Neighborhoods should be designed to be in character with existing historically significant resources, and to provide for preservation and appropriate adaptive use of the historic resource.

Policy L4

New development/redevelopment activities should be designed to preserve and enhance the significant historic qualities and characteristics of the individual neighborhoods. If the City's **Land Use Code** lacks sufficient guidance and protection for historic resources from new development/redevelopment activities, a specific set of design standards and guidelines should be developed to assure the preservation of an historic resource's character and integrity.

APPENDIX A
CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Subcommittee on Character of the Neighborhoods reviewed the following issues for analysis and recommendations:

Visioning	Land use	Community cohesion
Visual character	Diversity	Neighborhood-building
Public sector services	Private sector services	Parks and open space
Stormwater	CSU interface	Peripheral area impacts
Transportation effects on neighborhood character		
Streetscaping and view preservation		

Existing Conditions

Land uses in the planning area have been shaped historically by several forces: the original agricultural utilization; incremental expansion of the city; Colorado State University's divestiture of large blocks of its farm campus for private development; increased residential, commercial, and institutional development following World War II; and continuing promotion, with increased regulation, of the area's growth to provide needed inner city services. It is these forces, acting jointly or sometimes in conflict, that have forged the character of the area's individual neighborhoods.

The planning area is largely comprised of subdivisions and more recently approved planned unit developments. There are about 75 of these separate planning units. The earliest of these dates to 1911, but only three were planned before World War II. Two more were originated in the late forties, 16 in the fifties, 10 in the sixties, 12 in the seventies, 13 in the eighties, and 8 thus far in the nineties. These were platted and sometimes built as a unit, giving them some unity of characteristics within the subdivision or planned unit development. Such unity of character remains evident to a greater or lesser degree in most of these units; however, it may result in either a positive or negative character. The West Central Neighborhoods Plan therefore strives to reinforce the subdivision characteristics that are positive and encourage improvement of those that are negative.

Assessing the present situation, it is recognized that older sections of the planning area contain a wide diversity of land holdings, many still showing their farm or suburban origins. Highly disparate parcel sizes may exist within the same neighborhood, ranging from typical city lots to parcels of several acres. Some of the older, larger parcels are not encompassed in the approximately 75 subdivisions and planned unit developments in the area, which comprise perhaps 90 or 95 percent of the land in private use. Generally, the subdivisions and planned unit developments have been platted and sometimes built over a short space of time. This has tended

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to produce a unity of characteristics that remains evident in these subdivisions and planned unit developments.

Accepting the present City planning philosophy that favors concentrating population densities in the city's core areas, many of the larger properties in older areas are underutilized; however, the value of lower-density spaces among higher-density concentrations and the resulting open space is also prized in contemporary urban design. The West Central Neighborhoods Plan, therefore, avoids promoting high-density infill development on all such parcels but do so selectively to preserve appropriate open space benefits and to create or maintain a desirable character for the neighborhoods in which they exist.

Some neighborhoods within the area are in a state of accelerating change that is negative in terms of neighborhood character. Several economic and social forces spur these negative transitions. Among them is the growing demand for off-campus student housing. CSU has adopted a policy of housing only 30 percent of its students, which means that the remaining students must find housing elsewhere in the city. While such demand arises more from the changing lifestyles of students than from a lack of available housing on campus, it has resulted in conversion of many of the planning area's smaller, lower-cost dwellings into rental units owned by absentee investors. This circumstance often leads to short-term occupancy with little or no occupant responsibility for conduct of the tenants or maintenance of the property. Landlords or rental agents may or may not manage these properties well. A major objective in neighborhood character improvement should be to find ways to make owners and tenants of such rental properties accountable, as a means of stabilizing and enhancing the character of neighborhoods of this kind.

The destabilizing forces affecting some neighborhoods, as outlined above, have generally not yet impacted the half of the planning area south of Prospect Road, but the possible encroachment of the same destabilizing elements, as well as poorly situated commercial facilities and an excess of high-intensity infill housing, can become a major factor in the future character of these presently less impacted neighborhoods. Preserving and building upon the positive character of these neighborhoods will be another challenge of the planning process. It is also important to provide means of monitoring the appropriateness of new infill development if the existing neighborhoods are to retain their identifying character.

The planning area's private sector services have largely developed over the years without any coordinated planning. Whether they were actually needed or appropriate for the area was left to the developer's judgement and the availability of financing. Some of the ventures have enhanced the character of the West Central Neighborhoods; others have not. Other than those located in the Centre for Advanced Technology, the Raintree Plaza, and the Spring Creek Medical Center, facilities have mostly been planned and approved one at a time or in small groups. These latter developments are generally well designed and well located to serve important requirements of the area and the City; however, their original expectations have not been entirely met. A major

grocery store that was intended to anchor Raintree Plaza did not materialize, leaving the interior section of the area without such service in convenient walking or bicycling distance. In another example, the Centre for Advanced Technology was originally planned to offer major space for functions directly related to CSU, along with necessary commercial services and housing to support those functions. Later redirection of the Centre's development to provide comprehensive services for senior citizens, while it diverges from the original intent, also seems to fit well within the area's traffic limitations and proximity of the City's Senior Center. Coupled with the concentration of health care facilities nearby in the Spring Creek Medical Center, this area is beginning to develop a defined character of its own with services useful to the area's residents as well as others.

Obviously the public has a stake in deciding what private sector services are needed in the area and what are appropriate to the area's character. These needs and directions must be reflected in the standards and guidelines that implement the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. Since most private sector service facilities have been planned and approved one at a time or in small combinations, a main goal of the Plan should be to integrate and redevelop existing service facilities to provide a more definable, serviceable, and attractive neighborhood character.

Land use uncertainties resulting from the previous planning and zoning systems placed an undue burden on property owners, residents, developers, and neighborhoods. Although the advantages of flexible land use permitted under the previous system of development review and approval are recognized, the uncertainties involved are costly in several ways -- to developers in terms of redundant planning, unexpected delays, and speculative chances for approval; to property owners and other residents in terms of the impact of unforeseen development of their living or working conditions and their property values; and to neighborhoods in terms of unexpected changes in their character and wasted effort in reviewing and monitoring inappropriate or unrealized developments. The City's **Land Use Code** is new enough to have not yet been fully evaluated to determine if the Code is sufficiently definitive to overcome these land use uncertainties.

A. ISSUE: Land Use

Land Use - Past, present, and future uses of land within the planning area for which the City of Fort Collins, Colorado State University, Poudre School District, or other public agencies have final regulatory authority.

Background

Land use is a core determinant of the character of any neighborhood. It either dictates the physical layout of a neighborhood or must respond to it. It establishes the requirements for public and private sector services and sets the pattern for all modes of transportation and communication. Land use strongly conditions the lifestyles and sense of community of a

neighborhood's residents and other users. The aesthetic character of a neighborhood depends in large measure on the uses of its land. Public safety, including fire protection, police protection, traffic safety, citizen awareness and response, accident emergencies, and hazards to health and environment, is strongly influenced by land use.

Land uses in the broad sense of urban development have already been established in the West Central Neighborhoods. Very little in this planning area remains undeveloped or has not been approved for development. Such previous development and approvals are therefore "givens" in the current efforts to create a subarea plan for the West Central Neighborhoods. Among these "givens" are the area's three bounding and two bisecting arterial streets, plus a bounding main rail line. These have existed throughout the area's urban development, as has the main campus of Colorado State University, which bounds the planning area's northeast quadrant. The secondary street infrastructure is also largely in place having evolved incrementally over almost a century with the area's gradual urbanization. Fortunately, many of these "givens" fit well into concepts and plans for how the West Central Neighborhoods and the community should grow in the future. Others pose constraints that must be dealt with as constructively as possible.

The presence of CSU's Main Campus on the planning area's northeast boundary has been a major factor in conditioning other land uses, both as an incentive and as a physical barrier. The effect of the campus on the street infrastructure has resulted in a somewhat interrupted mix of collector and local streets that fail to carry north-south and east-west traffic efficiently. Campus-generated traffic places additional burdens on the original arterial streets, which are limited in their capacities by existing residential and commercial development. Most of the area's street infrastructure is also heavily utilized by other traffic coming into the area from outside or just passing through, with the result that recent street expansions have been prompted more by outside demands than the planning area's internal needs. These extraordinary outside traffic impacts are likely to continue and grow in the future and are a major reason to reconsider the appropriateness of present land uses abutting the area's arterial and major collector streets.

The presence of CSU's campus has also been a prime motivator for development and growth in the planning area. The earliest urban development in the area was designed to provide faculty housing and other services required by the University's constituents. These demands have continued and accelerated with CSU's growth, with expectations for more to come. Perhaps the greatest challenge in planning for future land use in the area is accommodating these CSU-generated demands without destroying the positive characteristics of the West Central Neighborhoods.

Due to the planning area's core geographic position in the City and changing City policies that call for more intensive development in core areas, the West Central Neighborhoods will be under increasing pressure to utilize land resources more fully. As these policies are pursued, regulatory and economic forces will place a premium on developing presently underutilized land and on

selectively converting uses of some land to meet present and future requirements more effectively. Such new development and redevelopment must be done with sensitive planning if general deterioration of the area's existing neighborhoods is to be avoided.

Land Use Problems

1. Lack of a central plan. Historically, there has been no central vision or concept for the planning area's growth or the purposes it should serve. Although planning and regulation have increased as the City assumed responsibility for successive annexations in the area, development projects have been approved one at a time, with little attention focused on their cumulative impacts or their effectiveness in serving well-thought-out needs. Definitive standards and guidelines for the growth, development, and conservation of the planning area as a whole have been lacking.
2. Inefficient land use. Uses of land in the portions of the planning area surrounding CSU's Main Campus are very mixed. Historic homes and farm structures are commingled with medium- or high-density and high-intensity residential uses, inefficiently organized commercial facilities, detached single-family residences and various institutional facilities that may or may not be CSU-related. While there is some merit in this diversity of land use, it generally fails to serve the area's needs as effectively as possible and often leads to direct conflicts between area users.
3. Disruptive rental housing. The proximity of the West Central Neighborhoods to CSU and other major employment centers makes rental housing one of the area's most significant land uses. As a result of this locational advantage, financial incentives have emerged for absentee owners to invest in relatively inexpensive, formerly owner-occupied, housing units to rent to CSU students and other short-term tenants. Despite the benefits of such enterprise as a means of meeting the demand for rental housing, it has led to obvious deterioration in parts of the planning area. Rental units are often occupied by more persons than the capacity of the property warrants in terms of health and safety. Behavioral excesses, overcrowded parking, poor maintenance of buildings and yards, and a general loss of neighborhood cohesion are other negatives often associated with rental housing. The problem is not inevitable since many rental units are well managed and well cared for, nor is it confined to student tenants; however, the disruption caused by a preponderance of such rental housing has made the stability and sustainability of the impacted neighborhoods doubtful unless more effective management of rental housing can be achieved.
4. Congested and dangerous traffic. Due to land use decisions within and outside the planning area, auto traffic has become highly congested and dangerous. Large infusions of public capital to alleviate this problem have not sufficed, and the problem is likely to

continue to grow in the foreseeable future. The negative impact of CSU's Main Campus as a physical barrier in the way of efficient traffic patterns makes the problem less tractable. While the CSU campus is a main destination for traffic in the area, it is also a barrier to traffic flows destined for other employment and service centers, such as the Downtown business/government center and the City's major shopping centers to the south. Continued massive development to the south and west of the planning area assures that the problem will become unmanageable unless practicable means of reducing auto traffic are found. This situation demands that future development in the area must be of a nature that will reduce traffic congestion or at least minimize increases.

5. Lack of alternative transportation. No comprehensive effort has been made to improve facilities for alternative transportation within the area as a means of reducing auto traffic and/or assuring the safety and regulation of alternative modes. Existing sidewalks are often discontinuous, dangerously close to auto traffic, in poor repair, overgrown with trees or shrubs, or inadequate in width to encourage pedestrian use. Bicycle routes are also incomplete, inconvenient, too close to fast auto traffic, and poorly maintained, especially in inclement weather. Major street intersections are hazardous for pedestrians and bicyclists because of very wide streets, confusing signage/signalization, and generally unclear rights-of-way among the various travel modes. Improved routing and scheduling of public bus transportation have met with fair success, but greater incentives for using this mode of transportation are needed. All planning for new or converted land uses within the area must give high priority to these problems of multi modal travel.

6. Land use uncertainties. Land use uncertainties resulting from past planning and zoning practices placed an undue burden on property owners, residents, developers, and neighborhoods. Although the advantages of flexible land use permitted under the Land Development Guidance System were recognized, the uncertainties involved were costly to developers in terms of redundant planning, unexpected delays, and speculative chances for approval; to property owners and other residents in terms of unforeseen development impacts on their living or working conditions and property values; and to neighborhoods in terms of unexpected changes in their character and in citizens' efforts wasted in dealing with inappropriate or unrealized developments. Theoretically, at least, most of these uncertainties have been mitigated by the development planning processes of the City's **Land Use Code**. A major obligation of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan is to clarify and further define the area's land use in the spirit of **City Plan** and the **Land Use Code**.

7. Insufficient commercial services. Parts of the planning area are seriously underserved by basic commercial services, such as grocery stores, banking facilities, and personal services that are available within convenient walking or bicycling distances by safe and convenient routes. This is particularly true for the area centered at the Prospect/Shields

intersection and to a lesser extent for the area's northwest quadrant. The Cedarwood commercial complex at Elizabeth Street and Taft Hill Road and the Raintree Plaza/Cimmaron complex at Shields Street and Drake Road provide some of the needed services, but access to these facilities on foot or by bicycle is highly inconvenient or unsafe for many residents. Other services required by area residents and business employees are available immediately adjacent to the planning area's boundaries, but utilizing them means crossing high-traffic, dangerous arterials or railroad tracks. Unless ways are found to provide the needed services within these neighborhoods by new or converted land uses, increased utilization of alternative travel modes will not be realized in much of the area.

8. Unmet recreational needs. Parks, trails, and publicly-dedicated open space are a major feature of the planning area and account for a relatively high percentage of its land use; however, some neighborhoods are not adequately served by such amenities, particularly the area's older neighborhoods. Emerging recognition in the City's policy making of the need to provide additional neighborhood or pocket parks, conveniently reached on foot or by bicycle, addresses this situation. Another related concern is the ongoing conservation of the Spring Creek drainage in a way that takes maximum advantage of the natural amenities it offers. This concern is also directly connected with storm drainage hazards and flooding potentials of Spring Creek that were so disastrously demonstrated in 1997. Comprehensive planning for these dual concerns related to Spring Creek has been late in coming, and opportunistic development has foreclosed some options; however, recent progress has been made in preserving some of the potential amenities and providing additional stormwater protections. These concerns must be fully reflected in future land use planning for the area.
9. Failure to distinguish between density and intensity of use. The City's past planning criteria did not differentiate between permitted densities of housing units and the type of occupancy that could be expected in the units. There was no objective means in the review process for evaluating the impacts on existing neighborhoods that result from widely divergent uses of housing units that have the same density. Lacking separate criteria for density and intensity, decision makers were forced to make subjective judgements about the compatibility of abutting land uses, often to the disadvantage of impacted neighborhoods. This major source of confrontation in the planning area must be dealt with more rationally in future planning.
10. Inadequate storm drainage protection. The 1997 flooding disaster associated with Spring Creek and several other waterways within the planning area emphasizes the importance of better storm drainage protection. Present and recent past plans for flood protection in the City of Fort Collins are based on the intensity of a storm likely to occur once in 100 years. Although the 1997 storm obviously involved a rain/time event far in excess of a

statistically probable 100-year storm, it raises questions about the validity of present plans and planning methods. The problem is establishing standards and installing affordable mitigation measures that will avoid the kind of damage that was experienced, particularly in parts of the planning area that are not in classified floodplains.

Analysis

1. Land use classification. For purposes of this planning process, a land use classification system was devised that is less broad than the *Structure Plan* of **City Plan** but broader in scope than the zoning system of the City's **Land Use Code**. This classification system was devised to identify and analyze present uses and visualize future uses on a scale finer than the *Structure Plan* but less localized than the **Land Use Code**. Three general classes of land use were defined:

Conservation Areas. Areas for which the predominant current uses are considered the most appropriate in the future.

New Development Areas. Areas now vacant that are available or potentially available for new development; areas for which new development is underway but only partially completed; and areas for which new development has been approved in final form but not yet begun.

Redevelopment Areas. Areas for which predominant current uses do not appear to be the most appropriate for the future and which have significant potential for selective conversion to more efficient uses. This category encompasses areas for which preponderant uses fail to make the best use of the land within the principles and policies of **City Plan** and under expected growth pressures in the planning area. This does not presume that land uses on individual properties in these areas are necessarily inappropriate but that the areas as a whole should be converted to other uses over time. Stringent selectivity will be required in converting the use of land in this class to avoid economic dislocation within the area, lack of compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, and violation of property rights.

2. Projecting future land use. The **Land Use Code** adopted in 1997 is now the basic zoning ordinance of the City of Fort Collins and is the principal operative means of projecting future land uses. The provisions of the **Land Use Code** apply to all development or redevelopment of land within the City unless specifically exempted by proper authority. It is therefore important to harmonize the **Land Use Code** with future land uses incorporated in the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. This requires selective rezoning

under the **Land Use Code** concurrent with the adoption of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.

As originally adopted, the **Land Use Code** of 1997 established 23 separate zoning types. Less than 10 of these are likely to be applicable to the West Central Neighborhoods now or in the future due to the largely developed status of this planning area.

The foundation for zoning considerations in the planning area is Principle EXN-1 of **City Plan**, which stipulates that “Most existing residential developments will remain largely unaffected by these *City Plan Principles and Policies*”. For this established, predominantly residential planning area Principle EXN-1 implies that overall neighborhood stability will be sought instead of major conversions of land use; however, other land use principles of **City Plan** tend to temper this principle. These other principles encourage compact and mixed-use development at a level not necessarily characteristic of the West Central Neighborhoods in their existing form. The analysis and projection of future land uses therefore require that the principle of neighborhood stability be reconciled with some degree of new development and redevelopment to satisfy the principles of compact neighborhood organization and mixed use. Such accommodation is complicated by the fact that new zoning districts as defined in the **Land Use Code** are not directly comparable to the planning area’s existing land uses or its former zoning. Most of the new zoning districts are more permissive in terms of greater densities and mixes of land use than the previous zoning or historic land use patterns. The differences present a planning challenge to reinterpret existing land use under the new zoning definitions without degrading positive characteristics of the West Central Neighborhoods.

The end result of such reinterpretation and the subsequently required negotiations and implementations is technically a revision of the zoning that was established with the adoption of the City **Land Use Code** in 1997; however, such change was anticipated in the adoption of the **Land Use Code**, and it was expected that the original zoning would be modified when the West Central Neighborhoods Plan was adopted.

3. Analysis of land use problems. The following is an analysis of the 10 land use problems cited above:

Lack of central planning. **City Plan** is designed to address this problem. It provides mechanisms for creating a central concept for preserving and strengthening existing characteristics of the City’s neighborhoods and for managing their future growth. This is in contrast to the City’s planning system most recently and predominantly affecting this area, which generally by-passed the traditional zoning system to utilize the more flexible Land Development Guidance System. Experience proved that the latter system yielded

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superior results in terms of site-specific planning but failed to provide a means of assessing the cumulative effects of multiple or successive developments on the planning area's character.

City Plan Principle LU-4 stipulates, "More specific subarea planning efforts will follow the adoption of these *City Plan Principles and Policies* which tailor **City Plan's** city-wide perspective to individual neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and edges." Policy LU-4.5 under that Principle assigns priority to subarea planning for the West Central Neighborhoods. Adoption of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan is expected to largely solve the problem of lack of central planning for this subarea.

Inefficient land use. While relatively low-density residential developments have been the predominant land use pattern in the West Central Neighborhoods, mixed-use developments have been a significant part of these neighborhoods for many years. These include a large amount of higher-density housing and increasing amounts of commercial and institutional development. Historically, as in the case of single-family detached residential projects, most commercial and multi-family developments have been planned individually with little or no relation to overall land use efficiency as dictated by present or future needs of the area. A major thrust of **City Plan** is to overcome such inefficiencies. **City Plan** goals include achieving a compact land use pattern and providing opportunities for mixed-use redevelopment, revitalization, and economic growth in existing under-utilized areas. In view of these goals, it is appropriate as part of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan to identify such opportunities.

Efficient development of presently unused land in the planning area is one way of reaching these **City Plan** goals. Another is redevelopment of land that fails to serve present or projected needs efficiently in a physical or economic sense; however, identifying apparent opportunities for more efficient land use is one thing; finding ways to achieve them under our free enterprise system is another. Both new development and redevelopment will remain highly dependent on initiatives of private entrepreneurs. In Fort Collins, public initiatives to stimulate development of private enterprises are largely limited to broad planning assistance, limited public investments in infrastructure, minor tax and fee incentives, and modest guidance of the private sector's alternative courses of action. It seems unlikely that these limitations on public involvement will change. The West Central Neighborhoods Plan therefore limits proposals for future development and redevelopment to those considered feasible within the above constraints, but envisions a higher degree of public/private partnering in comprehensively conceived ventures that meet the Plan's objectives.

Disruptive rental housing. This is perennially one of the most perplexing problems facing the City's neighborhoods. After more than two years of exploration by a citizens'

task force, resolution is not in sight. Neither existing state laws nor city ordinances and enforcement policies have been effective in resolving the problem. While concern is city-wide, it is more pronounced in neighborhoods surrounding CSU. Discerning analysis reveals that rental housing concerns are not a single problem but a complex of situations with many facets, making solutions legally and administratively difficult. Probably a majority of rental housing properties are not a problem because they are responsibly managed and maintained by their owners and responsibly occupied by their tenants. The majority of complaints are thought to stem from a minority of properties. One of the barriers to solutions is the lack of data on number and ownership of rental housing properties, the units and occupants that produce complaints, the frequency and types of complaints, the arrangements under which the properties are rented, and the mitigation measures taken by various City and CSU authorities.

There has been a tendency to think of this as a “student” problem and to look to CSU to find ways to resolve it; however, closer analysis indicates that the common denominator is actually short-term tenancy, differing lifestyles, and overcrowded living conditions. It is true that many tenants of disruptive rental housing are college students, but single workers and dysfunctional families are also involved. A key element appears to be that highly mobile individuals feel little or no responsibility for the maintenance of rental property or accountability to their neighbors. Landlords and their agents also often shirk these responsibilities. Unacceptable behavior and progressive deterioration of the character of the neighborhood are typically a result. At the extreme, resident owners feel threatened enough to sell their homes and leave the neighborhood. In certain neighborhoods of the planning area, this trend is already at an advanced stage and seems to be “snowballing”.

Incentives for absentee landlords to invest in residential rental property around colleges are not new or unique to Fort Collins. This is an entrepreneurial phenomenon in virtually every university city. On the positive side, it provides a source of rental housing that is in great demand. In the case of CSU students, the demand stems more from a desire of students to live off-campus than from the failure of the University to provide adequate housing on campus. Such desires have probably always been a part of student life, but today’s students are more financially free to act on those desires. Nevertheless, affordability remains a constant concern for students, and one way of keeping housing costs within reach is to divide the rent of a unit among more occupants. Their willingness to share housing encourages landlords to allow an excessive number of tenants to occupy a unit as a way of increasing revenues from the unit. A frequent practice is to rent a house or living unit by the room, sometimes any room that will hold a bed, without any single resident being responsible for the unit as a whole.

The land use challenge for the planning area is to sustain or increase the inventory of affordable rental housing available near campus for short-term occupancy without destroying the positive residential character of the host neighborhoods. The obviously serious problem already existing in several parts of the West Central Neighborhoods may well spread to other neighborhoods in the area as the number of students increases and as demand grows for such housing. Some combination of education and regulation is required to avoid major disintegration of the area's neighborhood character and stability. While the newly developed City/CSU program of education, mediation, and slightly intensified enforcement of existing regulations is commendable, it is unlikely it will solve this problem without more effective laws and ordinances and much more rigorous enforcement.

To solve these pressing rental housing concerns, it is critical that all parties -- rental tenants, landlords and their agents, neighborhoods, and City and CSU officials -- have a clear understanding of expectations regarding rental housing. That is not presently the case. Tenants are often unaware of existing City ordinances and are even less sure about their enforcement. Landlords and their agents feel little compulsion to abide by existing laws and ordinances, even if aware of them, in the absence of consistent enforcement and effective penalties. Neighborhoods likewise may have unrealistic expectations with regard to behavior of tenants and maintenance of property. Their individual or collective views of what is allowable may not be legally or administratively sustainable. Guidance and encouragement of neighborhoods to accommodate some level of differing lifestyles are valid approaches to developing a sense of community; however, it is too much to expect neighborhoods to continuously "re-educate" successive short-term occupants about community standards without clear-cut education and enforcement backing from the City. One common problem for neighborhoods is that enforcement officials have typically acted only on complaints from those directly affected, not from organized neighborhood groups. As a result, impacted individuals often fear personal retaliation and are reluctant to file complaints, even though they are justified. Public officials also appear unsure about applicable regulations and their enforcement. At least one ordinance, the one limiting occupancy of a residential unit to not more than three unrelated individuals, is still in the City Code, but is seldom, if ever, enforced and never to the point of litigation. All previous attempts to enforce this ordinance have, in effect, placed the burden of proof on the complainant and made it practically unworkable as a means of dealing with the usual kinds of rental housing concerns. Considering the lack of effectiveness of this ordinance and its questionable constitutionality, it should be repealed and replaced with an ordinance or ordinances based on tenants' performance and numbers rather than their relationships. This would relieve officials of much of their enforcement ambiguity.

CSU has a major stake in student aspects of this situation and should be held accountable for any needed disciplinary measures related to university standards of behavior, but the City has primary responsibility for solving off-campus housing problems and needs to move toward a solution without further delay and without further petitioning from impacted neighborhoods. Otherwise, the character of many of the City's neighborhoods will be irrevocably damaged with all the attendant social and economic costs for the City as a whole.

The land use implications of this growing rental housing problem are considerable. In terms of location and the stock of housing suitable for rentals, the West Central Neighborhoods are perhaps the City's best resource for affordable rental housing. For those whose activities center on CSU and the services it requires, the planning area is a preferred place to live. Such location is also consistent with the City's objectives of encouraging citizens to live nearer their daily activity centers and thus avoid excessive travel, particularly by auto. If a reasonable solution is not found to the existing problem, some of these neighborhoods will inevitably deteriorate to a semi-slum status where no one wishes to live. As a consequence, an appropriate land use that meshes well with the City's high priority goals will be forfeited.

Congested and dangerous traffic. This problem is analyzed more comprehensively in the Transportation section of this report. This additional analysis relates only to the land use aspects of the problem.

Future land use within the planning area may have only a minor influence on the congestion and dangers of auto traffic in comparison with developments outside the area; however, allowing large additional amounts of high-density housing or commercial developments that target community-wide clientele, rather than neighborhood services, would significantly expand the area's traffic problems. Future developments that could have a major impact include further regional or community services located in the Centre for Advanced Technology and the redevelopment of the West Elizabeth Street commercial complex in a way that attracts community-wide patronage. Proposed densification of housing on and around the CSU campus could have a mixed effect on traffic -- a probable increase in number of vehicles combined with a potential decrease in trip miles per vehicle. Regardless of these influences, there will be opportunities in the process of new development and redevelopment within the planning area to improve traffic flow and, particularly, to improve the safety and convenience of intermodal travel.

A priority opportunity to improve auto traffic flow is completion of Centre Avenue through the Centre for Advanced Technology. Not only will this provide direct access from the campus to the Centre and its CSU-related activities, it will create a more efficient travel route to and from CSU for those approaching the campus from the south.

Shields and Whitcomb Streets would be substantially relieved. It is therefore critical that any further development of the Centre for Advanced Technology be conditioned on the completion of Centre Avenue. If necessary, City resources should be found to support this completion.

Further, priority must be given to creating safe and convenient alternatives to auto use as new development and redevelopment occur in the planning area. Providing for these alternatives must be a strong condition of all new or revised land use approvals. Appropriate infrastructure must be provided for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as that for autos and public transit. All facilities must be designed in such a way that there is no confusion about potentially conflicting rights-of-way for the various modes. It is clear that more efficient use of the planning area's land in the future depends on safe and convenient travel by all of these modes.

Lack of alternative transportation. A more comprehensive analysis of this problem is found in the Transportation section of this report. The above analysis of the congested and dangerous traffic problem also refers in part to this problem. This further analysis expands on additional land use-related considerations.

Efficient use of the planning area's land and the delivery of services to its residents and businesses are curtailed by an inadequate transportation network. For those dependent on automobiles, traffic and parking are problems. Walking or bicycling would often be more logical alternatives if sidewalks and bikeways were safe and convenient and if needed services were available within reasonable distances. Neither of these conditions is generally true under present circumstances. The alternative of public transit, while gaining favor in the area, will not likely have a major effect on efficient land use unless it can be made more user-friendly. Only recently have these considerations been given serious attention in the area's land use planning. Some of the needed solutions are expensive and therefore long-term. But some are a matter of focused attention and understanding and could be solved promptly with a minimum investment of resources. Such solutions must be at the forefront of all land use considerations and decisions. Most important is acceptance in the planning process that increased dependence on alternative modes of travel is the most viable option to intolerable traffic congestion in the planning area.

Land use uncertainties. In theory, **City Plan** resolves many of these uncertainties. Some of the subjectivity and ambiguity associated with previous planning systems has been made more certain by the **Land Use Code** and **City Plan's** development review process. Specific, highly defined zoning districts that limit land uses in given geographic areas provide a much more definitive expectation for development proposals within and adjacent to existing neighborhoods. Developers can work with greater confidence that

their proposals fall within the parameters decision makers will apply; however, the price paid for this greater certainty is some loss of flexibility in land use and, potentially, less citizen access to the planning process. How this will balance out with respect to the protection and improvement of existing neighborhoods is yet to be seen. This situation suggests that the West Central Neighborhoods will need to be well organized to play an effective role in the land use review process. One important mission of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan is to anticipate present and future requirements of the area's neighborhoods and to provide for these needs with greater precision in the **Land Use Code**. A careful review, with public involvement, of the **Land Use Code** as originally adopted, followed by such modifications as will assure adequate protection or improvement of the area's neighborhoods, is the means for fulfilling this obligation. Procedurally, this must be accomplished prior to adoption of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.

Insufficient commercial services. It would be a fiction to believe that all commercial and professional services needed by the planning area's residents and business community can be provided within the area; however, to avoid undue auto traffic, some basic services must be available within convenient walking or bicycling distances. These basic services include food sources, primary health services, mailing and shipping facilities, copying and other basic business services, and perhaps a hardware supplier. Some of these services are now available in or adjacent to the planning area, but generally they are not well located to serve the entire area if alternative travel modes are to be effectively utilized.

The *Structure Plan* element of **City Plan** recognizes the need for additional neighborhood commercial facilities in the planning area, beyond those that already exist in or adjacent to the area. Included is a Community Commercial District with an area expanded somewhat beyond the present West Elizabeth Street commercial complex. The *Structure Plan* also includes proposed Neighborhood Commercial Centers in the Centre for Advanced Technology at Shields Street and Drake Road and at the Spring Creek site east of Shields Street that has been repeatedly considered for various kinds of commercial development. The existing Neighborhood Commercial Centers, usually referred to as Raintree and Cimmaron, at Shields Street and Drake Road are reflected in the Plan, but an existing small convenience complex at Shields and Stuart Streets is not. Also omitted are the mixed commercial facilities in the vicinity of the Holiday Inn on Prospect Road, a new mixed-use center at Shields Street and Prospect Road, and a few other stand-alone commercial facilities throughout the area. Existing Neighborhood Commercial Centers not within, but immediately adjacent to, the area at Elizabeth Street and Taft Hill Road and at Drake and Taft Hill Roads are included in the *Structure Plan*.

From a locational standpoint, the existing commercial facilities plus those that are proposed would probably serve the West Central Neighborhoods well in terms of convenience and the viability of alternative modes of travel; however, there is no assurance that all the needed basic services will be incorporated in these facilities. To help specify services that will be needed, by location, a detailed inventory of existing commercial services was made and compared with projected requirements. Proposed additional services that are presently lacking or are a projected need are described under Private Sector Services elsewhere in this report.

The tools available to the City to encourage the needed development are appropriate zoning, well-defined and appropriate design standards and guidelines, and a thorough understanding by decision makers in the development review process of these neighborhoods' requirements. Where possible, and particularly in expanding services available in the West Elizabeth Street commercial complex, the City should develop productive public/private partnerships to obtain the additional services required by the West Central Neighborhoods and, specifically, CSU and its varied constituents.

Unmet recreational needs. An analysis of the present situation and proposals for future recreational development is covered in the Parks and Open Space section of this report. This additional analysis relates only to the overall land use implications of recreational needs.

A look at a parks and open space map of the City gives the impression that the planning area is abundantly blessed with these amenities. With City Park on its northern boundary and Rolland Moore Park astride the Spring Creek drainage, and with several natural areas and recreation trails, it seems at first blush that the area is well served. On further consideration, it must be acknowledged that only one recreational facility in the entire planning area is designed as a neighborhood facility. All other parks, natural areas, and trails are intended for community-wide use. Obviously, many residents of the area benefit from these community facilities, but ready access to them and the opportunities typically offered in neighborhood type parks are lacking. The absence of safe and convenient access to these facilities by area residents on foot or by bicycle, particularly children, is especially at odds with the City's transportation goals and parks policies. Most area residents, as a practical matter, would need to travel by auto to reach these facilities.

Proposed solutions to this problem are modest. Two pocket parks are proposed for presently underserved areas. Each of these is less than 10 acres in size. Additionally, planning for the Centre for Advanced Technology should adhere to the present designation in its Overall Development Plan for a floodplain area along Spring Creek to remain undeveloped as open space. Recent experience with the 1997 flood suggests that

such designation is the only sensible use of the land. The City must assure that the existing plan is upheld in future development approvals.

Failure to distinguish between density and intensity of use. The compatibility of abutting land uses depends not only on the category of use, such as housing, but also on the density of development and the numbers and lifestyles of people to be served. Past land use planning processes have relied heavily on the number of housing units per acre (density) to determine the compatibility of housing developments with their surrounding neighborhoods. This has proved to be an inadequate index of a development's impact on its previously existing neighbors. Equally or more important are the number of people expected to occupy the housing units and their individual and collective lifestyles (intensity). For example, a residential complex housing only young, single adults has a different impact than one of the same unit density housing an equal number of retired couples. While this difference should be obvious, past planning processes have had difficulty coping with it. As a result, existing neighborhoods have sometimes been affected or threatened by density-determined land use decisions when the real problem was the foreseeable intensity of use. Such determinations need not be judgmental about respective lifestyles, only recognize that a difference exists in their compatibility impacts. It is doubtful that the new **City Plan** development review process yet fully recognizes the reality of density vs. intensity or is designed to deal with it effectively. Since this difference is a particularly salient parameter of development in the West Central Neighborhoods, the subarea plan will attempt to clarify it in the area's design standards and guidelines.

Inadequate storm drainage protection. Major damage was inflicted on homes and businesses in the West Central Neighborhoods by the 1997 flood. Even though the event was rare and not likely to be repeated soon, the possibility is there and is unacceptable to the area's residents. This experience raises questions about the validity of present flood prevention plans and planning methods. Nowhere in the City are these questions more pressing than in the West Central Neighborhoods. Considering the past and continuing urban development of wild and agricultural lands upstream of the planning area, one question is the effectiveness of current storm drainage patterns even under the current 100-year planning horizon. A further question is the engineering design and performance of storm drainage mitigation measures required when development disrupts natural drainage. Still another concern born of the 1997 flood is the role of the major irrigation canals that cross the planning area, both from the standpoint of their use as storm drainage conduits and as carriers of flood waters to abutting neighborhoods and streets. It seems obvious that complete protection from storms of any magnitude is not feasible; however, it is equally obvious that a repeat of the 1997 disaster should be avoided if possible. Considering the extremely high cost of flood mitigation measures, especially when retrofitting is required, some middle ground must be sought where the most

apparent deficiencies are identified and remedied without delay. Longer-range planning must be stringently reviewed to test its assumptions and the solutions projected. In terms of land use, it is imperative that further permanent developments not be permitted in floodplains, as delineated by state-of-the-art scientific methods. Where there is doubt about the boundaries of floodplains, land use decisions should be based on conservative assumptions as to the intensity of storms and the effectiveness of drainage and flood control systems, and planners must be held accountable for such assumptions. New development that will alter natural drainage must not be approved unless it can be assured that flooding potentials downstream will not be increased. An aggressive policy to remedy existing flooding hazards must be pursued by the City and resources found to mitigate those hazards.

Goals

Based on the background, problems, and analyses described above, the following land use goals are established for the West Central Neighborhoods:

1. Project a vision for future land use in the West Central Neighborhoods to guide growth, development, and redevelopment.
2. Utilize the planning area's land more efficiently to accommodate growing demands of CSU and the City as a whole to the extent it does not diminish or destroy the character of the area's existing neighborhoods.
3. Review the planning area's zoning districts as specified on the map of the City's **Land Use Code** to determine if changes are needed to meet the goals of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan and **City Plan**. Propose any needed changes in the **Land Use Code**.
4. Review **Land Use Code** design standards and guidelines for all zoning districts pertinent to the West Central Neighborhoods to determine if changes are needed to meet the goals of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan and **City Plan**. Propose any modifications that are needed to meet these goals.
5. Resolve or mitigate the specific problems described in the Land Use Problems section.

Implementation

The goals of this plan will be implemented legislatively and administratively through the City Council's adoption of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan; however, realization of these goals reaches far beyond the formal adoption of the Plan. Their actualization depends on dedicated, vigorous, and continuous cooperation from the City, CSU, the area's residents and businesses,

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and the various entrepreneurial interests attracted to the area. The specific implementation procedures proposed as a means of overcoming the land use problems described above and of realizing the defined land use goals are as follows:

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Goal 1 - Project a vision for future land use.

Task 1 - Referring to the broad land use classification system described under Analysis - 1, reconcile any internal inconsistencies between the Housing and Transportation sections of this Plan and the proposed Conservation, New Development, and Redevelopment land use areas.

Task 2 - Identify legal, political, economic, financial, and social constraints on future land uses in the planning area and organize these limitations in a mode that provides a framework for the rezoning process.

Task 3 - Assure that all of the Plan's goals are accommodated in the vision for future land uses.

Goal 2 - Utilize land more efficiently.

Task 1 - Referring to all appropriate elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Master Plan of Colorado State University, as well as other elements of this Plan, identify services and amenities that cannot be provided by existing land uses under future growth projections.

Task 2 - In consultation with the planning area's neighborhoods and property owners, Colorado State University, and the City's business community, propose chronologically phased new development and redevelopment that will satisfy projected deficiencies. Seek the counsel of potential entrepreneurial interests in confirming the validity of these proposals and enlist their support in accomplishing the proposed developments with overall planning assistance from the City of Fort Collins and Colorado State University.

Goal 3 - Review the planning area's zoning districts and propose any needed changes.

Task 1 - Review the zoning established by the **Land Use Code of City Plan** and determine the changes needed in that zoning to accomplish all goals of this Plan.

Task 2 - Obtain input from the planning area's residents, property owners and businesses, City officials, and the general public and revise the proposed zoning as needed.

Task 3 - Formalize the Plan's zoning as proposed for adoption, assuring that the proposed rezoning conforms to the other elements of **City Plan**.

Goal 4 - Establish design standards and guidelines.

Task 1 - Review the descriptions of all **Land Use Code** Zoning Districts pertinent to the planning area to determine what additions, modifications, or recision in design standards and guidelines, if any, are required to meet the goals of this Plan. Special emphasis will be placed on architectural standards and density/intensity issues to assure compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Task 2 - Obtain input from the planning area's residents, property owners and businesses, City officials, and the general public on proposed land use and development standards for each of the planning area's zoning districts.

Task 3 - Prepare appropriate text to codify any revised standards and guidelines.

Goal 5 - Resolve or mitigate the specific problems described in the Land Use Problems section.

Task 1 - Obtain public comment to establish the validity of each problem statement and the analysis of the problem.

Task 2 - Obtain qualified professional comment to verify the problem analysis and to project viable solutions.

Task 3 - Refer prospective problem solutions or mitigations to appropriate bodies for action.

B. ISSUE: Public Services

Statement of Issue

Public services are an integral part of any neighborhood. These services provide a number of everyday necessities such as personal and household safety (police and fire services), transportation (mass transit), recreational opportunities (parks and open spaces) and utilities (telephone, cable, stormwater/wastewater and trash collection). The proximity of the West Central Neighborhoods to Colorado State University adds special emphasis to this aspect of planning. Many of these students have ready access and need for these services. Therefore, reasonably accessible public services are also of concern to them.

Goals of this Analysis

The goal of this analysis is to impartially analyze the currently available public services, identify services which are missing, and recommend additional services if necessary.

Background Information

As previously mentioned, public services are defined as any living necessities provided to the masses regardless of whether these services are public or private. To secure information about these services, a request was made of various City departments for a report of their activities within the West Central Neighborhoods. This request resulted in reports submitted from the Police Department, Fire Department, Natural Resources, and Stormwater Utility. The individual reports are included in this assessment. Summaries of these assessments follow:

1. Police. The following reports are summarized:
 - A. *Nuisance/Crime Rates.* For the purpose of nuisance/crime rates, the West Central Neighborhoods was divided into 17 areas. An individual delineation of a number of incident categories were provided for each area for 1994 and 1995. For ease of analysis, the 1995 data set was analyzed. The 17 subdivisions were combined into four areas based upon quadrants (NW, SW, SE, and SW) of the planning area with the intersection of Prospect Road and Shields Street as the geographic center. These combinations also made sense with respect to their demographics. The analyzed data included most categories of violent crime, assault, burglaries, noise, and other categories associated with concentrations of population. It is clear from this analysis that the biggest problem spot in the West Central Neighborhoods is in the NW quadrant, presumably from the location of commercial developments.
 - B. *Traffic.* This analysis follows the outline of the previous section. The 1995 data set were for the following parameters: driving under the influence, accidents, hit-and-run, property damage accident, accident with injury, accident with extraction needed, traffic complaint, vehicular assault and vehicular homicide.
 - C. *Poudre Emergency Call Boxes.* There is one emergency call box in the West Central Neighborhoods located on the Spring Creek Trail at marker SW2.
 - D. *Neighborhood Watch Organizations.* There are 11 active Neighborhood Watch units: Orchard/Moore, Heatheridge, Ridgewood/Stuart, Prospect/Shields, Hill Pond, Sundering, Village West, Lexington Green, Valley Forge, Dover/Manchester, and Winfield/Union/Freedom Lane.
2. Fire. The West Central Neighborhoods is served by Poudre Fire Authority Sub-Stations 2 (415 S. Bryan), 3 (2000 Mathews), and 4 (2030 Devonshire). The estimated response time by these units is approximately 5 minutes. There are no special Fire Code restrictions different from any other area in the jurisdiction.

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3. Stormwater. The West Central Neighborhoods lie within three drainage basins: Old Town, Canal Importation and Spring Creek. The drainage basin which impacts the planning area most is the Spring Creek Basin. The Master Plan for this basin was updated in 1988. A copy of the Master Plan for this basin is attached. All of the stormwater improvements on Colorado State University Research Foundation (CSURF) property have been completed. Staff assessment of the basin plan is as follows:

“The Spring Creek Basin has had a high priority for several years and has consumed a lot of our budget and staff time compared to the other basins. Even though there are still improvements left to complete in the Spring Creek system it may be one of the first of the master plans to have them all completed.

The Canal Importation Basin has also been a high priority and several improvements have been built. In fact most of the bond money the Utility has gotten has gone to the Canal Importation Basin because the fees generated in the basin have not kept up with the needed improvements.

The Old Town Master Plan implementation has begun even though fees have been collected for less than two years... Each year priorities are determined using a number of factors and the West Central Neighborhood area has been getting a very high percentage of the attention.”

Stormwater - While this is considered a sub-issue of Public Services, it is a fairly complex one, and the Subcommittee has not had the resources to pursue it to the extent it deserves. A more detailed assessment is needed of present and future storm drainage plans and improvements, particularly in relation to flood protection and protection of the natural environment. These concerns are intricately enmeshed with federal, state, and local regulations, making it difficult to analyze the effects they will have on future planning for the West Central Neighborhoods. More time and more analytical expertise will be required by the Subcommittee to complete this assessment.

Optional Solution(s) (See below):

Measurement Criteria:

1. Regionalized crime statistics.
2. Fire response time and fire calls in West Central Neighborhoods.
3. Approval of new FEMA designation for Spring Creek Basin.

Recommended Options:

1. This area already supports one of the highest population densities within the City of Fort Collins. Insure the level of police services as population base increases within the West Central Neighborhoods to ensure necessary level of service.

2. Insure the level of fire service as population base increases within the West Central Neighborhoods.
3. Insure future development within CSURF properties does not compromise the Spring Creek Drainage plan.

Specific Actions

1. Investigate placement of police walking beat at Campus West Area.
2. Investigate placement of fire station in the Centre for Advanced Technology (CAT).
3. Monitor future planning on CSURF property.
4. Continue maintenance of Spring Creek Basin floodplain.

C. ISSUE: Private Sector Services

Background

Private sector services are an integral part of any neighborhood. Neighborhoods with too many commercial establishments are subjected to large traffic flows and their related pollution and noise, influx of large numbers of non-residents, and a gradual shift of character from private residential to commercial. Conversely, neighborhoods with too few commercial services result in economic instability, lack of services, and increased vehicle miles traveled as local residents commute to other sources of service outside the neighborhood. A wide variety of private sector services allows for inward focusing of the neighborhood as residents utilize these nearby facilities. Well designed local facilities (e.g. restaurants) also allow for neighbors to interact on a frequent basis which leads to an overall feeling of neighborhood unity. The proximity of the West Central Neighborhoods (WCN) to the University adds special emphasis to this aspect of planning. Many CSU students do not have ready access to automobiles, therefore reasonably accessible commercial services are of utmost priority.

Problem

Placement of new private sector services is a complex issue due to the limited availability of land for commercial development within the WCN and the highly sensitive nature of location with respect to existing residential neighborhoods. New development and redevelopment must proceed in a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly way. A few large parcels of vacant land still exist at the center of the WCN. If these properties are commercially developed, they must be developed with easy pedestrian access for the large population located in nearby apartment complexes and

the University. Similarly, the commercial development on West Elizabeth Street should be redeveloped in a more pedestrian-friendly manner.

Analysis

Private sector services are defined as for-profit commercial establishments, businesses, and services located in the WCN or offering for-profit services within the areas. These establishments include, but are not necessarily limited to entertainment, gasoline/service, health, insurance, and food, and other miscellaneous services such as hair cutters, small retail shops, banks, and pharmacies. A relatively complete inventory of the private sector services within the West Central Neighborhoods, and the area immediately adjacent has been completed. For the purpose of this analysis, the intersection of Prospect Road and Shields Street is considered the center of the WCN. This inventory identifies many commercial opportunities such as a neighborhood grocery, hardware, or electronics stores, and banking facilities. New development must consider the following parameters:

1. Traffic impacts. The Prospect/ Shields intersection is one of the busiest in the City. Similarly, the Campus West area is highly congested. Any development or redevelopment of these areas must be sensitive to the increased traffic these areas will produce. One must also consider that useful development in the WCN will most likely reduce vehicle miles traveled by local residents which may result in improvements for the City as a whole.
2. Pollution impacts. The Spring Creek Basin which runs through the center of the planning unit acts as a drainage basin which is the coldest part of the City. Any development should be sensitive to this fact because the atmospheric conditions tend to trap pollution. This is an issue for both the area residents and other citizens which use the area's bike trails and parks.
3. Neighborhood character impacts. Since commercial development is a "double-edged sword" careful attention must be given to maintaining the balance in the WCN so as not to swing the balance to commercial. New development or redevelopment should be developed as "people-friendly" and "neighborhood-oriented" places which encourage and support personal interaction with neighbors -- a place where people like to go, shop, and visit. Neighborhood scale centers would also discourage a community-wide shopping experience which would limit the stress placed upon the Prospect Road and Shields Street intersection. Such development should also proceed in a manner that is architecturally compatible with the visual character of the WCN.

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4. Pedestrian access. Due to the high population density of the proximity to CSU, all development must have easy pedestrian and bicycle access to current sidewalks and trails.
5. Bus access. Ready bus access to any new commercial development must be encouraged.
6. Open space and natural impacts. Because this area contains important natural areas, wetlands, and wildlife, new development must minimize impacts on these natural features.
7. Street impacts. Unnecessary deterioration of neighborhood streets by private sector service vehicles such as trash hauling trucks should be discouraged by encouraging trash consolidation in neighborhoods whenever possible.

Goals

This goal of the WCN Plan is to increase pedestrian and neighborhood friendly private sector service opportunities in the WCN, while minimizing the impacts of such commercial facilities and activities on the area's natural areas, wetlands, wildlife, and streets.

Implementation

The WCN Advisory Committee recommends building a larger commercial center with a grocery store on the vacant property SE of the Prospect/Shields intersection. This development should be accompanied by redevelopment of Campus West. All development and redevelopment should follow the **City Plan** development guidelines whenever possible, making these developments as pedestrian friendly as possible.

Specific steps for implementation:

1. Actively encourage development of commercial neighborhood services for the WCN.
2. Develop plan for redevelopment of the West Elizabeth Street commercial district, using **City Plan** design guidelines, to make it a centerpiece for the WCN.
3. Evaluate current pedestrian flow patterns and develop requirements for pedestrian access for all commercial developments.

4. Require Transfort to provide internal access to all major commercial developments.
5. Develop rigid guidelines for mitigating negative impacts on natural features of the WCN.
6. Require limited nighttime hours to reduce pollution accumulation in the Spring Creek Basin.
7. Develop rigid guidelines to insure safety of school children when negotiating new developments or redevelopment areas.
8. Encourage trash consolidation in neighborhood areas whenever possible.

D. ISSUE: Neighborhood Appearance and Design

Statement of Issue

The physical character of the West Central Neighborhoods (WCN) is defined as the appearance and design of individual residential neighborhoods, civic and other non-residential uses, commercial shopping centers, parks, and streets that connect these areas. This includes streetscape design, building design and compatibility, effective use and integration of open space, and the overall visual “flow” of the WCN, including Colorado State University as it abuts the WCN. This assessment of neighborhood appearance and design is organized onto two categories 1) overall visual character of neighborhoods and commercial areas and 2) streetscape design.

In order to develop and maintain visually pleasing neighborhoods, continuity of visual character is essential. Many of our neighborhoods have developed their own unique visual character through the years. The most attractive characteristics of these neighborhoods should be identified, fostered and maintained (e.g. view of Long’s Peak from the corner of Prospect Rd. And Shields St. The unpleasing elements should be identified, and efforts should be made for improvement. By developing a cohesive visual plan (within and/or between our neighborhoods), City officials will have the guidelines by which they can protect and enhance the beauty of our neighborhoods.

Background Information

Overall Visual Character:

Visual character defines the impression of the planning area being studied, and as such is quite important. It must be recognized, however, that much of the infrastructure of the various neighborhoods are already in place and will be difficult to change. Furthermore, the WCN is not a homogeneous neighborhood but rather an amalgamation of disparate neighborhoods, each with its own unique characteristics.

Four general residential areas comprised of primarily single family homes have been identified for conservation:

1. SW Area: bounded by Prospect Road on the north, Drake Road on the south, Taft Hill Road on the west and Shields Street on the east. This residential block is characterized predominantly by the Village West, Lexington Green, Foothills and Prospect residential subdivisions and Rolland Moore Community Park. The existing residential areas are reflected by a combination of cul-de-sac and collector street patterns. As a result of these established neighborhoods, which reflect a positive visual character, they are identified to be conserved.

2. NW Area: bounded by Mulberry Street on the north, Prospect Road on the South, Taft Hill Road on the west and Shields Street on the east. Interestingly, this square mile has developed as a transition from the grid street pattern existing in older neighborhoods to the north and the newer subdivisions utilizing cul-de-sac street patterns to the south.

Miller Brothers and Fairview subdivisions reflect predominantly single family residential housing. While to the north and east, a mix of single-family, apartments, and university-related housing exists. This area is characterized by both family owned and student rental housing adjacent to CSU.

3. SE quadrant: Bounded by South Shields Street on the west, Lake Street on the North, West Drake Street on the South, and the railroad tracks to the East. Single-family residential housing exists within the College Heights, Sheely, Spring Valley, Hill Pond and Windtrail subdivisions. However, a majority of this quadrant is part of the Centre for Advanced Technology Park.

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In addition, the WCN also contains a large number of high density apartment developments, some visually attractive and compatible -- such as Stone Creek or Woodbox, and some aesthetically unattractive -- such as Landmark or The Preserve. A major difference between these two developments is the effective use of open space, building height and footprint. Apartment complexes with garden levels or two stories appear to be more appropriate with the WCN.

The WCN also contains a number of commercial developments. Those with aesthetically pleasing design would be the Spring Creek Medical Complex or the commercial development occurring east of Shields Street and north of Centre Drive. These complexes are compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhoods in size, bulk and color. Commercial developmental design (e.g. Scotch Pines Plaza) are also compatible with the WCN. Design standards of “new Urbanism” which pushes storefronts to the Street and hides unseemly high volume parking are desirable.

Streetscape Design:

Streetscape: The overall street design, including both sides of the street public right-of-way (sidewalks, parkway landscape planting) and center median, if present.

Street Type: This analysis includes all arterial streets and collectors including West Elizabeth Street, West Stuart, Constitution Avenue (between Shields and Drake) and Centre Avenue. New local streets would meet the streetscape design standards for parkway planting.

Design features considered for development:

Street type	Lighting
Screen/buffer (pedestrian, cars, bldgs.)	Sidewalks
Planting design	Pedestrian crossings
Furniture (benches, signs, bike/news racks)	Curb cuts
Maintenance	

An assessment of existing information included reviewing City documents relating to public right of way street improvements. Prior to the adoption of **City Plan**, reference material used for development review included: the *City of Fort Collins Landscape Guide, Landscape Standards for Streetscapes and Medians, City Forestry Standards and Specifications, Standards and Guidelines for the North College Avenue Corridor*, and existing Corridor Plans. In 1996, new streetscape standards were adopted by the City for all public street systems. Refinement of the Streetscape Design Standards and guidelines is on-going.

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An inventory of Existing Conditions was conducted assessing the level of Landscape Planting (trees, shrubs, ground cover), relationships of sidewalk (& pedestrian crossings) layout to streets, parking, housing, open space, and views off street (short and long distance).

Assessment of Streetscape Design:

West Mulberry Street

This street has four auto traffic lanes, turn lanes and bicycle lanes. With few exceptions, the sidewalks are very narrow and are inconsistent. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient space to add a center planted median. There is very little room for bike lanes. There are, however, some mature trees, and the section along City Park is exemplary of desired elements -- detached meandering sidewalk and street tree plantings. This arterial street will not be widened as shown on the Master Street Plan.

Shields Street

Shields Street has four vehicular travel lanes -- two in each direction. This street has detached sidewalks along most of the mile between Prospect Road and West Drake Avenue. At Rolland Moore Park, the sloped concrete could be removed, regraded and planted. There are also some attached sidewalks which could be shifted away from the road providing opportunity for street tree planting. Most of South Shields Street has room for center planted medians between turn lanes, except the segment heading North of West Prospect. There is a significant view towards Longs Peak looking southwest from the intersection of Shields and Prospect Road. Proposed new development at that intersection should consider reducing building heights to not block these longdistance views.

West Prospect Road

Prospect Road has four vehicular travel lanes -- two in each direction with a bike lane and detached sidewalks. From Taft Hill to Shields Street, there is sufficient room to accommodate a center planted median. Along most of this mile section of street, the detached sidewalks are void of any landscape planting. Beyond Shields Street there are no bike lanes and the sidewalks become narrow and inconsistent. The overall appearance of the street declines from University Park Holiday Inn to College Avenue. According to the Master Street Plan, this section of Prospect Road will not be widened in the future -- precluding any opportunity for safe bike lanes, detached sidewalks or planted parkways.

West Drake Road

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West Drake Road has four vehicular travel lanes -- two in each direction. The West Drake Road widening project resulted in an excellent example of quality streetscape improvements incorporating planted medians and parkways, pedestrian-oriented street lighting, bridge design and bicycle trail design. Between Dunbar Street and South Shields Street, a few opportunities exist to convert the existing painted medians to full curb-planted medians.

West Elizabeth Street

West Elizabeth Street has four vehicular travel lanes from Shields to Constitution and then narrows to two travel lanes towards the Taft Hill intersection. There are bike lanes on both sides of West Elizabeth Street. There are mostly attached sidewalks with minimal street tree plantings. Future planning throughout the Campus West shopping area could result in providing opportunities for an enhanced pedestrian oriented streetscape design including planted medians, bike lanes, wide sidewalks with street trees and specialized crossings (future subarea plan being considered for this area).

Constitution Ave

Constitution Avenue has two travel lanes -- one in each direction. The majority of this street section generally has a positive character. While presently classified as a collector street, south of West Stuart Street reflects a character of a wide street corridor with bike lanes, compared to the segment between West Elizabeth Street and West Prospect Street having more of an appearance of a local street. In addition, the sidewalks are narrow and because of the wide street and attached sidewalk design, there is not sufficient room for establishing a street tree canopy theme.

West Stuart Street

West Stuart Street has two vehicular travel lanes with bike lanes and parking in each direction. This street is wide and the speed of traffic sometimes exceeds the limit. This street fits more into the collector level, rather than residential local street category. Bicycle route signage could be improved to better direct travelers along West Stuart and Constitution Avenue.

In addition, as a result of continued traffic exceeding the speed limit, even though the installed speed pumps are in place, a more visually appealing traffic calming approach should be considered.

Raintree Drive/Centre Avenue

Raintree Drive has two vehicular travel lanes -- one in each direction. Sidewalks and bike lanes exist on both sides of the street, with minimal street tree plantings. East of Shields there are very

narrow sidewalks and existing bike lanes. As this area develops, the street cross-section should be completed providing detached sidewalks and street trees. As Centre Avenue is extended to Prospect Street, several design issues need to be addressed including overall appearance, vertical height of roadway, connections to Spring Creek Trail, Science Drive and the Mason Street Corridor.

Problem

Visual Character:

Views from the streets onto parking areas and commercial areas are not screened adequately. The few remaining long distance view corridors will soon be obstructed by new development, unless an alternative is established to preserve these viewsheds.

Streetscape Design:

The streetscape and medians are in a varied array of landscaping styles and are maintained by various entities. These styles range from irrigated turf grass with tree and flowers, to undeveloped areas, and include hard surface areas which may or may not have vegetation. Historically, the maintenance responsibilities have been broken up into four different areas including: Parks, Forestry, Streets, and landowners or homeowner associations.

Analysis

Visual Character:

Opportunities:

Visual character can be enhanced to preserve short and long distance views, intersection design, overall streetscape appearance and focal points. Opportunities for street design enhancement can be achieved in both new street development and retrofitting of existing streets. Some projects are included in proposed developments, while others are part of larger capital improvements.

Constraints:

Visual character -- be it positive or negative appearance within neighborhoods, non-residential areas and public street corridors is subjective in nature. With the adoption of the **Land Use Code**, many of the previous problems associated with incompatible design of development projects have been addressed. In addition, the new street design standards significantly enhance the design and appearance along new and retrofitted street improvements.

Other obstacles include timing of improvements as individual projects are proposed, which could take some time, and when certain capital projects are implemented.

Optional Solution(s):

- Develop/redevelop neighborhood sensitive buildings.
- Form a “design review” committee to judge compatibility of new development or redevelopment with current development.
- Protect the visual character of those neighborhoods identified for preservation by design guidelines.

Streetscape Design:

Constraints:

The existing street landscape pattern throughout the study area includes a wide variety of styles of planting themes. While some arterial streets have sections that have a landscape design theme, the pattern is not consistent along the entire corridor. Other arterial streets lack any kind of cohesive landscape style.

Inconsistencies exist along most of the street corridors associated with pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes. As a result, parkway landscape planting along the street corridors ranges from minimal planting to no planting, with long segments which are comprised of hard surface paving, gravel or unmaintained turf. In most cases, sufficient room exists to accommodate additional tree and shrub planting or turf.

Painted striping at turn lanes and at pedestrian crossings could be better defined and enhanced visually.

Opportunities:

To enhance the visual appearance along these major corridors, which would increase positive reactions by a majority of observers, a more cohesive streetscape design would be desirable, where opportunities for improvements are identified. With the addition of a street tree design theme in areas lacking any streetscape improvements, these corridor segments could be greatly enhanced. Within the center areas of many of the arterial corridors, where painted turn lanes exist, some of these sections could be improved to provide a raised planted median to further enhance the overall streetscape design.

Goals

Visual Character:

- VC-1 Identify unique and pleasing visual characteristics in the WCN which should be conserved and improved during development/redevelopment.
- VC-2 Review and provide neighborhood input on specific development projects for site design, landscaping, building design and off-site impacts (Neighborhood Review Committee).
- VC-3 Encourage property owners to maintain, and commit to improving, individual property appearance and landscaping.

Streetscape Design:

- SC-1 Provide screening/buffering between residential neighborhoods and adjacent land uses including retail, commercial, parking and major street corridors.
- SC-2 Provide additional connections between residential neighborhoods and destinations for shopping, work, recreation and civic places. These links should have attractive landscaping and lighting to provide a visually appealing design.
- SC-3 Retrofit existing streets where appropriate, to provide new planted medians, detached sidewalks with planted parkways, and specialized pedestrian crossings at key intersections including Shields Street, Taft Hill Road, West Prospect Street, West Elizabeth Street and West Drake Road.
- SC-4 Maintain and enhance the positive visual character of the streetscape environment.

Implementation

Visual Character:

The WCN Advisory Committee encourages neighborhood sensitive development that preserves the “look” and “feel” of the WCN. A neighborhood “design review” committee should be formed within the WCN Council as its umbrella, and composed of members from each of the defined neighborhoods to judge neighborhood compatibility of proposed developments. This committee should advise City Planning Staff as to the desirability of any proposed development.

Specific Actions:

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1. Institute design standards and guidelines for development in each of the unique WCN.
2. Form development review committee to assist City Staff with the Development Review process.

Measurement Criteria:

1. Is proposed development compatible with neighboring, pre-existing development in building design, size, color and style?
2. Is there adequate open space and landscaping between new buildings to mitigate the impacts of development?
3. Is development compatible with the identified single-family areas so as not to visually alter the impression of low density (i.e. if medium density will be developed, design them like houses, e.g. newer buildings at Hill Pond)?

Streetscape Design:

Introduction:

In reviewing the assessment and analysis information for streetscapes within the study area, the recommendations are separated into three main categories relating to accountability including individual neighborhoods, private sector businesses, and the City of Fort Collins.

Streetscape Design Improvements:

1. Individual Neighborhoods:

A grass roots movement within the various neighborhoods in the study area can have an impact on improving the visual character of streetscapes along the primary corridors.

- With the initiation of the WCNP committee, a focus group has been established, that has identified opportunities for general improvements. In following up with an implementation program, this same organization can take the lead in coordinating efforts for specific improvements.
- Recommend developing design standards and guidelines for the WCNP area including housing, commercial, institutional, streets and parking. The Subarea Plan is the first step

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in the planning process, where goals and general recommendations are identified. The standards and guidelines would provide more detailed implementation strategies.

- Identify specific segments of street corridors for opportunities to improve the visual character. Recognize successful sections which reflect a positive image and are safe.
- Establish an Adopt a Tree program in the area where private donations could help construct landscape improvements along medians, and sidewalk sections.

2. Private Sector Businesses:

- Existing businesses could be contacted and encouraged to improve landscaping, screening, access, etc. within their parcels. A special improvement district could be established to finance improvements for a larger section of street and parking area. In addition, private sector sponsorships could contribute for street furniture including benches, art, lighting, and other accessories.
- New development proposals can be reviewed to assure quality landscape design within the project site to include adequate planting, screening, lighting, maintenance, etc. Follow-up monitoring could then be conducted to make sure proposed improvements actually were installed and maintained over time.

3. The City of Fort Collins:

- Coordinate with the WCNP Committee in developing design standards and guidelines for the area.
- Coordinate with the WCNP Committee in implementing the city-wide streetscape design standards and guidelines.
- a) Install curb/landscape planting extensions at strategic locations along West Stuart Street to enhance neighborhood appearance and aid in slowing traffic. Narrowing of the street on both sides could contribute to slowing the speed of traffic considerably. Planting islands need only extend out to the inside of the existing bike lanes. b) Planted medians along the center of the street where appropriate could also act as traffic calming devices.
- Install improvements where identified by the committee, and make it a priority in the immediate future.

Measurable Criteria:

- Pedestrian design for sidewalks and street crossings at intersection locations
- Bicycle safety and access along streets/neighborhoods, CSU
- Visual character (positive/negative) based on level of improvement

F. ISSUE: Sense of Community

An important ingredient of neighborhood well-being is a somewhat abstract quality, which has been termed “sense of community” for purposes of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. “Sense of Community” involves both tangible and intangible relationships that strongly influence the character of neighborhoods -- public and private facilities of all kinds, personal feelings of connection and a sense of belonging and satisfaction, and the day-to-day interactions that occur between the people of the neighborhood and with others outside the neighborhood. It encompasses such elements as the cohesion felt among a neighborhood’s constituents, how a neighborhood responds to a diversity of people and lifestyles, the physical conditions under which they live, and the degree to which a neighborhood is organized to cope with matters of mutual concern. Lacking such a sense, a neighborhood exists only as a physical entity. But with it, a neighborhood becomes a vital physical, social, and economic unit capable of creating or modifying its character to better meet the needs of its own residents and business community and to play a more vital role in the city as a whole.

Background

The degree to which a sense of community exists is a major factor in determining the character of a neighborhood. Concerns related to this issue were frequently expressed in surveys of neighborhood attitudes conducted before this planning process began and in the early deliberations of the Plan’s Advisory Committee. The Committee recognized that the existing sense of community varies widely among the planning area’s neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods seem rather well unified, while others almost completely lack the basic relationships that provide a sense of community. One fundamental difference is the way in which a neighborhood’s constituents interact, or fail to. At a personal level, residents of some neighborhoods know all the residents in their block and care about their welfare. In other neighborhoods people rarely know the name of their next-door-neighbors, or even recognize them when they see them. In the area’s business and professional community, customers or clients are often not from the neighborhood but come there only to obtain some particular good or service. Such neighborhood constituents may or may not develop any particular affinity for the neighborhood. Further, a sizeable proportion of this area’s people are short-term residents, often a part of their neighborhood for only a few months or even a few weeks. Each of these categories of neighborhood constituents plays a different role in the problems and opportunities of establishing a sense of community.

Such inconsistencies in relationships make it more difficult to develop a sense of community throughout the area's neighborhoods, but not impossible. Histories of cities with even more complex societies demonstrate that many neighborhoods achieve this sense, either naturally or by intent. But in the absence of some natural cohesive force, such as a common ethnicity, a sense of community will not likely be achieved without well-organized efforts and well-defined objectives. Some formalized organization that provides a means of establishing and maintaining communications is almost a necessity. The City of Fort Collins recognizes this need and has established a Neighborhood Resources Office, reporting directly to the City Manager, to facilitate effective neighborhood communications and neighborhood-building activities.

A sense of community depends on both "hardware" relationships, such as the existing buildings and infrastructure, and "software" relationships, such as human organizations like neighborhood and homeowner associations, neighborhood schools and their parent-teacher groups, religious institutions, private businesses, and, in this case, the CSU community. Because the West Central Neighborhoods are an older area, their "hardware" elements are mostly in place and therefore are a given for planning purposes. Only minor adjustments can be made in these "hardware" elements to eliminate physical barriers to a stronger sense of community cohesion. But much can be done on the "software" side. Neighborhood and homeowner associations that foster a sense of community already exist in parts of the area. Homeowner's associations are the contractual entities created to address some particular purpose, like enforcement of covenants and management of open space held in common or a swimming pool or clubhouse. Typically, such associations are effective in promoting cohesion in only a particular subdivision. Neighborhood associations, by contrast, are generally voluntary groups formed to address issues of more general concern to all property or business owners and residents of a broader area. A few associations in the West Central Neighborhoods, such as the Prospect-Shields and Avery Park Neighborhood Associations, have been highly successful in focusing on problems and opportunities in their neighborhoods and creating productive communications with the City's planners and decision makers. Such effectiveness, in turn, does much to foster a sense of community within those neighborhoods. Schools and their parent groups, religious organizations, and the many interest groups associated with CSU can also contribute to a broader sense of community.

One distinctive characteristic of the West Central Neighborhoods is their diversity, including major differences in the cultural, ethnic, racial, social, age, gender, sexual, and economic status of their people. While it is generally accepted today that diversity enriches our society, it can become a major barrier to a sense of community. At present, national, state, and local laws and policies largely favor diversity as a basic social tenet. However, since accepting and melding diverse elements in neighborhoods is not universally accepted, the full spectrum of viewpoints on diversity may be represented in the West Central Neighborhoods, as in the City as a whole, with the result that planning goals and courses of action that promote, or even favor, diversity in its various components may meet some degree of resistance. This means that accommodating

diversity within the West Central Neighborhoods, if not adequately addressed, could become a significant challenge in developing a true sense of community in the area's neighborhoods.

Problems

Achieving a sense of community in the West Central Neighborhoods is confounded in part by the area's geography. While the area's boundaries are appropriate for the City's subarea planning purposes, the West Central Neighborhoods are really an artificial entity that has not previously existed. This planning area crosscuts, overlaps, or shares established City Council districts, all infrastructure services, school boundaries, and the boundaries of existing neighborhood and homeowner associations. These physical, or "hardware," conditions contribute to the difficulty of realizing a sense of community in the West Central Neighborhoods. Transportation issues are particularly significant in this respect, with the lack of consistency in multi-modal transportation facilities a major deterrent.

In the past, auto traffic has been assigned top priority, which has encouraged circulation by auto. The resulting increase in street capacity facilitates city-wide auto traffic flow but tends to fragment the area and actually inhibits travel by auto within the West Central Neighborhoods. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic has fared even less well. This is a critical point since the area's bicyclists and pedestrians are largely West Central Neighborhood residents. Specific problems are: (1) inadequate crosswalks and medians; (2) discontinuous and poorly maintained bicycle lanes (too little attention is paid to removal of snow, sand and debris); (3) bicycle lanes directly adjacent to high-speed auto lanes on arterial streets considered unsafe by many users, particularly for children's use; (4) sidewalks throughout the West Central Neighborhoods that are often narrow, nonexistent or discontinuous; and (5) bus routes and schedules that are not adequate to encourage transit use. One important result of these transportation-related hindrances is the difficulty of developing and maintaining a sense of community in the West Central Neighborhoods.

Another problem for the area -- as well as an opportunity -- in developing a sense of community, is the presence of CSU. While CSU has generally been a good neighbor and a focus of much of the West Central Neighborhoods' sense of community, it has a State institution's option of responding or not responding to the City's problems. A major problem for the West Central Neighborhoods has emerged from the need to house an ever-increasing number of CSU students. Driven by a natural desire of students to live off campus and the financial ability to do so, the demand for student housing in the West Central Neighborhoods has risen dramatically in recent years. The University has generally deemed this a normal social and economic trend and does not plan to mitigate the problem by providing more on-campus housing for its students. Consequently, the largely unregulated conditions under which students and other short-term residents occupy off-campus housing have become a seriously negative factor in developing and maintaining a sense of community in some of the area's neighborhoods. The problem stems less

from students as individual residents of rental housing than from their itineracy and characteristic lifestyles that differ significantly from those of a neighborhood's longer-term residents. Financial incentives to create and overload rental housing are another facet of the problem. Under such circumstances, the historic cohesion that previously existed in neighborhoods has often evaporated, leaving long-time owner residents with the option of adjusting to less stable living conditions or leaving the neighborhood. As these trends progress, some of the area's neighborhoods are threatened with instability and decline. Unless this problem can be satisfactorily resolved, it will be extremely difficult to enhance, or even sustain, a sense of community in some of the area's neighborhoods.

To cope with the growing complexity of the West Central Neighborhoods, a well organized effort will be needed to promote a sense of community. It cannot be expected that this will occur without intervention from the City. The question is how to organize this effort, utilizing the resources of the City government without jeopardizing the grass-roots initiatives that have emerged from the development of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. The Plan's Advisory Committee has demonstrated that representatives of most of the area's neighborhoods, plus Colorado State University, the Colorado State University Research Foundation, and the area's business community have a strong common interest in solving the West Central Neighborhoods' problems and capitalizing on its opportunities. From a variety of formal and informal processes, facilitated by the City's Advance Planning Department's staff, a climate of personal familiarity and trust, easy communications, understanding of City governance, and a sense of common purpose has developed among the Advisory Committee's members. Unique insights into the problems and opportunities of the area that have emerged would not likely have become so well-defined under more conventional top-down planning processes. Building on the assets that have developed out of this planning process, the Advisory Committee proposes that its mission of developing the West Central Neighborhoods Plan should be extended to include initial organization of an ongoing body to advise the City on implementing the West Central Neighborhoods Plan, to help the area's neighborhoods develop a stronger sense of community, and to address other issues of mutual concern as they arise in the West Central Neighborhoods. Details of this proposal are set forth in a subsequent discussion of neighborhood-building.

To summarize, developing a true sense of community among the West Central Neighborhoods will depend on finding ways to promote community cohesion, to accommodate social and economic diversity, and to establish an organized means of neighborhood-building. Further discussion of each of these aims follows.

G. ISSUE: Community Cohesion

Definition of Issue

For purposes of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan, “community cohesion” is defined as: *the factors that contribute to feelings of connection, sense of belonging, and satisfaction that binds the stakeholders within the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.*

Importance of the Issue

The degree of community cohesion that exists is obviously a major contributor towards determining the character of the neighborhood. The concern over the issue of community cohesion has been noted in the survey of the West Central Neighborhoods planning area and in the West Central Neighborhoods Planning Committee. Although data do not exist to support this, it seems apparent that the amount of community cohesion varies considerably throughout the planning area.

Priority of the Issue

The Subcommittee has identified that community cohesion is a high priority issue for the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.

Relevance of the Issue to Other Issues

Community cohesion is one of the foundations forming the character of the neighborhood and is a major issue comprising the West Central Neighborhoods Plan being developed.

Problem

How can community cohesion be enhanced both within and among neighborhoods of the West Central Neighborhoods planning area?

Analysis

There are two facets of community cohesion: the socioeconomic and infrastructure aspects. These two facets are analogous to the “software” and “hardware” concepts presented in the Neighborhood-Building section. We feel that the proposed West Central Neighborhoods Committee, in conjunction with other neighborhood associations, City agencies, CSU, private business, religious institutions, and residents, can play a major role in enhancing the community cohesion of the West Central Neighborhoods. Generally, any situation which tends to create disruptions or discontinuities in linkages or interactions of socioeconomic or infrastructure components will negatively impact community cohesion. Therefore, disruptions and discontinuities must be avoided wherever possible. It is also possible to include a more positive, proactive approach to enhancing community cohesion.

- (1) The socioeconomic component deals with issues such as:
 - a. neighbor and neighborhood interactions;
 - b. the diversity of individuals living in the area or passing through; and
 - c. the CSU/student/neighborhood interface;

- (2) The infrastructure component deals with issues such as:
 - a. layout and streetscape of streets;
 - b. layout of bike trails;
 - c. layout of pedestrian walkways and sidewalks;
 - d. linkages between streets, bike trails, pedestrian walkways and neighborhoods;
 - e. bus services;
 - f. presence of schools, recreational, religious, and other infrastructure facilities; and
 - g. housing issues.

Proposed Solutions

Socioeconomic issues:

- (1a) *Neighbor and neighborhood interactions.*

A few of the many factors that can limit neighbor and neighborhood interactions and thereby impact community cohesion are:

- short-term residents;
- physical barriers to interactions such as fences (particularly without gates), major arterials, and irrigation canals; and
- interfaces between differing land uses, such as high density and single-family residences, and housing and public/private institutions.

Opportunities that provide for interaction among residents either by common activities or sharing common locations/facilities can alleviate some of these problems and improve community cohesion by increasing familiarity and understanding. The importance of providing common activities and facilities is important due to the large number of short-term residents in the West Central Neighborhoods. Activities that contribute to feelings of connection and sense of belonging are positive, proactive ways to enhance community cohesion. There are a number of public and private facilities in the planning area (see Public and Private Services sections) that provide parks, open spaces, swimming pools, the Senior Center, churches, and schools that

provide common locations for interactions. Given that facilities exist for gathering residents, activities need to be promoted to facilitate interactions. Even relatively inexpensive and simple activities such as block parties, festivals, joint garage sales, and pool parties can promote community cohesion. If parks, such as Rolland Moore, can increase the diversity of attractions they offer to serve a greater variation of users, this would help community cohesion (see the Parks and Open Space section of this report). Providing common activities has the added benefit of “tearing down” fences. The West Central Neighborhoods Committee can play a key role in facilitating activities while working in coordination with City and County agencies.

(1b) *Diversity of individuals in planning area and those passing through.*

The planning area is characterized by a high diversity of people, which is an asset (see Diversity section); however, diversity can also lead to conflict and lack of cohesion when unifying factors and commonality is not found, or when diversity is not appreciated. The best means to make the diversity of the area an asset is to provide for positive community interactions and education among the residents of the West Central Neighborhoods. Linkages with CSU, City agencies, schools, and religious institutions are important in facilitating and educating residents of the value of diversity.

(1c) *CSU/student/neighborhood interface.*

As recognized repeatedly throughout this Plan, CSU is an overriding factor both positively and negatively impacting the West Central Neighborhoods. CSU can serve as a focal point providing facilities, cultural events, academic events, sporting events, etc. which can enhance community cohesion. CSU also can serve as a physical barrier and disrupt linkages, contribute to the presence of the transient nature of tenants in the area, and add significantly to the number of individuals passing through the area. CSU students can add problems to the West Central Neighborhoods, but also bring a vitality as well and certainly contribute to the diversity of the area.

CSU provides an excellent service to the West Central Neighborhoods in all of their facilities and programs. The CSU Master Plan also is addressing issues such as transportation to the campus and how the campus interfaces with the surrounding neighborhoods. Little can be done about the campus providing a physical barrier to travel across campus other than what is being proposed. Encouragement and support in implementing the CSU proposals should be emphasized.

Several other sections of this Plan deal with specific issues of the CSU/student/neighborhood interface.

Infrastructure issues:

(2a) *Streetscape and layout of streets.*

Street layout and streetscape impact residents' feeling of satisfaction with the area. When streets create disruption in linkages or barriers to interaction, then community cohesion can be adversely affected. Prospect Road can be used as an example to illustrate some of the influences on community cohesion. The poor streetscape design between Shields and Taft Hill does not enhance the visual character of the West Central Neighborhoods and decreases residents' satisfaction. This section is clearly a barrier to resident access to facilities in the area and thus interactions with other residents. This is evident to all pedestrians, especially children, who try to cross Prospect in the one-mile section of road where there are no traffic or pedestrian crossing signals and no medians to increase safe crossing. Considerably more attention to this subject is presented elsewhere in this Plan, particularly in the Streetscape Design and the Transportation sections.

(2b) *Layout of bicycle trails and lanes.*

As with streets, the layout and condition of bicycle trails and lanes can impact residents' satisfaction with the planning area. Whenever linkages are not consistent, or safety is compromised, then negative influences on community cohesion can be expected. The encouraging aspect of this issue is that in general, conditions are very good for bicycling in the area. Areas such as the CSU/CSURF property between Prospect and Drake, east of Shields, and the occasional disappearances of bike lanes (e.g., the bridge on West Plum just west of City Park) where linkages are lost, can be easily corrected. Some of the safety issues do not prove difficult to correct either. Consistent snow, sand, debris, glass, etc., removal from bike lanes, especially along arterial and collector streets would enhance safety. The generally wide nature of streets also allows for many opportunities to enhance safety for bicyclists. Safety for children can be enhanced by allowing them to ride on sidewalks on busy arterials like Taft Hill rather than the bike lane immediately adjacent to the traffic lanes. The guiding principle should be that diligent and prompt attention is given to problems as they arise so that community cohesion is not adversely changed.

One issue that affects community cohesion is the interaction between motorized vehicles and bicycles. Rules and regulations that bicyclists must follow are established for motorized vehicles, not bicyclists. This acts as a deterrent for bicyclists to using bikes rather than other means of transportation, and results in conflict among bicyclists and drivers. Considerably more detail is presented in other sections of this Plan.

(2c) *Layout of pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, and trails.*

As with streets and bicycle trails/lanes, community cohesion is responsive to pedestrian issues. When linkages are broken, or physical movement is impeded or unsafe, then satisfaction with the

planning area declines. Specific examples of problems are given throughout this Plan, but some major ones are roads with no sidewalks, very narrow sidewalks, obstructions of sidewalks, and lack of crossing signals for certain arterial and collector streets. Fences without gates or access ways tend to fragment neighborhoods and isolate individual residents. There are many possible solutions to these issues, some of which are discussed elsewhere, but from a community cohesion standpoint it is important to address problems promptly.

(2d) *Linkages between streets, bike trails, pedestrian walkways, and neighborhoods.*

When linkages within the infrastructure are broken or do not exist, then community cohesion is impacted in many ways. Specific problems in linkages need to be identified and corrected. Particular concerns are when access to facilities, parks, etc. such as Rolland Moore Park, Village Green Swimming Pool, Red Fox Meadows, and CSU facilities are not convenient or safe (especially for younger children). For example, crossing Prospect Road between Shields and Taft Hill is difficult and unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross because of the speed and volume of traffic, with no pedestrian crosswalks for this one-mile stretch of road. Another example is the bicycle lanes on Taft Hill. Safety issues of children riding in these lanes when so close to traffic are a concern to some parents. There are sidewalks that would be safer, but it is technically illegal to ride a bicycle on these sidewalks. Other examples are given in the Transportation section, but the positive side to this is the relative ease of correcting many of the problems. For example, put some pedestrian crossing signals on Prospect and allow bicyclists to use the sidewalk on major arterial.

(2e) *Bus services.*

Many residents in the West Central Neighborhoods depend on the bus system as their primary source of transportation, and therefore, it is important to community cohesion as are other modes of transportation. Adequate bus service will become increasingly important as environmental concerns deepen and as the public school system continues to incorporate more alternative schools/schools of choice into their program (more children will need to use public buses to get to these schools). When routes are inadequate in meeting resident needs and in stimulating greater usage of the bus transportation system, then community cohesion and diversity of the West Central Neighborhoods will be adversely affected. Some clear inadequacies are:

- a. poor evening and summer service (although evening service has recently been expanded);
- b. bus frequency is too low; and
- c. access to existing routes is not convenient for many residents in the West Central Neighborhoods.

Bus service issues are covered in greater detail in the Transportation section in Appendix C.

(2f) *Presence of schools, recreational, religious, and other infrastructure facilities.*

Recreational, religious, school, and other infrastructure facilities play a pivotal role in enhancing community cohesion. For instance, they can provide locations for functions that bring the community together. Fortunately, many of these facilities are available in the West Central Neighborhoods (See Public and Private Services sections).

Every effort to increase the developing partnership between the City and Poudre School District should be encouraged. This partnership can greatly enhance community cohesion. For example, the proposal that a pocket park be created across the street from Bennett Elementary School (see Parkland and Open Space section) meets the intended spirit of both providing pocket parks throughout neighborhoods and increasing interaction between the City's Parks and Recreation Department and neighborhood schools. Another area to explore further and encourage is making neighborhood school buildings more accessible to the community. Not only should programs like opening the Moore Elementary School library to the public in the summer be continued, but the use of other school facilities, and for other functions, should be pursued. The fees customarily charged for use of public schools by the general public are understandably needed by the School District to cover added costs, but such fees discourage use of these facilities by the community. In the interest of promoting community cohesion, alternatives are needed for defraying these costs by some equitable distribution between the City, the School District, and those who use the facilities.

Demographic realities pose another threat to the traditional role neighborhood schools have played in community cohesion. Shifting populations of children of elementary school age often mean that children must be transported from outside a neighborhood to make efficient use of an underutilized neighborhood school. This situation is complicated further by the trend toward schools of choice and special programs that attract pupils from outside the neighborhood. But these practical necessities need not nullify the neighborhood cohesion dividends of a local school if the "outside" students are welcomed into the community and the neighborhood school remains open to the neighborhood's children. It should therefore be the policy of the School District, reinforced as appropriate by the City, to assure that the neighborhood character of public schools will be maintained and strengthened unless logistic demands make this impossible.

Churches have also played an important traditional role in building and maintaining community cohesion. This is now less true than in the past due to the fact that most churches draw their constituencies from wider areas of the City than the neighborhoods in which they are located. However, some churches in the planning area have demonstrated a desire to support their surrounding communities by making the church's facilities available without charge for public neighborhood meetings and activities. Such cooperation strongly benefits community cohesion and should be commended and encouraged by the City.

(2g) *Housing issues.*

Housing can positively or negatively affect community cohesion. By providing a diversity of housing as currently exists in the West Central Neighborhoods, all residents' needs can be met. When the balance is disturbed, then community cohesion and diversity can suffer. A balance in housing diversity can also lead to conflict and reduction in community cohesion. For example, non-owner-occupied housing situations mixed with owner-occupied housing can have socioeconomic implications as noted above and cause infrastructure problems. Housing maintenance is often a point of contention in neighborhoods. City regulations need to be assessed for adequacy to meet the problems and then enforcement of regulations stressed. The Housing and other sections of this Plan more completely address housing issues.

H. ISSUE: Diversity

Definition

For purposes of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan, "diversity" is limited to its cultural, ethnic, racial, social, age, gender, and economic aspects. These terms are overlapping and not intended to be mutually exclusive.

Background

There are a number of ways the issue of diversity could be defined. Looking back to citizen's meeting in May of 1994 that initiated the planning process, aspects of diversity that were raised included: "need creative mix of apartments, single-family, affordable homes"; "good diversity"; and "opportunity for diversity makes a great neighborhood/society". Later, the Advisory Committee identified these aspects of diversity: mixed land uses and housing types; mixed character of the population (diversity); maintain age and people diversity and vitality; and maintain economic diversity and vitality. None of these citations is completely definitive of what was intended in the scope of the issue. Some address the physical makeup of the area that is better handled under other issues; others address the cultural, social, and economic diversity that more closely fits the common "politically correct" use of the term. We have chosen to limit our consideration of diversity to this meaning.

In today's sociopolitical context, diversity as it relates to its racial, ethnic, age, economic, religious, sexual, and gender components is a subject of intense debate. At present, national, state, and local laws and policies generally favor diversity as a basic tenet of our society; however, accepting and melding the diverse elements of our society is not universally accepted, and we can expect that the full spectrum of viewpoints on this issue may be represented in the West Central Neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Planning goals and courses of action that

promote, or even favor diversity in its various components will likely meet some degree of resistance.

Most major decisions regarding diversity as defined here are made at national, state, or local levels beyond the jurisdiction of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan. This suggests that the role of diversity in the Plan is largely one of acceptance, accommodation, and enforcement; however, opportunities probably exist to condition the attitudes of citizens in these neighborhoods toward this issue and to support it through the planning process. This can begin with the recognition that the West Central Neighborhoods are already among the most diverse in the City -- partly due to their proximity to Colorado State University and its diverse clientele, and partly due to the wide range of housing the planning area offers. The planning challenge is to build on this high degree of de facto diversity in such a way that a balance of social and economic conditions will be maintained and that single-type concentrations that lead to an unacceptable level of exclusion or ghetto-style neighborhood deterioration can be avoided.

Numerous discussions of the various aspects of diversity have appeared in the local press over the past several months. Some worthwhile insights have come from these discussions. A task force jointly sponsored by the City, CSU, and the Poudre School District has spent much time and effort debating the issue. The primary result of this appears to be a more emphatic enforcement of laws and regulations already in place to protect diversity. Little emphasis appears to have been placed on promoting diversity as a community goal. For example, the January 22, 1996 draft of **City Plan's** "*Community Vision and Goals*" statement does not include diversity as a major goal, only as an incidental part of the "fairness" component of community values, and then without elaboration. Without a clear City policy and action program to promote diversity beyond fundamental enforcement, it is difficult to know if or how the Advisory Committee can incorporate it into the West Central Neighborhoods planning process. However, diversity does seem to be an integral element of neighborhood-building and can possibly be productively approached through that avenue.

Accommodating existing levels of diversity in the West Central Neighborhoods does not appear to have caused major problems to date; however, much of the planning area has not really been tested in the acceptance of large numbers of minority peoples. As the proportion of these groups grows in the U.S., we can expect that they will also grow in Fort Collins and that a greater share of our neighbors will be people with different cultural and economic backgrounds than those of the present majority. The inevitable differences in lifestyles may lead to new problems for our neighborhoods. A few relatively minor indications of what may occur are the following problems that we have identified as being diversity related:

Problems

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1. A rapid rise in the number of rental housing units occupied by students and other short-term residents has led to conflicts in lifestyles with owner-occupants and other long-term residents. Failure to maintain rental units at a level that meets general neighborhood standards tends to depreciate the livability and economic value of surrounding homes.
2. Some resistance has surfaced to locating group homes for care of the elderly or persons with disabilities in low-density residential areas, as permitted by City Code.
3. Some neighborhoods have resisted building subsidized "affordable" housing in their area. Such resistance has generally faded if such housing is well managed and well maintained. This could become more of a problem if more of this type of housing were proposed for other up-scale neighborhoods.
4. An ongoing plan to construct an Islamic mosque on a vacant Lake Street parcel near CSU has drawn some criticism from individuals in its early stages but is generally favored by the neighborhood as an appropriate use of the land.
5. While most permitted home businesses are accepted by neighborhoods, some seem to have an adverse impact and draw criticism and demands for corrective action.

Opportunities

1. There is a potential opportunity through the City's neighborhood-building initiatives to create an awareness of the planning area's growing diversity and to gain acceptance for it. Support for such diversity-related policies and programs as the City adopts should be reflected in the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.
2. The Plan's land use and housing goals should promote mixes of housing and services that support diversity.

Diversity Analysis

1. Using U.S. Census and other pertinent data, develop a demographic profile of the planning area that describes its ethnic, racial, gender, age, religious, educational, and income diversity. Project these statistics to reflect growth erected in future periods and postulate trends (to be accomplished by City staff or paid consultants as a part of the Plan).
2. Document the history of the planning area with respect to diversity and analyze possible causes of any problems that developed (to be accomplished cooperatively by the City staff and Advisory Committee).

3. Document current and projected philosophies and policies of the City, CSU, and Poudre School District on diversity (to be accomplished by City staff responsible for carrying them out).
4. Document existing laws, ordinances, and funding mechanisms related to diversity that are applicable to the planning area (to be accomplished by the responsible City staff).

Diversity Courses of Action

Action 1 - Develop a consistent and well-planned program to provide information to the West Central Neighborhoods on diversity, based on current efforts of the City, CSU, and Poudre School District. This program will seek the support of the area's neighborhood associations, homeowners' groups, area schools and churches, and other identifiable civic entities. It will explain the legalities of diversity, the area's diverse demography, potential diversity-related problems, and the advantages of accommodating a diversity of people and institutions within the planning area.

Action 2 - Through the City's Neighborhood Resources Office, establish a framework for identifying diversity-related problems in their early stages and devise mechanisms for dealing with them, in cooperation with the area's neighborhood organizations.

Action 3 - Develop enforcement strategies to handle violations of existing laws, ordinances, and policies that do not further complicate diversity problems in the West Central Neighborhoods.

I. ISSUE: Parks and Open Space

Statement of Issue

Parks provide much needed visual and physical relief within the urban landscape. Park features are numerous in the West Central Neighborhoods planning area. These include Rolland Moore Park, Spring Creek Trail, access to parks adjacent to the West Central Neighborhoods and a natural open space area in the middle. These features must be preserved and enhanced. Also, more park features should be added in specific areas.

Goals of this Analysis

To identify the park and open space areas, suggest improvements, and identify areas where new park features can be developed.

Background

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Park features include:

- Rolland Moore -- major 68-acre community park. Includes developed trails, natural open space, developed recreational facilities -- tennis, soccer, softball, picnic areas, volleyball, basketball, skateboarding.
- Avery Park -- neighborhood park with good recreational facilities and good neighborhood buffer.
- Spring Creek Trail -- unique trail, well used, good link to the rest of the City, great amenity. It will be extended across Drake Road near Constitution Avenue and connects to the Pine Ridge Open Space to the west.
- Red Fox Meadows -- 27-acre undeveloped natural area. Provides good buffer near high density area. Creates break in the middle of the city.
- CSURF -- about 50 acres are designated as park and open space on property that is owned by the Colorado State University Research Foundation. The uses are identified in the organization's development planning document. This property is located south and west of the Holiday Inn on Prospect Road.
- City Park -- not technically in the planning area, but it is adjacent on the north boundary and easily accessible to West Central Neighborhoods.
- Blevins Park -- again, not technically in the planning area, but adjacent on the west side.
- Moore School -- some open area is available for neighborhood uses.
- Pine Ridge --
Natural Area easily accessible using the Spring Creek Trail to the west.
- CSU Campus -- provides a strong visual break at Shields Street near Elizabeth Street. The west side of campus also will remain open as designated in the CSU Master Plan.

Options

The City has no plans to add any park amenities in the planning area at this time. Following are suggestions for additions and enhancements:

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- CSURF – The City has adopted a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It is essential that the plans for the CSURF land be included within that Plan. The area appears suitable for both passive and developed recreational areas. Since this area also might soon be home to student housing, it is important that some of the area be designated for recreational uses.
- Bennett School --
Pocket Park
acquisition -- Situated directly north of Bennett School, it is a small strip of land that has been used for years as a horse pasture by the owner. The City must acquire that land, possibly in conjunction with the school district. The parcel would be undesirable for housing development. The area is very busy throughout the day with vehicular traffic, and adding more cars and turning movements there could be disastrous. The parcel would provide extra play areas for the neighborhood. The City should initiate dialogue with the property owner to determine how the property can be purchased.
- Young's Pasture -- This property is located on the south side of Prospect Street between the Landmark Apartments and the Sheely Addition. This small area, about 8 acres, has been used by the owner as a horse pasture for years. It provides a unique visual break for the area. In a proposed development plan for property to the south, the pasture was slated to be purchased for open space. This parcel should be purchased by the City for open space. It is unique and has historical value in the neighborhood. It also could be a crucial parcel to provide pedestrian access to the Spring Creek Trail as Prospect Road is redeveloped in the future.
- Existing parks and -- Add more pedestrian friendly amenities. These would include park along
bike paths benches, picnic tables, gathering areas. Especially in Rolland Moore Park, there are vast areas of open space where these amenities could be added with little expense. On the bike path, some benches should be added in the area between Shields and the railroad underpass.
- Rolland Moore and -- Consideration should be given to allow vendors during evenings and on
along the bike path the weekends. They could sell drinks and snacks in designated areas to allow a bit of a festival flavor to the area. Perhaps these concessions could be designated to non-profit groups looking for fundraising activities.
- Red Fox Meadows -- A natural area that should be extended to the west, possibly all the way to
Natural Area Taft Hill Road. There is open land in that area that is privately owned. Discussion should be initiated between the City and the private land

owners. While Red Fox Meadows is a natural area, some consideration should be given to people, who also are part of the natural world. This is in the middle of a very dense area, some consideration should be given to adding footbridges over irrigation ditches to make walking easier.

Specific Actions

1. West Central Neighborhoods representatives should meet with parks planners and the Parks and Recreation Board to discuss the above options.
2. City staff should be directed to begin investigating immediately the possibility of acquiring the parcels mentioned above.
3. The West Central Neighborhoods must resolve the issue of pocket parks in the WCN with the City's adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan and current park planning policy.

Open Space

Red Fox Meadows Natural Area.

The City hopes to purchase an additional 10 acres west of the existing Red Fox area. That would extend the parcel to Taft Hill Road; however, while a high priority, it is not a sure thing because the property owners are looking at the long-term development potential. The good news is that the owners aren't planning to develop this year or next. Whether the land is purchased or not, there is the potential of establishing a public walking trail through the area. Foot bridges would cross the ditches and bring the path out to West Stuart where it could easily connect with Rolland Moore Park.

CSU Property near Holiday Inn.

Old plans identify this area as suitable for parks and open space. As noted above, the land is designated as park land in CSU's and CSURF's master plan for the area.

Pocket Park Proposals, Benches, Intimate Spaces, City-School Cooperation.

The City's Parks Master Plan will include management plans for each area, bike paths, etc.

Regarding the pocket parks suggested (one just north of Bennett School, the other near Prospect and Shields known in the neighborhood as Young's Pasture), the biggest obstacle will be the cost to purchase and cost of development. Even development of a pocket park can be very expensive

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because the City must supply irrigation, curb and gutter, and other improvements. In general, the planning area is considered to have an abundance of parks and open space, so these will not be a high priority for the City.

Regarding planting of trees and shrubs to create more intimate spaces in Rolland Moore Park, again, cost is the prohibiting factor. Even though suggestions are made in this Plan, efforts need to be made to lobby City Council to convince members of the need. A recommendation should also be considered in the Park Department's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Requests for additional benches and sitting areas along the bike path are also made in this Plan. The City and the school district should cooperate whenever possible to adjoin parks with school yards. This might be a possibility with the parcel near Bennett school.

APPENDIX B
HOUSING

Background Information

Two distinct factors influence the type and location of housing in the area: a) its inner City location bisected by Prospect Road and Shields Street, two major arterial streets; and b) its proximity to the Colorado State University (CSU) campus.

The West Central Neighborhood (WCN) planning area consists primarily of single-family neighborhoods surrounding a mixed density residential core. Some multi-family housing does exist in the surrounding areas, especially near major street intersections; however, the character is primarily single-family in scale, bulk and visual texture. The residential core of the West Central Neighborhoods contains a variety of single-family and medium to high density multi-family units which are generally in sound structural condition.

Table 1 shows the estimated number of housing units in the West Central Neighborhoods compared to the total for the City of Fort Collins for the years 1990 and 1998.

Table 1: Housing Unit Estimates, 1990 and 1998

	City of Fort Collins	West Central Neighborhoods	% of City
1990	35,357	5,784	16.4%
1998	44,489	6,810	15.3%

Many of the single-family subdivisions have a distinctive architectural style which gives each neighborhood unique visual characteristics. The architectural style of multi-family housing in the area is likewise varied. Some multi-family housing integrates well architecturally with existing neighboring areas but much of the higher density housing built prior to 1980 does not blend well visually with the character of the single-family neighborhoods.

There is a high proportion of multi-family housing in the area. Table 2 at the end of this Appendix lists the housing complexes by name and number of housing units. According to this figure and the 1990 Census data, multi-family housing may comprise more than 65% of the housing in the area.

Much of the rental housing is located near the Colorado State University campus, providing housing for students and other short-term residents. This rental housing is composed of multi-family complexes and by-the-bedroom rental homes. By-the-bedroom rental homes are single-

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family residences in which the bedrooms have been rented individually to a number of unrelated persons. While providing needed housing for students, the increasing use of single-family homes as by-the-bedroom rentals near the CSU campus has had an adverse effect on the area's ability to attract homeowners and may contribute to the lack of exterior maintenance, crowded automobile parking on city streets, and other nuisance issues.

Many residents feel that the high proportion of multi-family housing and large number of rentals is causing a strain on City services and facilities in the area. By-the-bedroom rentals are significant because they are often occupied by more people than would ordinarily live in the unit. The high proportion of rentals is also contributing to the lack of neighborhood pride. Part of the answer to restoring the balance between home owners and rentals is the mitigation of high intensity through additional neighborhood or pocket parks, trails, and/or open space.

In order to describe housing conditions particular to each West Central Neighborhood, the planning area was divided into seven sections, which are described below.

Northeast Section - bordered by Mulberry Street on the north, Elizabeth Street on the south, Shields Street on the east and Bryan Avenue on the west. Single-family homes in this area were built in the fifties and earlier. While some are owner-occupied, the majority are by-the-bedroom rental houses. This area has a considerable number of medium to high density apartment and condominium complexes which are mainly occupied by students. In addition, two CSU student housing complexes, two private owned and managed student housing complexes, five fraternity houses and seven sorority houses provide student housing.

Many of the rental units in this area are not well maintained and do not provide adequate off-street parking. No parks, trails or open space exist in the northeastern section to offset the intensity of use which is occurring in the area.

Northwest Section - bordered by Mulberry Street on the north, Elizabeth Street on the south, Bryan Avenue on the east and Taft Hill Road on the west. Housing here is primarily single-family homes built in the fifties and earlier with many houses converted to by-the-bedroom rentals. Several medium to high density apartment complexes, built in the sixties, are located along Elizabeth Street and Taft Hill Road. A CSU married student housing complex, built in the nineties, is located at the end of Plum Street adjacent to existing single-family homes on Skyline and Broadview. New townhouse developments, built in the nineties, are located along Glenmoor Drive between Plum Street and Taft Hill Road. Several large parcels of property with single-family homes near the Mulberry/Taft Hill intersection, currently used as pastures, present future possibilities for housing or open space acquisition as these properties change ownership.

Many properties in this area, both single-family and multi-family, are not well maintained. This applies to both owner-occupied and rental properties.

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This area has no parks, trails or open space. A large storm drainage area exists on Elizabeth at Skyline. A large parcel at Glenmoor and Taft Hill could be developed as open space/storm drainage.

Western Mid-section - bordered by Elizabeth Street on the north, Prospect Road on the south, Shields Street on the east and Taft Hill Road on the west. Housing is primarily single-family homes and duplexes built in the fifties and earlier, with several medium to high density condominium and apartment complexes built in the sixties, seventies and eighties in the northern and eastern portions of the area. Several undeveloped parcels remain in this area, offering the possibility for future housing or open space. Also, some lots on Shields and Prospect are deep, which may offer the possibility for accessory housing.

An increasing number of by-the-bedroom rentals exist and more are occurring in this area. Property maintenance is a problem in some of the rental home areas. Residents are concerned that the speed at which rentals are being created will have a detrimental effect on the character of the neighborhood. Overall, the maintenance of the multi-family complexes is good in this area.

This area has a neighborhood park (Avery) with an attached storm drainage area, but has no trails or open space.

Eastern Mid-section - bordered by the CSU campus on the north, Prospect Road on the south, the railroad tracks on the east and Shields Street on the west. Again, housing is primarily single-family homes built in the fifties and earlier with an extremely large number of houses being rented as by-the-bedroom rentals to students. Multi-family housing includes six high density student apartment complexes built in the fifties and sixties, including two which are CSU-owned and managed. In addition, a sorority house, a fraternity house, a youth group home and a small motel are in the area. Several undeveloped parcels exist in this area offering the possibility for future housing.

Overall, the multi-family complexes in the area are well maintained and provide adequate on-site parking. There are some well maintained, owner-occupied homes in this area. There are also a large number of by-the-bedroom rental houses in the areas of Whitcomb Street, Blevins Court, Lake Street and portions of Shields Street and Prospect Road which are detrimentally impacting the area. Lack of property maintenance and parking congestion both on-site and on neighborhood streets is visually unsightly in this area and is a problem for both the rental and owner-occupied properties.

There are no parks, trails or open space in the area.

Southeast Section - bordered by Prospect Road on the north, Drake Road on the south, the railroad tracks on the east and Shields Street on the west. This area offers a wide variety of housing choices and types. South of Prospect Road are single-family homes built from the fifties

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to the nineties and four townhome complexes along Shields built between the seventies to the nineties. Two high density apartment complexes are in this area: *Landmark*, built in the eighties at the corner of Shields and Prospect and *Aggie Village South*, a CSU student housing complex at Prospect and Centre Avenue. Senior housing, including an apartment complex, assisted living housing and nursing home facilities are located at the Centre for Advanced Technology. A large hotel at Prospect and Centre provides overnight and/or short-term housing.

Many homes in the Prospect Road, Whitcomb Street, Balsam Lane and Juniper Lane areas have been converted to by-the-bedroom rentals, some of which are not well maintained. The poorly maintained rentals along Prospect are particularly unsightly as on-street parking is not allowed on Prospect and tenant parking is accommodated in the front yards of the rental houses.

This area still has a large area of undeveloped property with CSURF and CSU owning the largest undeveloped portions. Future student housing could logically be built on these properties. Spring Creek Trail runs through this area, but the area has no parks or open space.

Southwest Section - bordered by Prospect Road on the north, Drake Road on the south, Shields Street on the east and Taft Hill Road on the west. Housing in this area is primarily single-family homes built in the seventies. Eleven medium to high density complexes offering a variety of housing options are located mainly along Prospect and Shields. Conversion of single-family homes to by-the-bedroom rentals appears to be occurring less here than in other areas. Overall, properties in this area are well maintained.

Some parcels of undeveloped land are in the area. Spring Creek Trail, Rolland Moore Park and Red Fox Meadows Natural Area are within this area.

Campus Housing Section - bordered by Laurel Street on the north, Lake Street on the south, the railroad tracks on the east and Shields Street on the south. Though not formally a part of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan area, residents of on-campus housing utilize the infrastructure of the Plan area, enjoy the amenities of the area such as parks, trails, open space, shopping, dining and recreation facilities. In addition, students party and park in the neighborhood areas close to campus, thereby adding to the intensity of use that is occurring in many of the single-family neighborhoods within the West Central Neighborhoods.

There are ten dormitories and an apartment complex on-campus offering high density housing to approximately 5,000 students. The on-campus housing is well maintained.

Table 2 (see pages B25 - B29) shows all multi-family housing in the area broken down into the geographic sections described above. There are 5,744 total multi-family housing units.

A. ISSUE: Property Maintenance and Appearance, Health and Safety

Background Information to Define the Issue

Proper maintenance and restoration of properties contributes to the overall integrity of neighborhoods. Well maintained properties contribute to a pleasant, inviting and vital neighborhood appearance, encourage a feeling of pride in neighborhood residents and inspire a desire in residents to improve or invest in their properties.

Improperly maintained properties can damage the appearance of an area and lead to health, safety, and nuisance issues. They can also lead to the deterioration of adjacent properties due to lack of pride in the community and the flight of caring home owners from an area. Property maintenance problems are universal for neighborhoods regardless of whether the properties are owner or rental occupied, single-family or multi-family, or commercial. Lack of adequate property management in some areas of the West Central Neighborhoods is creating not only visual blight, but is adversely impacting the quality of living. Unfortunately, some poorly maintained properties are located along arterial streets, projecting a negative image of adjacent neighborhoods to passersby.

Over-occupancy of rental properties can contribute to problems of maintenance, traffic, and parking congestion and a strain on public facilities. Occupancy of all residential development is regulated by the **Land Use Code**, which restricts occupancy in individual dwelling units to a “family” consisting of persons related by blood, marriage, etc. or not more than three unrelated persons, or two unrelated adults and their related children. In certain cases, a City decision maker can increase the occupancy, if additional open space, recreation areas, parking areas, and public facilities are provided as necessary to serve the occupants of the development and to protect the adjacent neighborhood. In most cases, occupancy has been exceeded without approval from the City and has led to tension between residents within the neighborhoods because of the unresolved impacts.

The lack of responsible property management is an ongoing problem in some areas of WCN. While many property managers maintain their properties in good condition, abide by City regulations and are responsive to the complaints of neighborhood residents, the lack of responsiveness on the part of absentee property owners presents a growing problem. Absentee property owners may respond initially to neighborhood complaints and comply with City occupancy requirements; however, over time, the probability is that the same problems will resurface again due to the inability of the owners to monitor renters and the condition of the property.

Requesting enforcement of City Code regarding rental property requirements can be difficult. Area residents usually must request enforcement by the City, taking time to document maintenance problems and for the enforcing department to respond. Furthermore, City Ordinances are often difficult to enforce because of the lack of available City resources, or the widespread nature of maintenance violations.

In summary, property maintenance and appearance, health and safety issues include the following:

Building Maintenance: Lack of basic maintenance, painting, roof and gutter repairs, window and door repairs, results in a downward spiral of deteriorating properties. This decreases property values and desirability of the neighborhood, and is a disincentive for other residents to invest in their properties.

Grounds Maintenance: Lack of basic upkeep, watering, mowing, and removal of trash and rubbish also results in a downward spiral of deteriorating properties. Contributing to this rundown appearance is the unsightly appearance of furniture such as sofas and mattresses on lawns, roofs and driveways. The impact on property values and the integrity of the neighborhood is significant.

Health and Safety: Lack of basic amenities results in dangerous conditions for individual properties as well as for adjacent properties. A review of ordinances and informing residents about ordinances and enforcement mechanisms, such as fees and penalties, is essential.

Goals Related to the Issue

1. Encourage responsible property management within the West Central Neighborhoods.
2. Encourage home ownership and owner occupancy.

Action Items

1. Increase enforcement of the City Ordinances dealing with Nuisances, Health and Safety, Housing Standards and the **Land Use Code**. The following are specific areas of concern:

Housing Standards: general safe and sanitary maintenance of premises; lack of maintenance of the exterior of structures or accessory structures including fences, broken glass, loose shingles or siding, crumbling stone or brick, excessive peeling paint or other conditions reflective of deterioration and/or inadequate property maintenance.

Nuisances: "visual blight" with junked, wrecked, abandoned, or inoperable cars in driveways, lawns or neighborhood streets; indoor furniture and/or appliances on lawns, driveways and property; fire and safety hazards such as accumulated garbage, trash, refuse, rubbish, weeds and brush. Lack of compliance with and enforcement of the City's animal control ordinances, including pet licensing and lease laws.

Safety: vegetation growth on private property which conceals street signs and hampers visibility at intersections and sidewalks; lack of adequate disposal and/or storage for toxic and flammable substances.

2. Prepare an information sheet on City Ordinances dealing with the issues listed above and contact numbers to encourage residents to report violators.
3. The WCN Standing Committee (See Appendix A of this report) should create an information pamphlet welcoming renters to the WCN. Information to be included could describe renter and neighborhood responsibilities, rights and expectations. The pamphlet could be sent to property management companies, distributed at the CSU Housing Fair which is held every Spring and distributed to new residents who move into a West Central Neighborhood.
4. Publicize access to the Larimer County Assessor's database containing property owner information to encourage residents to contact property owners when maintenance issues arise.

B. ISSUE: Affordable Housing

Background Information to Define the Issue

In recent years, Fort Collins has experienced a housing market where the cost and availability of housing no longer meets the needs of all residents of the community. The housing problem occurs when shelter costs far exceed what households can afford to pay.

The City's Affordable Housing Policy defines affordable housing as housing which can be purchased or rented by people of low incomes (i.e., incomes of less than 80% of the City's median income) where the occupant, either the owner or renter, pays no more than 30% of their gross income for housing costs, including utilities. For example, if area median income (AMI) is \$50,625 (actual 1997 AMI for a family of four in Fort Collins). Eighty percent of AMI is \$40,500. Housing costs at 30% of gross household income at 80% AMI would be \$15,188 annually, or about \$1270 per month. The City of Fort Collins and other organizations offer programs to help families making less than 80% AMI. Some applicants for these programs make less than 50% AMI, which translates to \$25,313. At this level, families could pay a maximum \$633 per month for their housing to be considered affordable.

Affordable housing is comprised of many types of housing, including single-family homes, attached housing, condominiums, apartments and other forms. Some of the housing in the WCN consists of basement apartments within single-family homes. Because of the diverse range of housing, it is nearly impossible to track the location of every affordable housing unit.

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In an effort to ascertain the level of affordable housing in the WCN, the Housing Subcommittee reviewed the *1995 City of Fort Collins Consolidated Plan*. The majority of the household incomes in the West Central Neighborhoods area are Low to Very Low. This would imply that the West Central Neighborhoods is meeting a significant part of the needs for affordable housing in the City of Fort Collins.

Based on Fort Collins Housing Authority and private/non profit housing company waiting lists for subsidized housing, demand is high for affordable housing in Fort Collins. In-migration and the related costs of land, construction and City fees is increasing the average housing cost, while the slow construction of new affordable housing combined with slowly rising incomes, is reducing the ability of low income residents to pay for housing. Continued growth in the traditionally lower paying retail and service sectors of the local economy will further exacerbate demand for affordable housing.

Affordable housing is a community-wide issue that will require the cooperation of the whole City to ensure that all households have a choice in the type and location of housing. **City Plan** encourages a community-wide distribution of affordable housing. The City offers a number of programs including incentives to developers and first time home buyers and programs to reduce regulatory barriers to the construction of new units.

Goals Related to the Issue

1. Encourage development and dispersion of various types of affordable housing in all residential neighborhoods throughout Fort Collins.
2. Support home ownership for households of all economic levels in the West Central Neighborhoods.
3. Retain the wide range of housing opportunities available for households of all economic levels in the West Central Neighborhoods.

Action Items

1. Encourage city-wide dispersal of housing incentives and programs, such as funds made available through the HOME Program and the Community Development Block Grant Program.
2. Investigate and encourage programs such as the Home Program to assist low income and first time home buyers with home purchases in the area.

C. ISSUE: In-home businesses

Background Information to Define the Issue

In-home businesses, also known as home occupations, are increasing nationwide as people seek alternatives to traditional employment situations. In-home businesses are an overall benefit to the neighborhood for several reasons, some of which are listed below:

People working at home contribute to the sense of community in neighborhoods during traditional working hours of the day and are also a crime deterrent in the neighborhood.

People with in-home businesses do not contribute to rush hour traffic congestion and air pollution problems created by driving.

Employment opportunities allowing one family member to work at home often enhances the economic viability of many families while allowing them to maintain their personal priorities, family commitments and other obligations. In some cases, the sole provider may find employment opportunities through an in-home business. Regardless of individual or family situations, this is a benefit not only to the individual, but also to the community.

In-home businesses allow greater cultural and economic diversity within each neighborhood.

City Plan encourages in-home businesses as a means to reduce automobile trips and the **Land Use Code** allows for home occupations as a permitted accessory use in all zones.

In-home businesses can become problems if the nature of the business impacts neighboring residents negatively and does not conform to City standards for in-home businesses. Negative neighborhood impacts can include the use of driveways or sidewalks as a sales area (not including occasional garage sales), sale items and supplies stored in the front yard or driveway, the use of front yards or driveways as workshops or construction areas, and excessive noise or noxious fumes, to name a few. Other negative impacts and concerns could include the following:

- lack of licensure
- improper signage
- inadequate parking
- increased frequency of delivery vehicles
- excessive trash accumulation
- potential safety hazards
- improper use or appearance of a property that gives more of a business feel than a residential one.

Goals Related to the Issue

1. Promote in-home businesses as a way to improve neighborhood safety and livability.
2. Reduce in-home business violations to protect the residential integrity of the neighborhoods.

Action Items

1. Support in-home business requests within the neighborhoods that comply with City of Fort Collins home occupation regulations.
2. The City should increase enforcement of home occupation conditions specified in the **Land Use Code**, Section 3.8.3.

D. ISSUE: Current and Future CSU Student Housing Needs and Issues

Background Information to Define the Issue

Colorado State University is a major employer and influence on the City of Fort Collins. It is acknowledged that housing in close proximity to the CSU campus will always be highly desirable for students as well as for CSU faculty and staff. In fact, the area is already providing housing for most of the student population. Based on 1990 Census population data, 55% of the 17,910 people living in the West Central Neighborhoods are students.

While this data is seven years old, there is no reason to believe that fewer students live in the area at the present time, nor that demand for student housing in the area will decrease over time. In fact, it is more likely that the number of students living in the area has increased in the past seven years, corresponding with increased enrollment.

CSU currently provides housing for approximately 27% of the student body (mostly freshmen) and has a stated goal to increase that percentage to 30%. CSU has projected increased enrollment of up to 3,500 students in the next 10 years. The absence of appropriate student housing significantly impacts the intensity of use in the West Central Neighborhoods in terms of over-occupancy, declining levels of property maintenance, increased on-street parking, and higher volumes of traffic and congestion.

This area provides a variety of housing types and population mixes and easy access to work and neighborhood services for faculty and staff of Colorado State University. Residents of the area that work at CSU lend stability and contribute positively to the character and social environment of the neighborhoods.

While much the student population also contributes positively to the area, in some areas, the growing number of student rentals are increasing and destabilizing the surrounding neighborhood. In an effort to meet more of its housing needs, CSU is currently considering potential development of two student housing sites: one on CSU property between Lake Street and Pitkin Street and one on CSU property by the railroad tracks.

Colorado State University Research Foundation (CSURF) has the largest undeveloped land acreage within the boundaries of the planning area. Future development of the CSURF property will play an important role in the economic vitality and livability of the West Central Neighborhoods. The expansion of research facilities on CSURF property will create additional demands for housing in neighboring residential areas. In addition, the CSURF property is an ideal location to build needed multi-family student housing. It will be important to maintain the ongoing cooperative established dialogue between CSURF, CSU, the West Central Neighborhoods and the City to work through issues related to the development of the CSURF property.

The West Central Neighborhoods cannot absorb and accommodate all housing needs resulting from the growth and development of CSU as a major educational institution and maintain a viable residential environment. Although residents of the area expect that most of the student housing will continue to be provided in the West Central Neighborhoods, they also feel that a broader city-wide response to student housing demands should be pursued, especially as the student population grows. To maintain the long term integrity and viability of the area, it is critical that both the City and CSU make an earnest commitment to develop multi-family, student oriented housing in other parts of the City.

Goals Related to the Issue

1. Foster and strengthen the relationship between CSU and the neighborhoods.
2. Create development opportunities for multi-family housing on vacant and/or deteriorated properties close to CSU.
3. Encourage and support CSU in development of student housing on CSU and CSURF property.
4. Encourage a distribution of student housing throughout the community.

Action Items

1. The following two areas be designated as planned high density student housing:

- the northeast corner of Lake Street and Shields Street
 - the area bordered by Plum Street and Birch Street and Shields Street and City Park Avenue.
2. Allow height of student housing complexes built adjacent to campus and on CSU property to exceed 3 stories.
 3. Ensure that student housing development proposals meet the proposed Design Standards and Guidelines for the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.
 4. Neighborhoods in the West Central Neighborhoods will work with developers, CSU, CSURF and the City to seek solutions to increased student housing demands not only on specified properties adjacent to CSU campus, but on sites throughout the city to encourage dispersion of student housing throughout other areas of the city.
 5. The West Central Neighborhoods and CSU should consider properties along the west side of Shields between University Avenue and Prospect Road, the east side of Shields Street between Lake Street and Prospect Road, the north side of Prospect Road and between Prospect Road and Lake Street as potential properties for use as small businesses and offices to serve the student population. Development should be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood. Redevelopment in this area should consider the long-term goals of Colorado State University. CSU intends to shore up its boundaries by acquiring properties south to Prospect Road in the future.
 6. The City should develop incentives to encourage CSU to develop the recommended areas for student housing identified in this Plan.

E. ISSUE: Future Housing Needs

Background Information to Define the Issues

The demand and need for a variety of housing types in the West Central Neighborhoods and some other areas of Fort Collins exceeds the existing supply, resulting in a shortage of housing, lack of affordable housing, over-occupancy and loss of single-family neighborhood character. A shortage of housing choices can lead to a loss of diversity within neighborhoods and deepen inequities between neighborhoods. The Fort Collins community as a whole must address the loss of housing heterogeneity in a balanced and equitable manner.

Although residents of the West Central Neighborhoods would like to see new low density single-family detached housing development in the area, it appears unlikely that much can be built in the planning area in the future. The development constraints of increasing land costs, limited availability of large infill parcels, desirability of the area adjacent to a major employment center, decreasing amount of vacant infill property, and the prohibitive cost of redevelopment of large areas for low density development will limit the amount of new single-family housing.

The area contains just a small sprinkling of vacant parcels of land. The largest parcels of the land are on the CSURF property or adjacent to Shields Street just north of the CSURF site.

New development opportunities may be found in redevelopment of underutilized commercial areas such as Campus West. In addition, infill development on underutilized single-family lots may be appropriate in some areas, especially where the existing infrastructure can handle an increase in density. As suggested above, there are large parcels of CSURF land that could be developed as student housing, thereby decreasing the pressure to provide student housing within developed areas.

One key to providing for additional housing needs in this developed area is to ensure that additional infrastructure and services are provided to sustain the increase in density. In particular, as the intensity of housing increases, the amount of open space nearby needs to increase as well. The same can be said for transit routes, street maintenance, police and fire coverage, and many other City services.

The following is a description of impacts and opportunities in the provision of new housing in the West Central Neighborhoods:

Conversion of Single-Family Properties to Another Use

Use conversions may benefit some areas by providing needed multi-family housing or commercial space. In some areas, such as adjacent to Shields between Elizabeth and Prospect, it may be appropriate given the mixed character of properties or close proximity to the CSU Campus or other neighborhood attractors; however, if not done in appropriate areas, or if conversions are done without regard for the character of surrounding areas, conversions may damage the image and function of the area. Two good examples of sensitive commercial conversion are the Camera Corner and the Carson Dental Office which have retained residential characteristics.

Multi-Family Accommodations: The variety of multi-family accommodations has generally had a positive impact on the neighborhood. These developments are attractive, well maintained and managed; however, there are multi-family developments which residents feel have had a negative impact on the neighborhood. New multi-family structures must be designed and managed in

such a way to reduce conflicts with the single-family character and lessen infrastructure impacts in single-family neighborhoods.

Although multi-family developments may have initially met some resistance from residents living in close proximity, many neighborhood concerns seem to have been mitigated through neighborhood involvement, resulting in better planned and well managed developments which are an overall asset to the West Central Neighborhoods. Examples of these developments include The Bridges, Rams Village and the two married student housing developments at University Village (1700 W. Plum) and Lory West (1400 W. Elizabeth). The Landmark and The Preserve are two examples of multi-family developments that are perceived by residents as having negative impacts on the neighborhood due to the bulk and scale of the buildings in relation to neighboring single-family homes.

Several older multi-family complexes which are well managed and maintained include Heatheridge, New Colony, Northwood, and Woodbox, to cite a few.

Mixed-Use Housing: For the purposes of this plan, mixed-use housing is defined as a building containing both housing and commercial uses. Generally, housing units are located over retail or office space, providing compact, efficient use of land. In appropriate areas, mixed-use developments can provide needed housing where very little space exists and can occur through redevelopment. Two specific areas where mixed-use housing could occur are the Elizabeth Street and Plum Street areas.

Accessory Housing: Accessory housing refers to the provision of a second dwelling unit either within or added to an existing single-family detached dwelling or business, or in a separate accessory structure on the same lot as the main building. Existing accessory housing in the West Central Neighborhoods is located primarily in areas close to CSU. The majority of these accessory housing units are basement apartments in single-family residences. Some of these properties are owner occupied; however many are entirely rental properties. Few, if any, "Granny Flat", studio or over garage apartments exist in the area.

While much of the existing accessory housing units accommodate students, it is also providing needed housing for lower income residents. Accessory housing accompanied by an owner occupied unit can benefit homeowners by providing added income and an increased sense of security, which is of particular importance for some of the senior citizens in our area. Accessory housing units could also mean better use of some of the under-utilized larger lots in the planning area.

The downside to accessory housing in the West Central Neighborhoods is that basement apartments tend to be well maintained and managed only for as long as the primary residence is owner occupied. As a rule, when the property is sold, the single-family residence usually becomes two separate rental units. This problem contributes to a decline in property

maintenance, appearance of over occupancy and an increase of on-street parking on neighborhood streets.

A goal of this Plan is to maximize existing housing opportunities within the West Central Neighborhoods area. This goal can be met in part with additional accessory housing. Accessory housing units should meet the following guidelines:

- accessory housing units should be designed and built in a manner that protects and retains the existing residential neighborhood character of the neighborhood;
- they should provide on-site tenant parking; and
- they should be well managed and maintained.

City Plan specifically mentions accessory units as potential infill within existing neighborhood areas. Current **Land Use Code** regulations treat accessory dwelling units as either attached or detached single-family dwellings; however, within the Low Density Residential District (RL zoning), which makes up a majority of the West Central Neighborhoods area, each dwelling unit must have at least 6,000 square feet of lot area. Thus, accessory housing is not allowed in much of the West Central Neighborhoods except on large lots or within Medium Density Mixed-Use or Commercial zones.

Goals Related to the Issue

1. Plan for the accommodation of a variety of housing types addressed by **City Plan**.
2. Interpret how density requirements in **City Plan** apply to the West Central Neighborhoods.
3. Ensure increased density is accompanied by additional infrastructure and services to handle an increase in population.
4. Seek and/or accommodate innovative housing solutions.
5. Allow development opportunities for multi-family housing in appropriate locations.
6. Encourage re-use of existing buildings rather than demolition for new development. Where buildings are in poor condition, encourage building redevelopment. These conversions should maintain the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood in relation to size, scale, and bulk of additions to the original residence.
7. Consider the reduction of single-family lot sizes below the current 6,000 square foot minimum so that additional or accessory housing could be developed on smaller lots in RL zones.

Action Items

1. Designate buffer areas between commercial or high density multi-family areas and single-family neighborhoods to mitigate traffic, noise and other issues. These buffer areas could be made up of lower density multi-family housing such as town homes and other attached single-family residences, and small scale apartment buildings. This area could be similar to the Neighborhood Conservation Buffer zone located near intensive commercial areas and high traffic zones. Targeted areas for buffers include areas which: have been converted to rentals; may be in considerable disrepair making rehabilitation difficult; have adjoining open land, or; are located in close proximity to CSU or other high density areas. Targeted areas may also include areas where the original character as single-family residential has predominantly changed to an undesirable over-occupied multi-family character, or where well maintained neighboring areas are being adversely impacted.

Proposed Buffer Areas include:

- Both sides of Elizabeth beyond the commercial area
 - On the south side of University as a buffer for single-family residences on Westward Drive
 - Coy Drive/Crestmore Place area
 - Whitcomb Street between Prospect and Lake including Blevins Court
 - South side of Prospect Road between Whitcomb Street and Prospect Lane
 - South side of Prospect Road between the horse pasture and Shields Street
 - Myrtle Street, Miller Drive, Crestmore Place to Larimer County Ditch and Birch Street
2. Plan areas for a variety of uses, with the intent that **any** redevelopment **must** maintain the residential character of the neighborhood and must meet the proposed Design Standards and Guidelines for West Central Neighborhoods and work with the Neighborhood Standing Committee during the Development Review Process.

These areas are as follows:

- West side of Shields Street between University Avenue and Prospect Road
- East side of Shields Street between Lake Street and Prospect Road

- North side of Prospect Road between Shields Street and the Larimer County Ditch
 - Area encompassing the north side of Prospect Road and south side of Lake Street
3. The City should develop a long term plan to facilitate the acquisition of properties to assist in redevelopment activities (similar to an urban renewal authority approach). Considerations must be given to potential problems associated with redevelopment including: purchasing properties from multiple owners; and paying inflated property values as a result of high rental potential -- regardless of condition of property and a developer's goal to create larger parcels for development by combining smaller parcels.
 4. As density in West Central Neighborhoods increases, there will be a need for small neighborhood "pocket" parks. Pocket parks are not drainage corridors nor large lighted areas with tennis courts or baseball diamonds, but rather simply people-friendly, grassy areas with trees. Pocket parks will play an important role in the West Central Neighborhoods to offset the impacts of the intensity of use level which the area currently is carrying and will continue to carry. Sites which should be considered for pocket or neighborhood parks include:
 - Approximately 10 acres at Glenmoor Drive and Taft Hill Road
 - South side of University Avenue between City Park Avenue and Shields Street
 - North side of Bennett School Road across from Bennett School
 - 3.2 acre Young's Pasture on south side of Prospect Road between Landmark Apartments and homes on Sheely Drive.
 5. The City should adopt an incentives policy that would encourage developers to redevelop the designated parcels in the West Central Neighborhoods.

Note: Achievement of the vision for the neighborhoods will be expensive given the cost of property acquisition and conformance to planned design criteria. Some options to consider include, but are not limited to, tax abatement programs from the City, higher densities in designated areas, waiver or deferment of some of the development fees and expediting of the review and approval process.
 6. Redevelop the Campus West area with people-friendly retail/business/neighborhood services, mixed-use housing, and recreational opportunities.

F. ISSUE: Housing Design

Background Information to Define the Issue

The form of new development in the West Central Neighborhoods is likely to be development on infill parcels of land surrounded by existing development, or redevelopment of underutilized land. Because this new development will help to define the character of existing neighborhoods, it will be increasingly important to ensure that new development is compatible with the positive values of surrounding buildings and the urban landscape. The West Central Neighborhoods already have the highest density of any area in the City of Fort Collins. Therefore, as medium-to-high density housing is planned, it is imperative to the future of the neighborhood that housing design become a major consideration for future development and redevelopment.

Higher density projects generally have a more significant visual impact on the community than low density development because of their size and bulk. For this reason, it is especially important to ensure that multi-family apartments, townhomes, or other attached dwelling unit buildings be designed to an appropriate scale and promote the positive characteristics of the area. It is relatively easy to ensure good design in larger buildings because a few visually appealing elements added to a structure will tend to have a significant effect on the character of the surrounding area.

The issue of what constitutes good design and architectural compatibility has been debated in Fort Collins and in many other communities. The Visual Preference Survey™, prepared as part of **City Plan** in 1995, has been a defining survey of what many people in the community consider to be good, average, and poor development. For residential development, most participants in the survey considered residential streetscapes with street trees, connecting sidewalks, residences close to the sidewalk, and other elements as preferable designs. Single-family residential development with traditional designs such as porches, garages in the rear or side yards, large homes, low fences and clearly located front doors were favored over designs without these elements. Multi-family developments with some of the same single-family elements listed above were also favored. Dwelling units where nothing distinguishes or individualizes one unit from the next were given the lowest preference. Elements which appear as good design to many residents include: brick; projecting, pedimented box windows, and; recessed entrance doorways that articulate the space. Images with residences located over commercial shops were also favorably received.

Maintenance of the quality of life, values, and integrity of the community are seriously compromised when "poor" designs are built. Poorly designed projects adversely impact neighborhoods by contributing to the loss of desirability and livability in the neighborhood and can contribute over the long term to decline of property values.

Many of the elements listed above were incorporated into **City Plan** and the new **Land Use Code**. For example, garage doors are to be recessed from the primary front facade and multi-family building entrances must be oriented to face the adjacent street. The **Land Use Code** also

requires building and project compatibility for infill development. Infill development must be compatible in terms of proportions in building mass, relationships to the street, window and door patterns, and building materials to those existing in the immediate area of the proposed infill development. Buildings must be similar in size or height, or articulated and subdivided into massing that is proportional to the mass and scale of other structures on the same block.

Specific issues related to residential design are described below.

- a) **Density:** Density is a major consideration for the West Central Neighborhoods. As stated above, the planning area already has the highest density in the City. Additional density should be reviewed for its compatibility with surrounding development. Specific detail on how to achieve compatibility will be defined in the Standards and Guidelines document.

Infill parcels which are identified as mixed or commercial uses should also have greater definition about what is acceptable and what would be considered unacceptable development.

- b) **Landscaping:** Landscaping which is coordinated with surrounding development and sensitive to the natural environment can be an excellent buffer between housing types and/or travel corridors. Separation, buffers, berms, lighting, and signage are important elements of a site plan.

Open space along street frontages and within interior private spaces in projects are not only people-friendly and visually pleasing, but are a good buffer for differing land uses. Landscape should be used in transition spaces between differing land uses. By creating visually appealing areas through well planned landscape design, the visual impact of high density uses in the West Central Neighborhoods, though not eliminated, may be diminished.

- c) **Design Compatibility:** Achieving compatibility with existing neighborhoods needs careful consideration when new development, redevelopment, and conversion proposals are being planned. Reviewing each development in context of the entire neighboring community is extremely important to ensure that the residential character of the neighborhoods are preserved.
- d) **Height of Structures and Overall Scale of Development:** The height of development projects in context with the neighborhood and relative to scenic view corridors is very important. Two considerations are scale of buildings and preservation of views. Views can include, but are not limited to, interior views within the project, how the project looks from the surrounding area, and whether it blocks any mountain views.

Clear identification by the developer of the final height of a completed project, including fill dirt, grading, and any other item contributing to the finished building height should be required prior to approval of a development.

- e) **Transportation Access to Neighborhoods:** Neighborhood access is not just achieved by adding traffic lights at intersections or widening of streets. Streets need to be planned to encourage walking. The West Central Neighborhoods Plan encourages walking and bicycle accessibility between existing neighborhoods in the planning area.

Streets should have a grass strip between the curb and the sidewalk and should be lined with street trees. Traffic calming techniques should be part of street design. Bus stops should be built to be attractive and inviting. Each transportation network associated with new development needs to be able to function as an integral component of the existing network.

Goals Related to the Issue

1. Maintain the residential character of the West Central Neighborhoods.
2. Compatibility of a development must be evaluated in the context of the entire neighborhood, not as an isolated project.

Action Items

1. Design Standards and Guidelines for the West Central Neighborhoods (much like the Standards and Guidelines for the North College Avenue Corridor Plan) should be developed as Phase II of the West Central Neighborhoods planning effort. The West Central Neighborhoods Plan Advisory Committee (WCNPAC) should serve as members of the Design Standards and Guidelines Committee. This committee should expand on design recommendations, develop housing design criteria specific to maintaining the character of the planning area, and include results of the Visual Preference Survey.

Design for the West Central Neighborhoods should include and incorporate Anew urbanism® philosophies which encourage small, traditional neighborhoods that people like, interior planned open spaces, buildings clustered together, major buildings located around the plaza, and houses on relatively narrow streets.

2. The Standing Committee, consisting of the WCNPAC, should be created to work with developers and the City Planning Department for achievement of development which is of benefit to the WCN. It is a logical assumption that the current Advisory Committee members serve on this Standing Committee because: 1) members of the current Advisory Committee are representative of a variety of stakeholders in the West Central Neighborhoods, including neighborhood and commercial, CSU, CSURF and City Planning; and 2) the Advisory Committee members are knowledgeable about City policy and the West Central Neighborhoods Plan.

3. Conversions of use from residential to commercial should conform to the following guidelines:
- Conversions must maintain the residential feel and character of the structure.
 - All property conversions and redevelopment must meet the proposed Design Standards and Guidelines for West Central Neighborhoods and work with the Neighborhoods Standing Committee during the Development Review Process.
 - Existing trees should be preserved and incorporated into the Landscape Plan. No large trees should be removed for parking areas.

INFORMATION SOURCES

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B C Business Center District, December 13, 1995.

Trends: A Review of Economic and Social Conditions in Fort Collins, June 1995.

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Demographic and Economic Trends and Issues in Fort Collins, Colorado, Preliminary draft of the Executive Summary, Clarion Associates, September 1995.

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Fort Collins Code: Article II.: Garbage and Refuse: Division 1. Generally, Section 12.16 through Section 12.24.

Fort Collins Code: Article III.: Weeds, Brush and Rubbish: Section 20.41 through Section 20.45.

Fort Collins Code: Article V.: Junked, Wrecked, Abandoned, Inoperable Property: Division 1.

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Colorado State University Master Plan, 1982.

Sources from Other Communities:

Home Based Business, Section Two, Saskatchewan, Canada.

City of Stevens Point Maintenance and Occupancy Code, Stevens Point, WI, January 26, 1995.

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“Duties and Responsibilities of Problem Property Nuisance Abatement”, Denver Police Department, Denver, CO, July 13, 1995.

Land Utilization, Section Two, Saskatchewan, Canada.

“Sample Notification Techniques Used By Neighborhood Association”, Bel Air News, Albuquerque, NM, July 1994.

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City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village, David Sucher, City Comforts Press, Seattle, 1995.

“Bye Bye Suburban Dream”, Newsweek, May 15, 1995.

“Land Use Private Property Rights, r. George Wallace”, MR Notes, News from the College of Natural Resources, No. 4, November 1995.

“Low Income Tax Credit Will Probably End After '97”, Kiplinger Washington Letter, November 24, 1995.

“The New Urbanism, Suburb may look like Seaside in Florida”, Denver Post, November 13, 1995.

“The New Urbanism, Revisionist Approach Finds Test Ground Here”, Denver Post, November 14, 1995.

“Not So Fast”, Bill McKibben, New York Times Magazine, July 23, 1995.

Table 2
West Central Neighborhoods Plan
Multi-Family Housing

NORTHEAST SECTION	Number of Units
Cambridge House Apartments 1113 W Plum	102
Birch Street Condominiums 1420 Birch	24
Birchwood Condominiums 1325 & 1331 Birch	20
Baystone Condominiums 710 City Park Avenue	72
Baystone Condominiums 720 City Park Avenue	78
City Park Condominiums 812 City Park Avenue	18
Campus West Condominiums 1209 W Plum	42
International House 1400 W Elizabeth	118
University Village 1600 W Plum	350
Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity 705 S Shields	39
Beta Theta Phi Fraternity 801 S Shields	31
Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity 709 Wagner	31
Sigma Chi Fraternity 635 S Shields	35
Sigma Nu Fraternity 701 Wagner	40
Alpha Chi Omega Sorority 708 City Park	40
Chi Omega Sorority 1112 Birch	56

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Delta Delta Delta Sorority 1307 Birch	66
Gamma Phi Beta Sorority 733 S Shields	51
Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority 729 S Shields	53
Sigma Kappa Sorority 1300 Baystone	10
Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority 1225 Baystone	55
<i>Total for Northeast Section</i>	<i>1,331 units</i>
NORTHWEST SECTION	Number of Units
Rams Village Apartments (East and West) 900 and 901 Constitution	356
University Village 1700 W Plum	80
Sleep Willow Apartments 2021 Plum	100
2034 & 2036 W Plum Apartments	24
Condominiums 2024 W Plum	10
The Emily Apartments 2020 W Plum	12
Condominiums 2012 W Plum	10
Apartments 2008 W Plum	21
Apartments 2000 W Plum	8
Villas at Orchard Place Townhouses	20
Glenmoor Place Apartments	16
<i>Total for Northwest Section</i>	<i>657 Units</i>

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WESTERN MID-SECTION	Number of Units
Delta Tau Delta Fraternity, 1409 W Elizabeth	20
Campion West Villas 1517 W Elizabeth	22
Matador Apartments 1117 City Park Avenue	146
WoodBridge Condominiums City Park Avenue	24
University Court Condominiums 1118 University	24
University Court Condominiums 1301 University	33
WoodBox Condominiums 1625 W Elizabeth	54
<i>Total for Western Mid- Section</i>	<i>323 Units</i>
EASTERN MID-SECTION	Number of Units
Old Town Square Apartments 210 W. Prospect Rd.	32
Prospect Plaza Apartments 304 W. Prospect Rd.	180
Aggie Village North 500 W. Prospect Rd.	289
Pi Beta Phi Sorority 625 W. Lake St.	48
The Farmhouse Fraternity 633 W. Lake St.	22
Hi Lan Apartments 775 W. Lake St.	72
Lake West Apartments 914 W. Lake St.	90

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James Court Apartments 1300 Burton Court	64
<i>Total for Eastern Mid-Section</i>	<i>797 Units</i>
SOUTHEAST SECTION	
	Number of Units
Aggie Village South 501 W. Prospect Rd.	289
Landmark Apartments 1050 Hobbit	120
Hill Pond Hill Pond Rd. & Shields	61
Wind Trail Townhomes Hill Pond Rd. & Shire Court	37
Wind Trail at Spring Creek East Gilgalad Way	35
Sundering Townhomes 900 Shire Court	88
Wind Trail Park South of Shire Court/East of Shields	77
The Worthington 900 Worthington Circle	94
New Mercer Commons Assisted Living 900 Centre	118 beds
Columbine Care Center West 940 Worthington Circle	108 beds
<i>Total for Southeast Section</i>	<i>1,027 Units</i>
SOUTHWEST SECTION	
Northfield Condominiums 1221 W. Prospect Rd.	104
Stone Creek Apartments 1225 W. Prospect Rd.	168
Red Fox Meadow 1600 Foxbrook Lane	99

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The Bridges Condominiums 1600 Westbridge Drive	87
Summerhill 1637 Westbridge Drive	148
Heatheridge Lakes Condominiums 1705 Heatheridge Road	210
Carriage Townhomes 1300 Village Park Court	60
Northwood Apartments 1742 Heritage Circle	182
New Colony Apartments 1917 S. Shields Street	261
Raintree Townhomes Evenstar Ct. off Shields Street	12
The Preserve Apartments 1212 Raintree Dr.	278
<i>Total for Southwest Section</i>	<i>1,609 Units</i>
<i>Total for all West Central Neighborhoods</i>	<i>5,744 Units</i>

APPENDIX C
TRANSPORTATION

SUMMARY OF ISSUES and GOALS
AUTO TRAFFIC and STREETS

Issue I: Excessive movement of through-traffic on the non-arterial streets of the neighborhood.

Goals: Promote the utilization of arterial streets (Taft Hill, Shields, Mulberry, Elizabeth, Prospect, Drake, and eventually Centre) for the movement of traffic through the neighborhood, thereby discouraging the use of neighborhood collector (connector) and local streets for through traffic movements with the possible exceptions of Stuart Street and/or Constitution Avenue which could become “mini-arterials.”

Issue II: Balance the level of service for all transportation modes at major intersections (i.e., arterial/arterial and arterial/collector [connector]) within the neighborhoods.

Goal: All major street intersections (i.e., arterial/arterial and arterial/collector [connector]) within the neighborhoods should have the highest Multi-modal Level of Service possible for all modes of travel (auto, bicycle, transit, and pedestrian).

Issue III: Adequate level of maintenance of existing streets and appropriate design standards for new streets.

Goals: Streets of the neighborhoods should be adequately maintained on a regular schedule.

Use of new street design standards should be balanced with existing street designs and existing neighborhood character.

The design standards of new streets should lend themselves to creating a better sense of “neighborhood community” with, depending upon their functional classification, attributes which encourage alternative modes, especially pleasant walking experiences on local streets, and fostering interaction between neighborhood residents.

Issue IV: Need another connection between CSU and the south and southwestern parts of the City.

Goals: The construction of Centre Avenue should be completed as soon as possible to provide a direct connection into the CSU Main Campus and relieve traffic congestion at the Prospect/Shields intersection.

Centre Avenue should be designed to have a functional classification of at least a major collector and possibly a minor arterial and should include bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Spring Creek Trail and a bridge over Spring Creek of sufficient size to allow the bike trail to pass uninterrupted under the street.

Issue V: Need for adequate law enforcement on the streets of the neighborhoods.

Goal: Speed laws need to be enforced on neighborhood streets.

Issue VI: Insure safe access for children to neighborhood schools (Blevins Jr. High, Bennett and Moore Elementary Schools).

Goal: Eliminate unsafe travel corridors and street crossings.

Issue VII: Insure safe access to other activity centers and focal points within the neighborhoods (i.e., Rolland Moore Park, the Campus West shopping area, etc.).

Goal: Eliminate unsafe travel corridors and street crossings.

BICYCLING

Bicyclists must be able to move freely, conveniently, and efficiently within and between the neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

Bicycle safety, freedom, and efficiency of movement is of equal importance to the safety, freedom, and efficiency of movement of all other components of the transportation system (especially motor vehicles).

Bicycle systems should receive servicing and maintenance equal to the levels provided other vehicular modes of transportation.

MASS TRANSIT

Increase the number of trips taken by neighborhood residents on alternative modes, including mass transit.

Mass transit needs to be efficiently organized and be adequate to meet the demands of the people in the neighborhoods.

Transit services need to increase the areas served within the neighborhoods, increase frequency of service, and expand hours of operation.

PEDESTRIANS

Encourage and direct pedestrians to cross arterial streets at signalized intersections (arterial/arterial or arterial/collector [connector]).

Improve access within each neighborhood by eliminating cul-de-sacs.

Improve pedestrian movements to shopping areas by improving sidewalks leading to the shopping areas.

Improve access to CSU.

Make sure all pedestrian routes, especially to CSU, are maintained at a high standard at all times by removing snow and debris.

Provide safe access to Rolland Moore park

Insure pedestrians are safe at all locations in the neighborhood by enforcing traffic laws, providing adequate signals, signs, and crosswalk markings, etc.

PARKING

The provision of adequate parking, in both single-family and multi-family residential areas, and in commercial/business areas within the context of the City's Congestion Management Plan's goals, is critical to maintaining the character of the West Central Neighborhoods.

Parking along residential streets by non-residents should be limited to the extent practical.

The provision of parking in residential and non-residential areas should consider the aesthetic impacts on surrounding uses.

TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

1. Prospect/Heatheridge/Lynnwood traffic control signals for safer pedestrian and bicycle crossings.
2. Completion of Centre Avenue from Research Blvd. to Prospect Road with a bridge over Spring Creek Trail.
3. Widening of Taft Hill Road from Elizabeth Street to Mulberry Street for wider bike lanes.
4. Bike/pedestrian connection from Underhill Drive, south of Prospect, to Ridgewood Road, north of Stuart.
5. Whitcomb/Prospect intersection.
6. Prospect/Shields intersection.
7. Add or improve pedestrian crossing markings at all arterial/arterial and arterial/collector (connector) intersections.

ADDITIONAL CITY BIKEWAY DESIGNATIONS

1. Valley Forge, Taft Hill to Constitution.
2. Heatheridge, Stuart to Prospect.
3. Lynnwood, Prospect to Springfield.
4. Springfield, City Park to Shields.
5. Skyline, Orchard to Crestmore.
6. Centre, Research to Prospect.
7. Research, Centre to Drake.
8. Along railroad tracks, CSU Vet Hospital to Prospect (included within CSU Master Plan).
9. Along Larimer Canal No. 2, CSU Vet Hospital to Centre (included within CSU Master Plan).
10. Hobbit, Shields to Sheeley.
11. Along storm drainage facility, Hobbit to Spring Creek Trail.
12. Whitcomb, Prospect to Lake.
13. Lake, Centre to College.

AUTO TRAFFIC

GOALS

Promote the utilization of arterial streets (Taft Hill, Shields, Mulberry, Elizabeth, Prospect, Drake, and eventually Centre) for the movement of traffic through the neighborhood, thereby discouraging the use of neighborhood collector (connector) and local streets for through traffic movements.

All major street intersections (i.e., arterial/arterial and arterial/collector [connector]) within the neighborhood should have the highest Multimodal Level of Service possible for all modes of travel (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian).

The construction of Centre Avenue should be completed as soon as possible. The design of the street should include bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Spring Creek Trail and include a bridge over Spring Creek of sufficient size to allow the bike trail to pass uninterrupted under the street.

Encourage the enforcement of speed laws on neighborhood streets.

Maintain safe access to neighborhood schools (Blevins Jr. High, Bennett and Moore Elementary Schools) for children.

The design standards of new streets should lend themselves to creating a better sense of “neighborhood community” with, depending upon their functional classification, attributes which encourage alternative modes, especially pleasant walking experiences on local streets, and fostering interaction between neighborhood residents.

A. ISSUE: Auto traffic

Multimodal Level of Service on neighborhood streets, especially at major street intersections such as Prospect/Shields, Shields/Elizabeth, Shields/Laurel, and Taft Hill/Elizabeth.

Background Information to Define the Issue

Auto traffic is the most significant transportation issue in the planning area. Regardless of attempts to encourage the use of alternative modes of travel to displace major volumes of auto traffic, the best that can be hoped for is that the alternatives will stop part or all of the growth in auto traffic. Because of their physical location, the neighborhoods of the planning area are ordained to be a funnel through which much of the auto traffic from areas south and west of the area will flow through to the CSU Campus and the central business district. A major challenge of transportation planning in the community and in this neighborhood plan is to propose

solutions that would accommodate some of this extraneous auto traffic outside of the planning area. The West Central Neighborhoods should not be obligated to accept, as a given, the conventional engineering approach to routing all traffic through the neighborhoods regardless of impacts on the neighborhoods.

Some of the arterials in the planning area were not designed as, nor intended to be, arterials. All of Prospect and Mulberry west of Shields, the north half of Shields and Taft Hill were country lanes until fairly recent times. Some semblance of arterial standards have had to be retrofitted on these streets. There exist opportunities for modifying these street segments to accommodate greater traffic flows.

“Level of Service” is a common traffic engineering rating system to measure and classify traffic flow and delays along streets and at intersections. Ratings range from “A” (free flowing/no delays) to “F” (very congested/major delays), i.e., the higher the rating the better the traffic flows for a particular facility. Currently, for example, the Level of Service for the Shields/Prospect intersection, according to the City’s Traffic Engineer, is “C”. Peak ratings are “D”. These ratings are currently acceptable and consistent with adopted City policies. A lowering of Level of Service would mean more congestion, longer delays, more drive frustration leading to poor choices, increased noise, and deteriorated air quality.

A more inclusive “Multimodal Level of Service Criteria” rating system has been developed and integrated with standard traffic engineering rating systems to cover and include all modes of transportation, i.e., autos, bicycles, and pedestrians. Multimodal Level of Service Criteria include such items as how safe and comfortable people feel moving through an intersection, whether in a car, on a bike, or on foot. The criteria will help quantify a proposed street improvement’s impacts on the different modes of travel. Obviously, trade-offs would have to be made between the various modes, e.g., giving pedestrians more time to walk across the intersection reduces the amount of “green” time autos and bikes would have to move through the intersection.

Arterial streets are planned and designed to be the primary movers of auto traffic throughout the community. This functional use of arterial streets is critical to maintaining various quality of life attributes within the neighborhoods. Diversion of through traffic movements onto neighborhood streets is unacceptable unless specifically planned for. Therefore, arterial streets in the neighborhood should offer as much of an unincumbered flow as possible to those who wish to pass through the neighborhood from one point in the city to another; however, this unincumbered flow should not be at the expense of safety to neighborhood residents or the utilization of alternative modes of travel.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

The following are the goals of the subcommittee:

1. Promote the utilization of arterial streets (Taft Hill, Shields, Mulberry, Elizabeth, Prospect, Drake, and eventually Centre) for the movement of traffic through the neighborhood, thereby discouraging the use of neighborhood collector (connector) and local streets for through-traffic movements.
2. All major street intersections (i.e., arterial/arterial and arterial/collector [connector]) within the neighborhood should have the highest Multimodal Level of Service possible for all modes of travel (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian).

Alternative Options to Solve the Problem

Because major intersections are part of the City’s overall arterial streets system, the Multimodal Level of Service of the intersection is directly related to the quality characteristics and traffic capacity of that entire system; however, the location of the intersection in the middle of the planning area demands that the intersection must also be user-friendly to neighborhood residents. Thus, solutions have to be addressed and concerns viewed from both the community-wide perspective and the neighborhood perspective.

Reducing traffic congestion is a community-wide problem and a comprehensive program has been established in the City’s Congestion Management Plan. Basically, reduction of traffic congestion involves a two part solution: one is to increase system capacities (new facilities, improvements to existing facilities, increased mass transit, etc.) and the other is to deal with demand management (reduction of the need to use an auto through car pooling, telecommuting, mixing land uses, etc.). These represent the alternative options.

Measures Used to Evaluate the Options

Standard “Level of Service” criteria should continue to be used for the major intersections within the neighborhood; however, these need to be supplemented with “Multimodal Level of Service Criteria” ratings developed as part of the Congestion Management Plan. The measures developed and compared over time, will help determine if and what future actions will need to be taken to reduce traffic congestion in the neighborhood.

Options Recommended by the Subcommittee

The committee recommends the City use the adopted “Multimodal Level of Service Criteria” in future decision making concerning the major intersections within the neighborhood. This way

trade-offs between modes can be better understood and priorities for the movements within modes can be made.

Specific Actions for the Options

Neighborhood residents should monitor the City's implementation of the Congestion Management Plan as related to major neighborhood streets and intersections.

B. ISSUE: Design of Centre Avenue

Background Information to Define the Issue

Centre Avenue will offer a critical connection from the south and southwest portions of the City into the Colorado State University (CSU) Main Campus. This street will offer an alternative transportation facility for moving traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians within and through the West Central Neighborhoods Plan area, specifically having a positive impact of reducing volumes at the Shields/Prospect intersection. Shields Street and Prospect Road, like every other arterial street in the city, are witnessing an increase in traffic volumes. The recently completed improvements to Prospect Road, west of Shields Street, and to the Shields/Prospect intersection have increased the carrying capacity and "Level of Service" of the streets and the intersection. These improvements help draw additional usage of the facilities since most people choose travel routes based on travel time and not distance. Centre Avenue could effectively siphon off traffic headed north on Shields Street for the Main Campus, allowing it to by-pass the Shields/Prospect intersection. The street should be designed to have a functional classification of at least a major collector and possibly a minor arterial status.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

The overall goal of the subcommittee is:

The construction of Centre Avenue should be completed as soon as possible. The design of the street should include bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Spring Creek Trail and include a bridge over Spring Creek of sufficient size to allow the bike trail to pass uninterrupted under the street. (The current estimated cost of the project is \$800,000.)

Alternative Options to Solve the Problem

The following are options related to the design of Centre Avenue:

1. The full construction of Centre Avenue.
2. Unless the full construction of Centre Avenue is accomplished to support the Congestion Management Plan's goals and strategies, a project to complete an

“interim” substitute for Centre Avenue for bicycle and pedestrian connections should be established.

3. Accelerate CSU’s implementation of a Transit Demand Management (TDM) Program specifically aimed at reducing the dependency on private automobiles of faculty, staff, and students.
4. Encourage the rapid implementation of the overall City TDM Program for other areas, such as the Downtown, which would positively impact Shields Street, Prospect Road, and the Shields/Prospect intersection, as well as other major street intersections in the planning area.

Measures Used to Evaluate the Options

The following are potential measures for evaluating the above options:

1. Monitor CSU’s TDM program for effects on reducing automobile traffic and encouraging alternative mode usage to/from the Main Campus.
2. Monitor the City’s TDM program for its impacts.

Options Recommended by the Subcommittee

Recommended options are as follows:

1. Construction of Centre Avenue should be placed on the next City Capital Improvements Program.
2. A Special Improvement District (SID), including properties in the Centre for Advanced Technology (CAT) should be included within the district.
3. Require completion of Centre Avenue with the next large phase of development in the Centre for Advanced Technology.

Specific Actions for the Options

Neighborhood residents should become involved in the next City Capital Improvements Program (like they were involved in the “Choices 95” Program) to assure that Centre Avenue is on the listing of projects. If the project fails to be placed on the next CIP, neighborhood residents should approach the City about establishing an SID.

C. ISSUE: Level of traffic law enforcement

Background Information to Define the Issue

Perhaps the most important issue concerning traffic law enforcement on streets within the West Central Neighborhoods Plan area is speeding. According to the City’s Traffic Engineer, automobile drivers will travel at a rate at which they feel comfortable, regardless of the posted legal speed limit. The arterial streets which pass through or along the edges of the neighborhoods are based on the Township/Range system and are exactly one mile apart in terms of spacing (the major exception being West Elizabeth Street which is on the half-section between Mulberry Street and Prospect Road). Thus, arterial streets are straight roads (no curves), with a design width of 70' or 4 travel lanes and a center left-turn lane. During times of lower traffic volumes, the arterial street design, such as Prospect Road between Shields and Taft Hill, lends itself to an increased comfort level for drivers because of long sight distances and minimal side street turning conflicts which, in turn, leads to increased speeds.

The design of several collector classification streets within the neighborhoods (e.g., Stuart Street and Constitution Avenue) is such that they also have long straight stretches and a relatively wide 54' design standard for 2 travel lanes, on-street bicycle lanes, and minimal on-street parking. Again, the design of these streets leads to greater driver comfort and increased speeds.

Setting speed limits too low does not necessarily improve safety and may encourage speeding violations. Speeds should be realistically set for streets in the neighborhood, e.g. Prospect should be 35 and not 30, Stuart should be 30 and not 25.

Technological advances are helping the Police Department to maximize the resources devoted to traffic law enforcement. Recently, the Police Department has used a “smart trailer” along streets as a public awareness tool to inform motorists of their speed of travel as a behavior modification device. In the future, camera-radars which monitor speeds and photograph vehicle licence plates will enable a single officer (1) to do the work of nineteen (19) officers in the enforcement of speed laws. Perhaps, the future may hold the potential to have camera-radars placed on street light poles at fixed locations to monitor traffic speeds and automatically record speeding violations. Cameras can also be placed at intersections to catch red light runners.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

The major goal of the subcommittee is to have speed laws enforced as follows:

Encourage the enforcement of speed laws on neighborhood streets.

Alternative Options to Solve the Problem

The following actions are presented:

1. Work with the City's Traffic Engineer to see that neighborhood streets are posted with reasonable speed limits for safety purposes.
2. Encourage regular enforcement of speed laws by the Police Department.
3. Utilize the most effective means of notification of speed limits on streets, including traditional along-street signs and on-street signs.
4. In areas where speeding seems to be a chronic problem (West Stuart Street), utilize what is known as traffic calming designs including curb bulges, speed humps, roundabouts, etc.

Measures Used to Evaluate the Options

The following measures could be used:

1. Monitor the number and characteristics (time of day, distribution of violations in MPH over the limit, age of driver, address of driver, etc.) of speeding tickets issued on various neighborhood streets for any patterns which could lead to different solutions.
2. Randomly monitor neighborhood streets for behavioral patterns and use the data in making decisions concerning speed limit enforcement.

Options Recommended by the Subcommittee

The committee recommends the following options:

1. Encourage the Police Department to regularly monitor traffic for speeding violations in the neighborhood.
2. If data collected about people who speed identifies certain types or classifications of characteristics, institute an educational program designed to add preventive measures to enforcement measures.
3. Work with the City's Traffic Engineer to place traffic calming devices in areas where chronic speeding occurs.

Specific Actions for the Options

See section above.

D. ISSUE: Safe access to neighborhood schools, Blevins Junior High, and Bennett and Moore Elementary Schools, for children

Background Information to Define the Issue

The City's Traffic Engineer indicates there are no reports of accidents involving school children to these schools. The lack of supporting data is not intended, however, to minimize the importance of the issue. The concern of safe access to schools for children, especially when crossing arterial streets, should always remain a paramount issue when considering transportation improvements in the neighborhood.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

The goal of the subcommittee is:

Maintain safe access to neighborhood schools (Blevins Jr. High, Bennett and Moore Elementary Schools) for children.

Alternative Options to Solve the Problem

Listed below are the options:

1. School crossing guards at major intersections including the Shields/Prospect, Shields/Lake, Taft Hill/Stuart, Pedestrian crossing at Taft Hill/Sheffield, and Taft Hill/Orchard intersections should be maintained to help assure safe crossing for children.
2. The Police Department/School District should maintain a "walk to school safely" education program, especially for elementary school children.
3. The School District should maintain a bussing program whereby students who may live within reasonable walking distance of a school, but have to cross busy streets, can be safely transported to schools.
4. The School District, in conjunction with parent groups, should delineate attendance boundaries which minimize the need, as much as possible, for students to cross busy streets in order to get to/from school.
5. Investigate movement of the Taft Hill school crossing to Blevins Jr. High.

Measures Used to Evaluate the Options

The following measures should be used:

1. Monitor accident reports for trend information which may lead to different solutions.
2. Monitor demographic changes within portions of the neighborhood and amend school attendance boundaries as needed.

Options Recommended by the Subcommittee

The subcommittee believes the following options should be recommended:

1. Maintain the school crossing guard program.
2. Provide bussing services from portions of the neighborhood which require students to cross busy streets in order to attend school.

Specific Actions for the Options

1. Neighborhood residents should monitor the City's General Fund Budget to assure sufficient funds are allocated to maintain the school crossing guard program.
2. Neighborhood residents, through their school parent groups, should monitor the School District's budget to provide bussing services from portions of the neighborhood which require students to cross busy streets in order to attend school.

E. ISSUE: Design standards for new streets and for the maintenance of existing streets

Background Information to Define the Issue

Design standards for streets typically deal with right-of-way and flowline-to-flowline widths, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, sidewalk size and placement, and landscaping treatments. Currently, the City of Fort Collins is known for its typical wide street cross-sections. Wide streets have an impact on neighborhood character, design, and perception, in addition to the impact on traffic safety. Street design standards have been updated in the City's Comprehensive Plan, known as **City Plan**. New design standards have been adopted, but special considerations still need to be made based on the unique qualities of individual neighborhoods. Thus, a one-size fits all approach should not apply to older neighborhoods.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

The goal of the subcommittee is:

The design standards of new streets should lend themselves to creating a better sense of “neighborhood community” with, depending upon their functional classification, attributes which encourage alternative modes, especially pleasant walking experiences on local streets, and fostering interaction between neighborhood residents.

Alternative Options to Solve the Problem

Since most of the neighborhood is developed, there will not be an opportunity for new street design standards to have a major impact on the character of the neighborhood. New street design standards will, thus, need to be retrofitted into the neighborhood over a longer period of time. There are several options which should be considered as follows:

1. New streets to be constructed in the neighborhood should automatically be required to conform to the new street design standards.
2. Over time, the new street design standards should be applied during the regularly scheduled maintenance of City streets, even though this could significantly increase the costs of such work when compared to the existing routine rebuilding/maintenance efforts.
3. Neighborhood residents could explore the creation of Special Improvement Districts (SIDs).

Measures Used to Evaluate the Options

The **City Plan** process led to new street design standards. Since the community consciously accepted the new standards and their increased construction and maintenance costs and was willing to financially support them, the program should apply the standards city-wide; however, the retrofitting of existing streets in older neighborhoods makes the street look out of character with existing development. Care needs to be taken in the application of the standards within the planning area. Over time, the WCNP citizens should see to it that they receive their fair share of financial resources to upgrade and retrofit existing streets, whether to the new standards or the existing standards within the neighborhoods.

Options Recommended by the Subcommittee

The following options are recommended:

West Central Neighborhoods Plan

1. New streets, limited as they may be, should conform to the new street design standards developed as part of the **City Plan** process.
2. New street design standards should be used during the City's regularly scheduled rebuilding/maintenance program, even though this would likely increase the costs of the program.
3. Neighborhood residents could explore methods to undertake retrofitting of new street design standards on existing streets.

Specific Actions for the Options (Same as above)

BICYCLING

GOALS

Bicyclists must be able to move freely, conveniently, and efficiently within and between the neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

Bicycle safety, freedom, and efficiency of movement is of equal importance to the safety, freedom, and efficiency of movement of all other components of the transportation system (especially motor vehicles).

Bicycle systems should receive servicing and maintenance equal to the levels provided other vehicular modes of transportation.

F. ISSUE: Level of service for bicycle routes needs to include the concepts that bicycles are used as both a method of transportation and a recreation activity

Background Information

The West Central Neighborhoods are a source of considerable bicycle traffic for both transportation and recreational purposes. Many routes traverse the West Central Neighborhoods going to and from adjacent neighborhoods and the CSU Main Campus, the Central Business District, and other activity centers. There is a need for improved facilities and the management of bicycle traffic in consideration with all modes of transportation. Any program or construction activity must consider the impact that good bicycle facilities will have on the quality of life in the neighborhoods and the overall environmental quality of the city as a whole.

There is a need for at least two different levels of service for bicyclists. One level of service should be developed for those who use the bicycle as a means of transportation. These are the individuals who use bicycles for the "journey to work" or school, go shopping, attend meetings,

or for other non-recreational purposes. The other level of service is for those who use the bicycle for recreational purposes, including exercising.

Alternative Solutions

1. Bicycle route planning needs to account for both the transportation and recreational uses of the bicycle. Some routes must be planned and designed for their specific separate functions and not combined in a single facility.
2. A bicycle route needs to be established offering a transportation functional link as an alternative to Prospect Road (because it is too narrow) for travel from Shields Street to Centre Avenue.
3. Both the City's and CSU's plans for the management of bicycle movements to and from the CSU main campus must be coordinated.
4. Traffic control signs ("Stop" signs, etc.) on streets acting as bicycle alternatives to high volume auto traffic streets should be changed such that freer movement of bicycles can occur.
5. A city-wide policy and street design standard must be developed and adopted for facilitating bicycle left-turn movements through major intersections (such as the Shields/Prospect intersection) within the community.
6. A bicycle/pedestrian activated traffic control signal should be placed at the Heatheridge-Lynnwood-Prospect intersection to increase safety of movements for those modes across Prospect.
7. Bicycle lanes should be marked with sufficient width for the safe movement of bicycles along major arterial streets. In areas where limited space is available (i.e., along Taft Hill Road from Elizabeth to Mulberry), street widening projects will need to be added to the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
8. Develop a priority snow removal system for bicycle access to the CSU main campus.

G. ISSUE: Behavioral differences between adult and pre-adult bicyclists

Background Information

Different age groups behave differently in their utilization of the bicycle and this factor needs to be part of any transportation planning effort which includes bicycles. Both riders and non-riders

of bicycles must understand that bicycles are subjected to the same laws and are entitled to the same privileges that govern or are given to motor vehicles (i.e., bicyclists must stop at ‘Stop’ signs and red lights, travel in the same direction as motorized vehicles [not heading southbound in a northbound lane], etc.) The 18-25 year old cohort appears to be the transitional age between adult and pre-adult users of bicycles. According to the City’s Traffic Engineer, the highest incidence of bicycle-related accidents and mishaps occurs with the male component of the 18-25 cohort and most of these can be attributed to not following the ‘rules of the road.’

Alternative Solutions

1. Educational programs as to the proper safe use of bicycles must account for the different age groups and their utilizations of the bicycle.
2. Investigate other methods of behavioral modification.

PARKING

GOALS

The provision of adequate parking, in both single-family and multi-family residential areas, and in commercial/business areas within the context of the City’s Congestion Management Plan’s goals is critical to maintaining the character of the West Central Neighborhoods.

Parking along residential streets by non-residents should be limited to the extent practical.

The provision of parking in residential and non-residential areas should consider the aesthetic impacts on surrounding uses.

H. ISSUE: Adequate parking in residential and business/commercial areas

Background Information

The City of Fort Collins regulates parking in new developments through provisions in the City’s **Land Use (Zoning) Code**. Generally, the City’s regulations are intended to ensure that parking is well designed in regards to safety, efficiency, and convenience. Pedestrians and vehicles are to be separated whenever possible. If separation is not possible, conflicts must be minimized. Site plans are required to show the number and location of off-street parking spaces, including guest, handicapped, bicycle, and motorcycle parking. Shared parking for multiple land use developments is encouraged. Presently, however, there are no regulations established for parking on city streets in existing residential areas by residents or non-residents.

The City's Transportation Department has completed work on a comprehensive review of parking in the community. There are three components to the study: 1) the Downtown area; 2) Colorado State University; and 3) the surrounding residential areas (which includes portions of the West Central Neighborhoods Plan area).

While shared parking can be beneficial when developments are new, the practice can lead to parking problems when land uses change over time. Concerns of insufficient parking exist with the Raintree Shopping Center and the Campus West area, for example. Generally, when pads develop at Raintree, the amount of area available for shared parking begins to be reduced and when redevelopment occurs at Campus West, some parking spaces may be lost.

A similar concern for insufficient parking exists when parking standards do not account for special populations which may live within residential developments. Observations made at the Landmark Apartment complex indicates that some of the apartment dwellers utilize Hobbit Street for parking. This may be a convenience issue for some dwellers who find that the street provides easier access to their units. The major concern, however, is with the adequate provision of parking. If Landmark does not have sufficient on-site parking, forcing overflow onto Hobbit Street, what additional problems will be created when the vacant land south of Hobbit Street develops?

Alternative Solutions

1. The results of the City's parking study should be closely reviewed by WCNP area residents for potential solutions to neighborhood parking issues. The WCNP process should not devote too much energy in duplication of the City/CSU study's efforts.
2. The City's parking regulations should be reviewed for new developments which may provide housing for specialized populations who may create demands beyond current regulatory standards.

I. ISSUE: Parking by residents in a manner which is unattractive or unsafe

Background Information

The City's parking laws cover such issues as obstructions and encroachments on public property and nuisances, including abandoned or junk vehicles. Parking laws also cover illegal parking on sidewalks, blocking of driveways and blocking of fire hydrants; however, the parking of multiple vehicles on lawns by residents and the storage of recreational vehicles in a manner which may be aesthetically unpleasant for many residents are not covered by City Code provisions. These parking problems decrease the quality of life and could also decrease property values in the neighborhood. Aesthetically related parking concerns are typically covered in new developments

by covenants. Such covenants do not exist for older neighborhoods and would be difficult to establish because they would require agreements among all property owners to be effective.

Alternative Solutions

1. Investigate the potential of changes to the City Code to deal with the parking of multiple vehicles on front lawns. Requiring paved parking spaces and limiting either the percentage of lot frontage devoted to parking or the area of a lot used for parking purposes are possible solutions. Great care in drafting new legislation would be required to assure special circumstances, such as cul-de-sac lots and lots along collector and arterial streets, can have safe access to the street and parking spaces.
2. Institute a “good neighbor” educational effort by neighborhood residents which discusses the negative impacts of unattractive parking on surrounding uses.

J. ISSUE: Parking along residential streets by non-residents

Background Information

This issue is currently being addressed by the City Transportation Department/CSU parking study, discussed earlier. A study by the Prospect/Shields Neighborhood Association (May 1995) showed that much of the non-resident parking in their area appears to be by CSU students. In their study, Balsam Lane was one street where parking by non-residents was a significantly important issue, whereas parking along Sheely Drive appeared to be by residents and their visitors.

Users of Rolland Moore Park often use the parking lots of the Shields Street Medical Center and streets in the Sundering and Hill Pond areas. Residents of areas near the Spring Creek Trail find people parking their vehicles to walk, hike, or bike along the trail. Again, the streets are public streets and there are no City Code provisions restricting parking on them; however, such usage often leads to congestion on neighborhood streets.

Alternative Solutions

1. Parking permits. Each resident would receive a limited number of permits for on-street parking.
2. Time limit restrictions. Some streets would need to have time limit restrictions (i.e., 2 hours).

3. Management of special events at Rolland Moore Park should provide off-site (out of neighborhood) parking facilities (if necessary renting outlying parking lots) and utilize shuttle buses or vans to bring people to the park.
4. Parking lots could be expanded at the park and on the CSU Main Campus.

MASS TRANSIT

K. ISSUE: Mass transit (Use of mass transit; frequency of service; routes; access to routes)

Background Information to Define the Issue

The West Central Neighborhoods are home to a large number of students, staff, and faculty at Colorado State University. The neighborhoods also have an above average density of people as compared to other parts of Fort Collins. Taken together, this means the neighborhoods can, if given the proper facilities and services, utilize alternative modes of transportation at a frequency that is above average when compared with the rest of the City. Mass transit is important to neighborhood residents, mostly for student going to CSU; however, non-student residents also use mass transit to travel to work, to shop, for medical services, and recreational activities.

The demand for mass transit varies significantly from day to day and time in the day. This has resulted in the use of larger busses when the demand is low. The mass transit routes are along major roads and principle streets in the neighborhoods. These routes are shown on Map 9. The major problems are that the night/evening service does not reach all of the areas with demand for night/evening service and that the walking routes to bus stops are often not direct.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

Increase the number of trips taken by neighborhood residents on alternative modes.

Mass transit needs to be efficiently organized and be adequate to meet the demands of the people in the neighborhoods.

Transit services need to increase the areas served within the neighborhoods, increase frequency of service, and expand hours of operation.

Alternative Options to Solve the Problem

Transit services should be as cost-effective as possible, recognizing that mass transit will not likely become self-supporting.

Action: Reduce the size or schedule frequency of busses during low demand times.

West Central Neighborhoods Plan

Each area of the community and the neighborhoods has different levels of transit services and has different needs. The night and evening service may not be adequate for the movement of people to and from Colorado State University. Also, the changes in the neighborhoods may cause a change in the schedule timing and routes.

Action: Survey users periodically to see if different routes and schedules could increase use of transit services.

Many of the pedestrian routes to bus stops are in excess of the 1/4 mile (10 minutes) walking standard.

Action: Investigate which is more cost-effective: 1) elimination of barriers and/or construction of pedestrian paths as proposed in the Pedestrian Plan to improve access to transit services; or 2) use of a mini-bus/van (paratransit) system to circulate within neighborhoods to collect riders and transport them to major bus routes.

Bus stops need to be user-friendly, attractive, and safe.

Action: Provide each bus stop in the neighborhoods with a safe, convenient, attractively designed, well lighted, landscaped, and covered bus stop shelter.

PEDESTRIAN

L. ISSUE: Pedestrians (accessability and circulation; safety)

Background Information to Define the Issue

During the post-World War II love affair with the automobile, pedestrian and pedestrian-friendly facilities have received very short shrift. While most new developments have some sort of sidewalks, they are generally inadequate and unappealing -- usually a vestigial extension of a Hollywood curb. Sidewalks in older sections have typically been considered anachronisms and allowed to deteriorate to the point that they are sometimes hazardous or even unsafe. Fort Collins has largely depended on new development to provide such pedestrian facilities as now constitute this part of the transportation infrastructure and on a semi-voluntary program with property owners to maintain existing facilities. In some few instances, Special Improvement Districts have been formed in older portions of the community to add or improve sidewalks. The only capital expenditures of any consequence for pedestrian infrastructure have been for federally mandated and funded handicap ramps at intersections and as part of street projects funded with local capital improvement program funds.

West Central Neighborhoods Plan

Given this general background of 50 years of neglect of pedestrian facilities, and rising interest in walking as an alternative mode of travel and as a recreational and fitness pursuit, now is the time to place major emphasis on pedestrian welfare in all City planning mechanisms.

There are several pedestrian activities in the neighborhoods, including the movement of people to and from CSU and other existing or planned employment centers (e.g., Centre for Advanced Technology), the movement of people to shopping areas and recreation areas within the planning area, the movement of people within the individual neighborhoods, and just general walking for recreation or fitness and social purposes. Each of these activities have their own characteristics.

The movement of people within the neighborhoods is partly a recreational activity and partly a process of travel between individual homes. The sidewalk, and streets if a sidewalk is not present, in all the neighborhoods are used by people walking in groups of two or three talking to each other and going to neighbors; usually these activities occur within an individual neighborhood (for instance the Sheely neighborhood, the Village Green neighborhood and so forth). The recreation activity of walking occurs all year long and it is important to keep sidewalks clear of snow and debris at all times. The movement of people walking as transportation is important all year but is especially so during the summer when school age children are moving about the neighborhoods going to friends' homes, to neighborhood parks, and to neighborhood swimming pools. Recreational walking and children's movements are usually within an individual neighborhood but there is some movement across major streets to adjacent neighborhoods.

The movement of people to shopping areas and community parks (Rolland Moore) is common in the West Central Neighborhoods and would be more common if it was not a perceived unpleasantness of walking along major thoroughfares, such as Shields Street. High community and neighborhood utilization of Rolland Moore Park creates the necessity of safe access to and from the park by all modes of travel. The current unsignalized Shields Street access into and out of the park creates an unsafe situation for all modes of transportation. Shopping access is a problem in all neighborhoods. The only exception is access to the Drake Crossing Shopping Center which can be reached by a reasonably pleasant walking route. Access to the Cedarwood Shopping Center is considered unsafe from both north and south because of narrow sidewalks along Taft Hill Road between Prospect and Mulberry. Access to Raintree Shopping Center is marginal because the routes along both Drake and Shields are considered to be unpleasant. The routes to the Campus West Shopping Center are pleasant and most are considered safe, but walking within the shopping area is unpleasant because of the arrangement of parking, vehicle access to parking, and sidewalks. Access to University Mall is either by the bike tunnel along the Spring Creek Trail, by a very unpleasant walk along College Avenue, or via informal crossings of the railroad tracks. Two informal crossings of the railroad tracks exist: one is a shortcut from the bike trail to the University Mall area and the other is a CSU access route from both the University Mall and the areas to the east of College Avenue to the Veterinary Hospital area.

Access to CSU is from all areas because there are students, faculty, and staff walking to the campus via a wide number of routes from the neighborhoods. These routes closely match bike routes and maintenance of high quality bike routes with adjacent sidewalks will, most likely, make good CSU access routes for pedestrians.

The neighborhoods do have a large number of runners, especially along Shields and the Spring Creek Trail. These routes should be maintained at a good standard because running is an all-year activity in the city.

An inventory of sidewalks within the planning area showed the pedestrian routes were good within the individual neighborhoods but improvements do need to be made in the crossing of major streets.

Goals of the Subcommittee Related to the Issue

The goals of the subcommittee are:

1. Improve access within each neighborhood by eliminating cul-de-sacs.
2. Improve pedestrian movements to shopping areas by improving sidewalks leading to the shopping areas.
3. Improve access to CSU.
4. Make sure all pedestrian routes, especially to CSU, are maintained at a high standard at all times by removing snow and debris.
5. Provide safe access to Rolland Moore Park
6. Insure pedestrians are safe at all locations in the neighborhood by enforcing traffic laws, providing adequate signals, signs, and crosswalk markings, etc.

Options Recommended by the Subcommittee

Three groups of actions are needed. The first is to improve the access to neighborhoods by pedestrians. The second is to improve the present pedestrian routes. The third is to enforce traffic laws that affect pedestrians.

Specific Actions for the Options

West Central Neighborhoods Plan

Set 1: Improve pedestrian accessibility and circulation by constructing pedestrian paths at the following locations: 1. Freedom Lane to Heatheridge; 2. Heatheridge to Prospect (near existing informal path); 3. Hobbit to Wallenberg; 4. Whitcomb across the canal, Glenwood to Manchester; 5. Between the canals from Spring Creek Trail in Rolland Moore Park to Centre; 6. Construct walking paths linking the neighborhoods through Heatheridge Meadows; 7. Establish pedestrian accessibility to the shopping areas along College Avenue via the underpass under the railroad tracks, with connections to the University Mall and South College Avenue; and 8. Enhance existing pedestrian links within the neighborhoods which are currently underutilized but are relatively unknown. For example, the connections from Overland Trail via Orchard Place/Rams Village/Plum Street/CSU.

Set 2: Improve sidewalks and street crossings: 1. Along Taft Hill between Prospect and Mulberry, the highest priority is between Elizabeth and Mulberry; 2. Improve the pedestrian crossing at Heatheridge-Lynnwood and Prospect; 3. Make the crossings at Prospect-Shields more user-friendly to pedestrians; 4. Improve the crossing of Taft Hill in the Shields to Sheffield reach; 5. Improve crossing at Prospect at Sunset; 6. Improve walking access to Rolland Moore Park from Constitution and across Shields; 7. Complete sidewalks on the east side of Taft Hill near Blevins; 8. Complete and/or improve the sidewalks on both sides of Prospect from Shields east to College to meet current standards; 9. Complete and/or improve the sidewalks on both sides of Lake Street from Shields east to College to meet current standards; and 10. Improve the sidewalks on both sides of Whitcomb Street from Prospect to Lake to meet current City standards.

Set 3: Encourage the Police Department to regularly monitor traffic for safety (running of red lights) and speeding violations in the neighborhoods and when the situation warrants, install camera radar at the intersections and section of the street system where violations continue to occur. A pedestrian light should be placed at the Heatheridge/Lynnwood/Prospect intersection. Promptly remove snow from sidewalks along Shields and other City-maintained paths in the neighborhoods. The City should assume maintenance and snow removal responsibility along Prospect between Shields and College. The sidewalks on Prospect must be maintained in very good condition at all times and snow and debris removed promptly.

