



History of Project Area

The River District includes the area just northeast of Old Town Square including Jefferson, Linden, and Willow Streets and Lincoln Avenue. This area is emerging as the next new opportunity to foster the on-going success of downtown Fort Collins.

Jefferson Street is also State Highway 14, serving to bring thousands of people daily to the heart of the city. Linden Street is the primary connection linking the River District to/from Old Town Square to the south and northward to the surrounding neighborhoods and employment areas. Linden Street also provides one of the main connections over the Poudre River and is one of the most convenient access points to/from the Poudre River Trail. Willow Street is a locally well-known route to connect from College Avenue/US287 through the River District to Lincoln.

The River District is a piece of what City Plan refers to as the Poudre River Corridor. The River District is described as a sub-district of downtown and as the “Historic and Cultural Core Segment” of the Poudre River Corridor. The core of the River District near Linden and Willow Streets is significant in its role in the settlement of the city of Fort Collins. The “Fort Collins” military post was established in 1864 and consisted of a parade ground, officer’s quarters & barracks, storehouses and other buildings. These structures were gradually removed one by one until 1942 when the last support building for the Fort was demolished. Cultural use and topographical changes occurred after the Army relinquished ownership in 1872. Uses that followed the military post have been (and in some cases, still are) residential, flour milling, retailing, farming and ranching, lodging, animal feed production and the city dump. The completion of the railroad in 1910 significantly changed the character of the area by leading to the demolition of some

buildings and to the construction of new ones, such as the freight depot and passenger depot. One significant topographical change included the channelization of the river between Linden Street and Lincoln Avenue. This resulted in the relocation of the river from the site now known as the “Oxbow” to the south in its present location. The river has scoured the channel in this section down to bedrock.¹

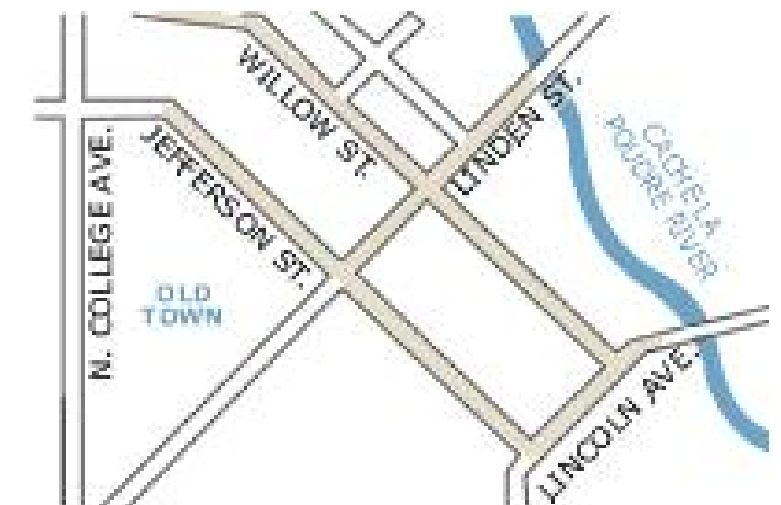
The portion of the River District between Jefferson Street and Willow Street is part of the Old Fort Collins National Historic District. The entire Corridor is part of a “national river corridor,” which Congress designated in 1996 for the Cache La Poudre River to recognize its critical historical value in the westward expansion of the U.S.¹

Despite community aspirations over many years to restore and revitalize the environs along the Cache La Poudre River near downtown Fort Collins, few improvements have come to fruition. There has historically been little coordination between isolated projects. The 1997-1999 Council Policy Agenda identified the need for a more coordinated approach towards action in the Downtown River Corridor. The completion of City Plan in 1997 also provided further impetus for a process and mechanism to improve the relationship of the city to the river in this area.¹

In January 1998, a committee made up of staff from a variety of City departments began work on the Downtown River Corridor Implementation Program. The Program’s mission was to coordinate city projects in the Corridor and to identify, filter and prioritize future projects recommended in various planning documents done over the years. The intent of the Program was to build on existing documents and studies rather than add a new vision for the Corridor. This report contains information and recommendations from the

first phase of the Program. The second phase will consist of implementation of the new projects contained in this report.¹

The Program generated a report that documented a list of 1st Priority, 2nd Priority and 3rd Priority projects that should be initiated in the River Corridor. Included in the list of 1st Priority projects were “Linden, Willow and Lincoln Streetscape Improvements,” “Jefferson/Linden Intersection Improvements,” and “Jefferson/Riverside Streetscape Improvements.” This Downtown River District project report has been developed to address these three 1st Priority projects, as well as the “Linden/Willow Urban Design Features” project that is listed as a 2nd Priority project.



Caption:

¹ Downtown River Corridor Implementation Program; Adopted July 18, 2000, City of Fort Collins’ Advance Planning Department

DOWNTOWN RIVER DISTRICT STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

City of Fort Collins ~ 250 North Mason Street ~ Fort Collins, CO 80524 ~ Tel 970.224.6140

Downtown Development Authority ~ 19 Old Town Square ~ Suite 230 ~ Fort Collins, CO 80524 ~ Tel 970.484.2020

HDR Engineering ~ 19 Old Town Square ~ Suite 242 ~ Fort Collins, CO 80524 ~ Tel 970.419.4388

BHA Design ~ 1603 Oakridge Drive ~ Fort Collins, CO 80525 ~ Tel 970.223.7577

HISTORY OF PROJECT AREA