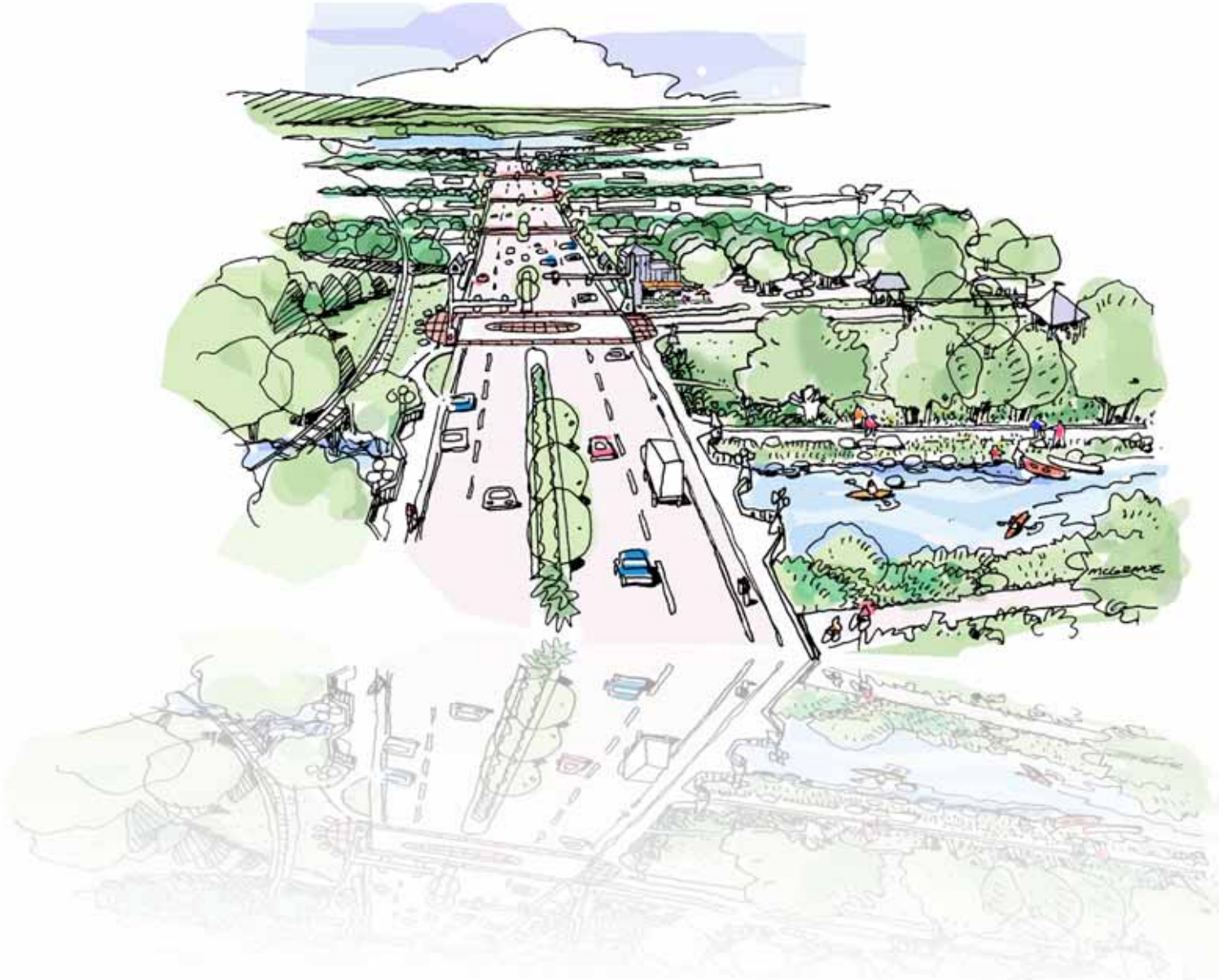




North College Corridor Plan



March 14, 2007



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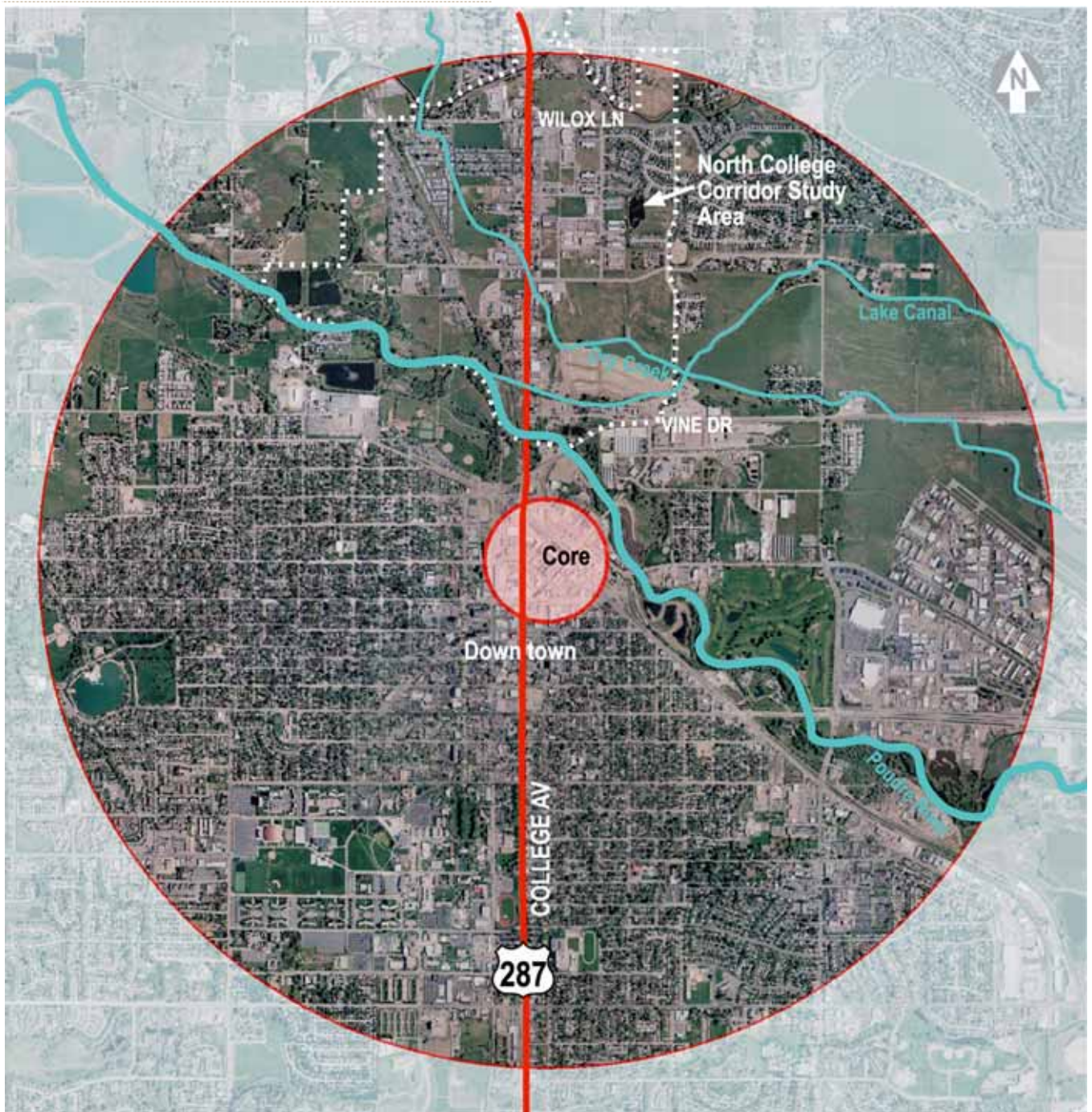
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Aerial photo showing about a 1.5-mile radius around the heart and origin of Fort Collins – the Downtown core. The Poudre River corridor forms a marked diagonal line separating different patterns of community development. This photo highlights the opportunity for a complementary relationship between Downtown and the North College corridor based on physical proximity, especially if the river corridor becomes a positive shared attraction rather than an edge.

Preface

The North College area holds unique opportunities. Perhaps most important is broad, robust support for growth and change on the part of property and business owners in the corridor. There is a general consensus that the area is “left behind, and needs to catch up” with the rest of Fort Collins in terms of the quality of the urban environment. Along with that consensus, however, comes a strong concern that redevelopment and public improvements should be coordinated to maintain a distinct character, reflect attention to the area’s unique circumstances and history, and avoid homogenizing the corridor with standardized suburban development commonly found along commercial corridors at the time of this plan.

A significant opportunity to shape the character of urban development in this near-downtown location has been preserved through the decades by obstacles to complete development – the Poudre River floodplain and its associated canals; the railroad that follows the river’s diagonal alignment; and the Dry Creek floodplain. The Dry Creek floodplain has recently been removed by upstream flood control facilities after more than a decade of effort pursuant to the original 1994 North College Avenue Corridor Plan. Railroad crossings of North College Avenue were reduced from 22 per day to six; and a new enhanced bridge over the river has been built, and bike/pedestrian bridges have been added over the river and the Lake Canal. As new public facilities facilitate private development and redevelopment, there is a need and desire to make the most of the opportunity to create special places.

The corridor’s proximity to Downtown has been obscured by limited connections - physical, visual and perceptual. But exciting possibilities exist to evolve in a way that strengthens synergy with Downtown. The North College corridor and Downtown can benefit each other -- for example, each with uses and activities that the other can not provide, and each with its interesting and evolving urban character that draws people across the river corridor which the two areas share.

The critical mission of this planning effort is to catalyze ongoing improvements to remove constraints and foster desirable development and redevelopment. This plan promotes development activity that strengthens relationships – such as North College Avenue to the areas behind it’s frontage; the corridor to Downtown; new housing to the mixed commercial/industrial setting; and development and activity to the natural environs of the river, canal corridors, and other outdoor spaces such as future drainage ways.

In addition to strengthening relationships, a significant part of the mission is to upgrade the image of North College and enhance the corridor’s role as the northern entryway into the City. Creating a positive community image is important for economic health and the ability to attract quality development projects. The corridor is an opportunity to make an impression that benefits the City as a whole.

PUBLIC PROCESS

The public process for the update to the *North College Corridor Plan* consisted of two major general open houses and monthly updates at meetings of the North Fort Collins Business Association (NFCBA), including two meetings devoted to review and discussion of the plan. The open houses were conducted on May 31, 2006, and November 1, 2006. The monthly meetings with the NFCBA were conducted throughout 2006 and into 2007.

A series of eight property-owner focus group meetings were held in July and August of 2006. The primary purpose of these meetings was to inform owners of the plan's vision and goals, focusing on the need for new streets, utilities, and redevelopment involving multiple properties.

In addition, the plan's progress was reviewed by the Transportation Board and the Natural Resources Advisory Board.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1994 North College Avenue Corridor Plan

Civic discussion has been ongoing in the corridor since the mid-1980s. Most of the initiative has come from citizens concerned about the general direction of the North College area's physical and economic condition. City Council first identified this subarea plan as a project on the 1991-1993 City Council Policy Agenda, leading to the first North College Avenue Corridor Plan, adopted in 1994 as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan (now known as *City Plan*).

2007 Update

After a little more than a decade, City Council recognized the need to update the original plan in response to changes, new information, and issues that had been emerging over the years. This *North College Corridor Plan* provides that update.

Some of the changes reflect progress on recommendations from the original plan. The inset lists 20 notable projects following the original plan, highlighting the value of a plan with broad community support.

The largest project – removal of the Dry Creek floodplain with about ten million dollars' worth of flood control facilities – was completed in 2006 after 12 years of study, financing, negotiation, design, and construction. The project removed the single greatest constraint to development noted in the original 1994 plan.

Commitment to revitalizing the area is stronger than ever, but obstacles still abound.

Some Projects Following Original 1994 Plan:

- Removed Dry Creek floodplain
- Generated drainage system design
- Adopted Access Management Plan by the CDOT/City/County with proposed realignment of Vine Drive
- Rebuilt N. College from Jefferson to Poudre River
- Constructed Old Town North residential development
- Generated 2005 Market Analysis
- Established North College Urban Renewal Plan with tax increment financing (TIF)
- Generated infrastructure needs analysis
- Created Soft Gold Park & Magpie Meander Natural Area
- Created Salyer and River's Edge Natural Areas
- City Plan updated/overhauled
- Constructed an enhanced N. College bridge over Poudre River (Gateway Bridge)
- City purchased/ cleared old Gasamat site in river floodway
- Consolidated railroad train crossings from 22 to 6/day
- Conducted a Trucking Roundtable Study with trucking industry
- Built Hickory Street spur bike path and bridge over Poudre River
- Built Redwood Street bike path and bridge over Lake Canal
- Built interim asphalt path, west side of highway
- Adopted new zoning
- Developed a grocery store (#1 desire in 1992 plan survey)

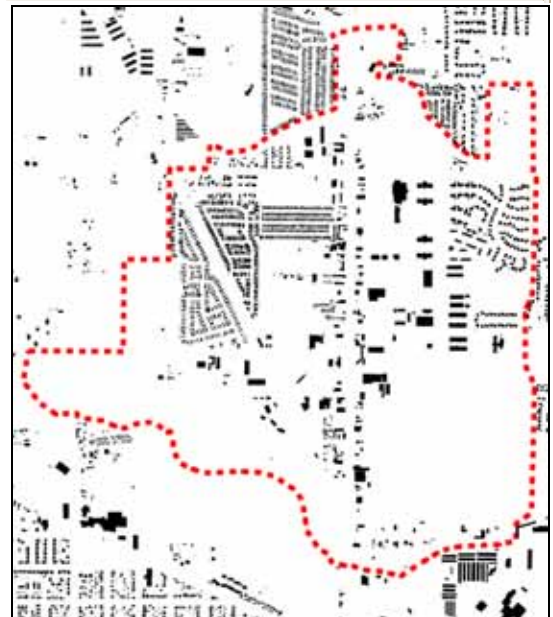
City Plan

In 1997, Fort Collins' Comprehensive Plan was overhauled and unified into a new document named *City Plan*. A corresponding new system for zoning and land use, the Land Use Code, accompanied *City Plan*. The material from the original 1994 plan for the corridor is reflected in *City Plan* and the Land Use Code.

City Plan recognizes that “the community is made up of many unique neighborhoods, districts, and places”; and recognizes the need for subarea plans to adapt its city-wide perspective to specific circumstances in certain areas. It identifies the North College corridor among “Targeted Redevelopment Areas” -- where general agreement exists that infill and redevelopment are beneficial; increased economic activity is desired; and it is appropriate to facilitate urban evolution.

This plan helps implement *City Plan* by providing the forum to:

- convene people of different disciplines and interests,
- stimulate crucial conversations,
- explore issues and possibilities,
- create a framework to guide decisions and investments over time,
- stimulate additional projects to pursue over time,
- review City requirements for development,
- recommend small and large ways to improve the area,
- discuss priorities, and
- maintain the broad base of community support regarding improvements in the corridor.



Black shapes are buildings in this figure-ground diagram above. Much of the area developed in a strip along the highway about a half-block deep.



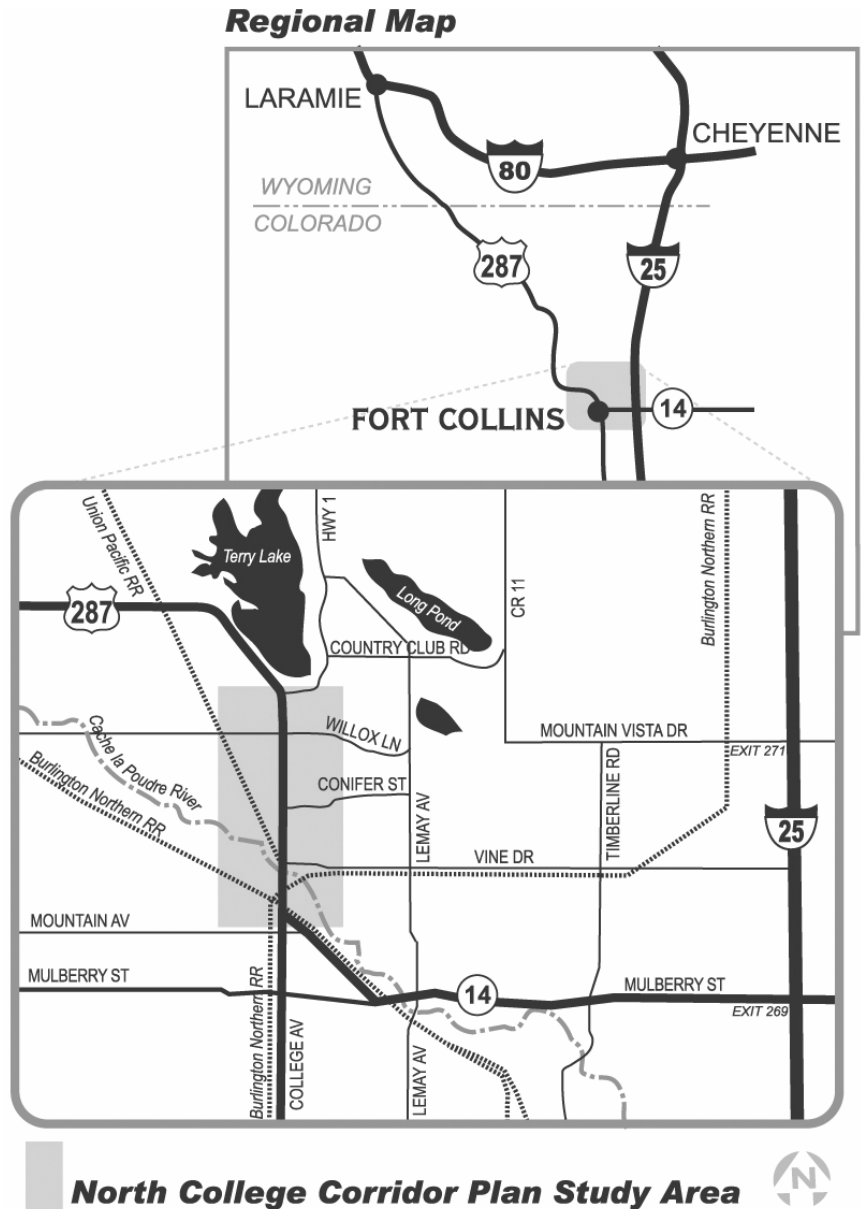
In this diagram, white lines are street rights-of-way. A relatively disjointed patchwork pattern of development in much of the corridor can be compared to the grid pattern of Downtown in both diagrams.

Plan Area

The Plan area centers on North College Avenue from the Cache La Poudre River, at the northern edge of Downtown, northward to the “Y” intersection with State Highway 1. The area extends about ½ mile east and west of North College Avenue, making the area just over a mile in both length and width, with North College Avenue running down the middle. The plan area encompasses about 800 acres.

The corridor is a fairly typical example of highway entryway corridors on the outskirts of downtowns, built before city planning systems evolved. Much of the corridor was subdivided and developed in an ad hoc manner, forming a shallow linear strip of low intensity, largely automobile-oriented uses along the highway. Many parcels are now becoming functionally obsolete due to small sizes, access and parking problems, outdated buildings and lack of drainage systems and other urban infrastructure. About 200 acres are undeveloped at the time of this plan, with significant additional areas underused or partially undeveloped.

A difficult situation remains for revitalization efforts. The private market alone can not afford to deal with retrofitting drainage systems, utility systems, and a street system into a subdivided area lacking such systems.



The corridor has seen some new investment and improvement over the past decade or so, but overall, constraints have continued to dampen economic activity, value, and reinvestment. The conditions in the corridor have allowed it to offer a lower-cost niche for low-cost housing, sales of used vehicles and other secondhand goods, other very small businesses, and non-profits and social services. However, there has also been strong concern about overall stagnation and decline if deficiencies are not addressed, and also about missed opportunities within the corridor.

North College Avenue Itself

Besides its roles as the primary thoroughfare of the city and US Highway 287, this stretch of North College Avenue also functions as State Highway 14. College Avenue/US287/SH14 is controlled by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT).

North College Avenue remains important as many things to many people including, but not limited to:

- a first impression of Fort Collins as the northern entryway to the city;
- a commercial corridor with services for local and regional residents;
- a pass-through corridor for commuters;
- a stop for travelers to find food, services, and lodging; and
- a north-outbound *Colorado Scenic Byways* route to mountains and other outdoor recreation lands of northern Colorado and Wyoming.

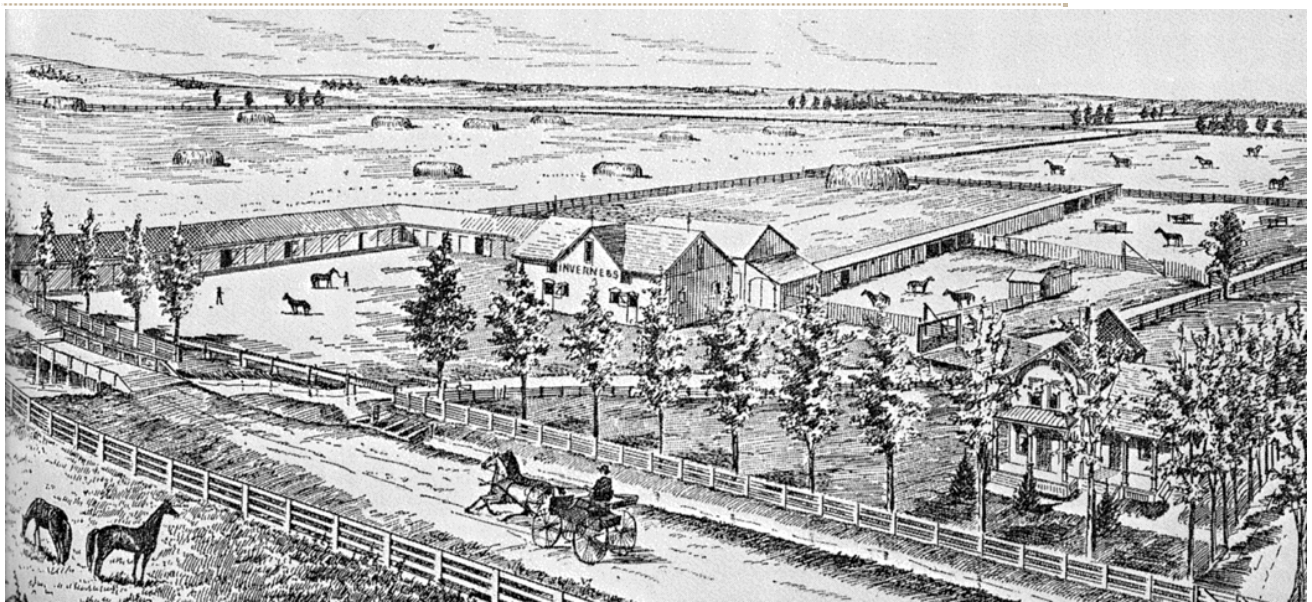
The original 1935 US Highway 287 designation linked Fort Collins and Yellowstone National Park as its end points. Current end points are Port Arthur, Texas and Choteau, Montana, as US 287 runs diagonally across Texas, Colorado, and Wyoming, with a short stretch across the Oklahoma panhandle. Within the North College corridor, the highway now serves mainly local and regional functions, with longer trips and interstate functions a secondary role.



Historical Background

When first settled, the corridor area consisted of low-lying meadows in bottomland where Dry Creek approaches the Cache la Poudre River as a tributary. Until 2006, most of the area was within the broad floodplain of Dry Creek -- a small, unremarkable channel which belied its 65-square-mile watershed extending north of Fort Collins for miles. In fact, Dry Creek was intercepted by the Larimer & Weld Canal in the late 1800's and its channel was subsequently eliminated by agriculture and development in the corridor area.

The 1865 sketch below shows Dry Creek with a bridge on North College Avenue, looking northeast. In the sketch, the creek runs through a broad valley bounded by uplands to the north, with stables, pasture, and hay fields. The uplands to the north were later developed with residential subdivisions outside city limits. Jax Outdoor now sits where the main "Inverness" building is shown in the center of this sketch; Conifer Street now runs along the long diagonal line of fencing and stables from center left to upper right.



Looking NE at Inverness Stables, with North College Avenue Bridge over Dry Creek, ca. 1890.

Since the incorporation of Fort Collins in 1873, the most efficient path for growth has been predominately southward from the original town site on the south side of the Poudre River. Residential and commercial investment within the City has naturally sought higher ground and open land away from obstacles of the river and railroad, toward Denver, and thus away from the North College corridor. Over the decades, the corridor has been generally neglected by city growth and related public infrastructure and amenities.

The North College corridor has less than 100 years' worth of development history, dating to approximately the 1930's. Following initial settlement on the area's low-lying meadows for agriculture and horse stables in the late 1800's, subsequent City annexations and land development were shaped primarily by auto-related businesses and industrial activity, with a few homes

included. Industrial uses were related to railroads, coal, and oil. Tourism and transportation became prominent themes, spawning early auto camps and motels, gasoline service stations, machine shops, auto dealerships, and related businesses.

A more detailed historical report is available from the City's Planning Department.

Chapter 2 - Issues

This chapter summarizes the main issues identified and discussed in the planning process. Following the original 1994 plan, significant new issues emerged over the years, leading to the 2006 update. The issues are grouped into the following general categories, based on topics of discussion early in the plan update.

These categories are to help organize discussion, but in fact all the issues interrelate and overlap. One particular aspect of all the issues is worth highlighting: the disparity between current realities and future plans. Physical and market conditions combine to form current realities that make transformative changes extraordinarily complicated. Obviously, needed infrastructure can not be built in a unified development program, as on open ground in a new growth area.

The issues are presented in general order of the amount of public and staff discussion leading to this updated plan. The order of presentation does not necessarily reflect importance, i.e. some of the most important issues are basic technical issues involving utilities that do not lend themselves to public discussion because the choices and possibilities are more circumscribed by technical constraints.

Issues of
Identity and Community Design

Issues of
North College Avenue/US 287/SH 14

Issues of
Retrofitting Streets Into the Corridor

Issues of
Existing Development

Issues of
Land Use and Business Mix

Issues of
The River and Connections to Downtown

Issues of
Transportation

Issues of
Drainage and Utilities

Issues of
Financing

Issues of

Identity & Community Design

POSITIVE OVERALL IDENTITY

One of the broadest issues addressed in this plan is the need and widespread support for stating a positive identity and desired character to pursue for the corridor. The point is to provide a framework for various investments and decisions to be part of a whole greater than the sum of the parts – a distinctive corridor that has an increasingly positive connotation. Various other issues depend on a positive overall identity that improves public perception of the corridor. Perceptions of the corridor as a run-down area separate from the rest of the city need to be overcome, and be replaced with more positive perceptions of an interesting complement to Downtown; with the Poudre River acting as an attractive link rather than a separation.

“MORE LIKE DOWNTOWN,” “NOT LIKE SOUTH FORT COLLINS”

Strong consensus exists around the general idea of aiming for a more “downtown-like” pattern, as opposed to a “south Fort Collins” pattern in

urban evolution. This is another over-arching issue that affects many other issues. It generally refers to a more personal scale, look, and feel for the area, avoiding a larger-scale, impersonal, or traffic-based feel commonly associated with standardized suburban growth. Existing development in the corridor already has a compact scale and character, with small parcels, close driveway spacings, and opportunistic parking layouts squeezed into areas smaller than what current standards would require in terms of dimensions, setbacks from the highway, landscaped edges, and pedestrian circulation.

A significant issue is how to introduce new, larger streets and buildings that accommodate demands that have grown over the decades, while adapting new, and sometimes larger, facilities to the compactness of the area, relating to Downtown, and avoiding tendencies to become homogenized with contemporary suburban growth as the corridor evolves.

RIVER/GREAT OUTDOORS INFLUENCES

There is a need and widespread support for capitalizing on the related influences of the Cache la Poudre River and the *Colorado Scenic Byways* designation as a major opportunity for positive identity. Area citizens have expressed a strong desire for the river to be a focal aspect of plans for the corridor. There is support for appropriate accessibility and use of the river corridor from the north, and enhancing the recreational and aesthetic qualities of the river landscape near North College Avenue.

The river corridor is widely seen as a potential benefit for the corridor, as:

- the perceived gateway from Downtown and areas south,
- a positive attraction for appropriate, sensitive, passive recreational uses,
- a possible venue for appropriate, sensitive, special active uses on higher ground/at street level, and
- an important part of the designation of the corridor as the *Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway*, with SH 14 leading to the Poudre River canyon, Cameron Pass, North Park, and other outdoor destinations.

NAME/MONIKER

There is desire and support for stating a theme or characterization of the area to indicate its uniqueness and help set the tone for improved public perception. There is interest in an identity program to support a moniker with elements such as a logo, colors, signage, banners, building materials, streetscapes, landscaping, and so on to present a positive identity while also encouraging businesses and individuals to add variety and expression to a general overall identity.

There is particular interest in a theme to capitalizing on proximity to Downtown, the *Colorado Scenic Byways* designation, and the influences of the Cache La Poudre River. Potential monikers such as “Downtown North” or “Old Town North” (although the latter has been used to name a specific residential development) are examples of names that have been discussed. The

issue is people's perception of the corridor as offering places to do business, and to visit, park their vehicles, walk around, and explore new changes and offerings.

Successfully establishing a theme and moniker is difficult. It must reflect actual changed conditions on the ground, and be well-accepted by the North College community, and by the general public. It is recognized that specialized effort is needed to get this right.

SITE DESIGN

Much of the older development in the corridor exhibits a sole emphasis on vehicle access to parking, with neglect of other community design considerations and relationships (e.g., safety, walkability, visual quality, efficiency of land use and access.)

Issues of

North College Avenue/US 287/SH 14

TRAFFIC VOLUME

Public perception will continue to be shaped largely by this main thoroughfare and its frontage, because it concentrates the greatest numbers of people in the corridor – corresponding to 25,000 vehicles a day, with that number projected to grow well into the 40,000's by 2020.

HIGHWAY/STREET CLASSIFICATION

North College Avenue's status as a segment of both US Highway 287 and State Highway 14, controlled by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), will continue to be a major factor in the character of the corridor. It is classified by the CDOT as access category B on a scale from A to C, where category A generally emphasizes free-flowing mobility for through-traffic over access to roadside development. Category C acknowledges needs for a balance between mobility needs and direct access in downtown-like areas, and category B is intermediate between the two, where existing roadside development makes a higher category unrealistic. In Fort Collins, the downtown stretch of College Avenue would be an example of category C, and South College Avenue south of Harmony Road would be an example of Category A.

The City's Master Street Plan, updated in 2004 as part of *City Plan* and the Transportation Master Plan, classifies this segment of North College Avenue as a four-lane Arterial Street based upon the existing and future traffic volumes and the land development pattern along the corridor.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

An *Access Management Plan* (AMP) was jointly adopted by the City, Larimer County, and the CDOT in 2000. It describes major improvements which would completely transform North College Avenue over time as traffic volumes increase the need for traffic calming and access control. It describes requirements for short-term changes based on existing development; and long-term changes based on redevelopment, which includes an enhanced circulation system of streets and other circulators to provide alternative access, and eliminate needs for direct access to properties from the highway.

It includes two more signalized intersections: 1) Realigned Vine Drive; and 2) Bristlecone. North College is planned to remain with four travel lanes (2 northbound and two southbound), turn lanes, bike lanes, detached sidewalks, landscaped parkways, and raised medians. The AMP indicates how local access points will need to be consolidated along the corridor and how the local circulation system will function to provide safe and sustainable access to/from individual properties. The goal of the AMP for North College Avenue is “to provide adequate and reasonable access for all properties; however, adequate spacing of access points should be introduced to relieve congestion and reduce the number of conflict points along the corridor.” Planned changes will limit direct access to properties over time, eventually replacing virtually all direct access from the highway with alternative access from cross streets and other circulators.

The changes would eventually transform North College Avenue to a standard Arterial Street similar to four-lane arterial streets in areas of newer development in Fort Collins. However, customized design solutions can be developed to meet unique circumstances of the North College corridor. Improvements must be designed to meet the CDOT’s requirements for a category B highway as well.

It is worth noting again, that planned changes will limit direct access to properties over time, consolidating and then eventually replacing virtually all direct access from the highway with alternative access from cross streets and other circulators.

On many properties, front parking close to the highway will be removed. On a typical property abutting the original 80-foot North College Avenue right-of-way, established standards would require 17.5 additional feet will be required for street right-of-way; with 15 more feet required for a standard utility easement, for a total of 32.5 additional feet needed on each side of the highway. Where right turn lanes, double left-turn lanes, and/or $\frac{3}{4}$ access points are needed, more than the standard 17.5 feet of additional R.O.W. may be needed. Because this is an important transit corridor now and in the future, it is likely that bus turnouts will also be needed. Established standards will be used as a starting point in the design of street improvements, and then the design process will

In other words, where much of the corridor has been characterized by unlimited full-movement access, without curbs or defined driveways, the plan

is to evolve a continuous curb line with bike lanes and landscaped sidewalks along the roadway. Short-term changes acknowledge the need for continued direct access to existing roadside development by defining driveway locations. Changes to North College will be designed and implemented in a manner to support existing local businesses as well as serve new/future development and redevelopment along the corridor.

Any changes to access are ultimately governed by the CDOT Access Code. Any changes to access require an Access Permit.

The City is open to adaptations and variations in design details to reinforce a unique local character in transportation improvements.

And, the CDOT’s governing *Access Code* states the intent to “work closely with property owners and local governments to provide reasonable access to the general street system that is safe, enhances the movement of traffic, and considers the vision and values that local communities have established for themselves.”

IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY DESIGN “MORE LIKE DOWNTOWN”

The North College corridor’s stretch of highway has always had a very different character than the downtown stretch of College Avenue. The degree to which North College Avenue could and should be “more like downtown”, as noted above, has needed clarification. Street design, parking, building orientation, and relationships with development behind the main highway frontage depend on clarification of this issue.

North College Avenue is not a natural candidate for a pedestrian-oriented, downtown-like street design due to the whole combination of its history, transportation role, existing development pattern, and market niche. Also, current street City and CDOT design standards simply would not allow design along the lines of College Avenue downtown, without very extensive negotiation of variances for many aspects of traffic engineering.

The highway is planned to be very different than it has been in the past, but is planned as a standard arterial street rather than a downtown-like “main street”.

To truly make North College Avenue feel as walkable and attractive as possible, a customized design approach will be necessary – balancing the state highway functions along with the local objectives to improve the urban streetscape and pedestrian amenities. This specialized design process may require adaptation of existing city-wide street standards, and consultation with the CDOT. In any case, it will be important to consider safety, mobility, and accessibility for all modes of transportation.

HICKORY AND CONIFER INTERSECTIONS WITH NORTH COLLEGE AVENUE

The *AMP* and *Master Street Plan (MSP)* highlight a particular issue at these locations – the two signalized T intersections are offset by just 150', and the center left turn lane accommodates competing left turns for both northbound and southbound traffic onto the two cross streets respectively. Plans recommend eventual consolidation into a single four-legged intersection; they anticipate that Conifer would be re-routed northward to align with Hickory. For this to occur, a development project would have to be formulated to redevelop the El Palomino Motel, with assembly of at least one other neighboring property and at least one neighboring property.

Because of the magnitude of reconfiguration required for the three streets and abutting properties, this issue has raised particular questions about how it could be designed to balance the various interests. While the concept is simple enough, the complications of the multiple streets, properties, and development patterns pose extraordinary challenges.

A CDOT Hazard Elimination & Safety (HES) Grant has been obtained by the City to mitigate the hazard that exists and will get worse in the current configuration with its opposing left turns. This HES project is expected to provide an opportunity to explore possible solutions, and then construct improvements, whether they are considered interim or permanent, in 2008. This project may be an opportunity to combine and leverage efforts with the City's voter-approved Building On Basics (BOB) capital improvement project.

POTENTIAL VALUE & BENEFITS OF ROUNDABOUTS

Public input has included support for at least one roundabout in lieu of a signalized intersection to create a special urban design feature, in addition to facilitating efficient mobility and decreased emissions. Particular interest has been expressed in considering a roundabout as part of a solution for the Conifer/Hickory offset problem. Similar to public input regarding desires to be more downtown-like, it is recognized that input on this topic may or may not be realistic in the role and context of the highway, and that the idea needs further exploration.

Issues of

Retrofitting Streets Into the Corridor

NEED FOR A MORE COMPLETE NETWORK

A more complete system of streets and other circulators is needed to support desired improvement of the corridor. The magnitude of change to existing parcels and development raises very difficult issues.

There are three main reasons for this need: first, to provide alternative access to properties along North College Avenue frontage as direct access from North

College Avenue becomes more limited over time; second, to bring access and utilities into rear areas that have been vacant, underused or neglected; and third, to create the desired development character that comes with a street and block pattern – i.e. “more like downtown”.

The first reason – alternative access – is very closely related to issues of North College Avenue itself, as noted above. In order for business to adapt to changes to the highway frontage, more streets and alleys must provide alternate business access.

The second and third reasons are closely related – bringing access and utilities to neglected areas behind the highway frontage, in a pattern of cross streets, alleyways, and other linkages, is the best way to facilitate evolution toward the desired identity and character.

The original 1994 *North College Avenue Corridor Plan* first described the need for a network, and the concepts were further institutionalized in the 2000 *Access Management Plan*. While the general approach has been supported over the years as the desired pattern for urban evolution, questions have lingered about how it can actually work given disparities with both existing development and with City standards for new development. Part of the reason for this 2006 update of the *NCCP* was to discuss this issue in concert with a clarification of the overall vision and goals. This may require a more creative, proactive, solution-oriented approach than typical application of city-wide standards in response to development applications.

LAND NEEDED VS VALUE GAINED

Land needed for the new streets must, by definition and necessity, be carved out of existing parcels. In many cases, existing buildings, parking lots, storage yards, or even whole properties need to be part of redevelopment projects in order for the street network to be able to evolve.

The simplest scenario is one in which large, highly capitalized developers emerge to simply purchase relevant groups of properties. Otherwise, extraordinary collaboration and cooperation among owners will be crucial. Ongoing planning should keep both types of scenarios in mind, but with particular attention paid to the latter type of scenario involving multiple owners with cooperative agreements, equity participation, and parcel reconfiguration.

Short of major developers simply purchasing and assembling groups of properties, there will be an ongoing need to demonstrate how benefits can outweigh costs, and how costs and benefits can be divided equitably. Some properties would gain new access where none existed before; others would net little or no additional access, and still others would essentially need to be entirely converted to new streets. Other complex factors, such as degree of access and degree of visibility/exposure, may vary with circumstances as well.

NEED FOR NEW FUNDING CONVERSATIONS

Assembly of land for needed connections will take time, effort, and therefore money, not to mention actual construction costs. The City and URA would typically assist with soft costs of needed planning and conceptual design. Other typical funding includes developers' activity and tax increment financing. Beyond typical funding, new mechanisms such as owner land pooling/assembly and creation of special improvement tax districts where funding comes out of benefits to property, need to be explored and discussed by all parties involved – multiple owners, multiple City departments, and other service providers.

NEED FOR PROPERTY OWNER AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT

Despite past public discussion, owners have been surprised to hear about requirements for new streets and/or changes in access to their parcels. This 2006 update involves extensive outreach to a large number of property owners in key locations where new streets are needed and cooperation will be crucial.

NEED TO ADAPT NEW STREETS TO FIT CIRCUMSTANCES

The general idea of a more complete network is widely supported; however, there is a high level of sensitivity or caution about specific impacts of additional streets being superimposed across existing parcels. Physical and ownership patterns combine with a unique vision for the corridor to suggest that a special approach to planning and design of new streets is needed.

City street standards are already somewhat flexible, because they allow a developer to request Engineering Variances. Nevertheless, community interest in incremental redevelopment, with qualities “more like downtown”, suggests a need to build understanding and acceptance in advance regarding a unique attitude and approach toward retrofitting streets into the corridor. The point is to build up agreement that a unique, proactive, solution-oriented approach is to be expected, either with individual variances handled accordingly, or with special standards developed for the area.

Downtown can perhaps be seen as an example of an area where city-wide standards for streets are presumed to either require special adaptation or be non-applicable due to prevailing conditions and the larger community vision and goals for the area.

Certain thorny aspects of this issue are inseparable from issues described in the ‘Existing Development’ category below. There is an apparent need to clarify interim steps smaller projects can take to contribute toward a desirable, responsible future network. Owners and developers who want to pursue goals for the corridor, have explained that their desire for redevelopment sometimes outpaces the realities of carrying existing developed properties through current market conditions. Much of the planning discussion suggests that partial short-term improvements are necessary in leading to eventual redevelopment.

*Issues of***Existing Development****DEFICIENCIES**

A study of existing conditions was done in 2004 as a prerequisite to the City's first Urban Renewal Plan, adopted for the North College corridor area in December 2004. The study documented a prevalence of deteriorated, deficient, and obsolete conditions in street and lot layout, public improvements such as streets and utilities, and buildings and other site improvements. The study is available from the City's Planning Department.

UPGRADING OUTDATED DEVELOPMENT, VS REDEVELOPING

There are questions about how a vision and goals can address competing needs for:

- cosmetic or partial improvements that may add new life to existing development as it reaches its life cycle limits; and
- redevelopment that creates whole new development, with infrastructure systems and new streets/access, etc.

In some cases, cosmetic or partial improvements to upgrade existing development may be able to contribute to desired evolution of the corridor. "Re-branding" aging buildings with facelifts, landscaping, lighting, signage and so on, can help address overarching issues of improving the identity of the corridor.

In other cases, the combination of problems and goals may make it more effective to hold out for true redevelopment. In other words, there appear to be situations where it may make sense *not* to encourage further capital investment in obsolete properties, despite vacancies or marginal uses.

Owners will ultimately formulate projects and make decisions on courses of action. The URA and City can be significant factors in decisions, by encouraging and assisting projects that work toward goals.

MARKET REALITIES

Market strength in the corridor has been affected by the character of existing development in a self-perpetuating cycle, generally resulting in a concentration of low-investment businesses and non-profits locating into existing lower grade office/retail/service space. Investors are understandably hesitant to be "pioneers" with transformative projects that bring expensive new infrastructure and investment, out of concern that the area may not evolve to support the investment, or will do so too slowly.

CHANGE OF USE REQUIREMENTS

“Issues of Existing Development” emerge when an aging property changes use from one category to another. The City includes Change of Use in its definition of Development, with requirements for a development plan to improve a property according to current development standards. The intent is to address tendencies for commercial properties to decline as they reach the end of their life cycles, become functionally obsolete, lose tenants, and need to change the use of the property to accommodate a new tenant.

Change of Use requirements apply where use changes from one type to another with different characteristics, e.g. vehicle sales to retail store or office; restaurant to retail, truck/trailer rental to car repair, etc. Changing from one retail use to another retail use or one office use to another office use, does not constitute a Change of Use.

Throughout the city, Change of Use development can be difficult, and requirements for development upgrades sometimes surprise a current or prospective property owner; but it has typically worked as intended. This is a city-wide requirement, but it has particular relevance in the North College corridor because of tendencies for turnover on aging properties, and particular difficulty solving infrastructure deficiencies on individual parcels. Owners have suggested the City create a “less stringent” approach to partial or phased-in solutions rather than full up-front installation.

OWNER COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND PROPERTY ASSEMBLY

Market analysis and infrastructure planning combine to suggest that assembly of relevant groups of properties (or similar cooperative arrangements among multiple owners) is needed in key areas of the corridor. In principle, property assembly is useful where

- past subdivision of land created small, functionally obsolete parcels which hinder private sector real estate and business development;
- the urban structure needs to be reorganized;
- there is a need to retrofit extensive infrastructure and services; and landowners in a proposed assembly area understand and support the process.

In the corridor, it appears extraordinarily difficult to make significant progress toward the needed street network and other infrastructure by responding to single-lot development proposals. Many parcels have a size or access situation that makes further re/development very difficult or impossible.

On the other hand, extra-ordinary costs are involved in assembling – that is, un-dividing subdivided property. It may involve the buyout or relocation of existing businesses, and hopes and expectations of existing owners.

The 2005 *North College Area Market Analysis* noted growing nationwide and worldwide interest in concepts for joint ventures among property owners in redevelopment areas. Essentially, property owners contribute their land to a

corporation and receive an equity position based on value of the property. The combined property can then be redeveloped in a more functional and productive pattern. Owners share in profits, and may also be able to relocate their old business in the new development if appropriate. This would involve a new paradigm for many owners and also for many potential developers. *The 2006 North Fort Collins Business Association Action Plan* describes potential assembly areas in the North College corridor.

A key aspect of this issue is the question of leadership – that is, who can lead ongoing pursuit of very complicated discussions and solutions. It has been noted by property owners that the URA or City would need to “play quarterback”, with support from the City departments and property owners.

PARKING

The existing subdivision and development pattern creates numerous on-site parking lots with maximized, opportunistic parking. Development projects will result in a loss of existing parking areas to make room for setbacks, sidewalks and landscaping. To help make development projects feasible, special consideration may need to be given to adapting development standards to circumstances, in order to make development projects feasible.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Based upon a preliminary "windshield" evaluation of potential historic resources in the plan area, no resources of high significance are readily apparent. However, as potentially historic properties are identified, and as properties age and become 50 years old, these properties should be documented and evaluated for historic significance.

Issues of

Land Use and Business Mix

APPROPRIATE AND REALISTIC LAND USES

The question of types of commercial uses appropriate for the North College corridor is a determining factor in the corridor’s character, identity, and economic health. In 2005, the North Fort Collins Market Analysis was commissioned by the City as an early input into this plan update.

The analysis focused on determining the best land uses for the North College area based upon market demand. It indicated:

- a somewhat limited, or secondary retail market draw, compared to areas south of the river
- modest demand for basic neighborhood and community retail uses and family restaurants to serve the area north of the river extending to Wyoming

- the importance of a major retail destination or other attraction such as a theater, which could attract people from a larger area beyond the identified trade area.
- a particular possibility for outdoor goods and services in an experiential, entertaining format, as one specific type of attraction that could be a primary draw serving additional trade area south of river, and capitalize on the Colorado Scenic Byways aspect of the corridor
- benefits from limiting or reducing the presence/visibility of used vehicle sales and other vehicle-related uses on North College Avenue over time
- benefits from increases in the office/industrial work force
- a need for more housing, especially more mixed-income housing (rather than solely low-income housing)
- a cautionary note about negative effects of concentrating tax-exempt and social service uses in this one area of the City

The corridor has become a location for uses that correspond to limited market conditions and missing infrastructure, which have generally kept values and rents comparatively low. Examples are used vehicle sales, other vehicle-related small businesses, secondhand sales, social service agencies and non-profit uses, mobile homes, and storage areas.

A key question is whether it will prove realistic to overcome past trends and the limitations of the market, and shift toward attracting higher-value, higher-activity businesses that can pay for better infrastructure and form urban places with a more complete pattern of streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and interesting buildings. Investors and lenders are generally hesitant to be ‘pioneers’ with transformative projects; and the lack of comparables for transformative projects generally tends to reinforce the status quo.

A related question has been whether the corridor will remain a financially viable location for small, startup businesses if it improves as envisioned, and given the costs associated with the needed infrastructure improvements.

CITY & URA SUPPORT A FACTOR

While the market ultimately determines the businesses that locate in the corridor, the business climate and resulting mix partly depend on how City requirements and URA resources are tailored to support a vision and goals. One particular aspect cited by owners and developers is a disparity between the cost of City infrastructure requirements and the modest, secondary strength of the market noted previously. The contention is that this discourages Changes of Use that trigger development requirements.

While there is general agreement on the needs for public improvements, owners and developers have expressed interest in lower up-front costs to facilitate desirable projects with new uses.

USED-CAR SALES AND OTHER VEHICLE-RELATED USES

Vehicle-related uses have been prominent in the corridor since the rise of the automobile (e.g. sales, servicing, washing, drive-thrus, trucking operations, storage, salvage, etc.). These kinds of businesses are viable and necessary, and highway entry corridors like North College are typical locations for them. In recent decades, used-car and truck sales in particular have become prominent enough to generate attention and concern as an issue. Market analysis and planning discussion have noted negative effects of this particular use on image and identity, investment and values, and spin-off activity. The concern is that these effects can combine to create a domino effect in which proliferation inhibits a more desirable mix of commercial uses.

One result of the original 1994 plan was a limit on proliferation of used car lots -- zoning now limits vehicle sales uses to a percentage of North College frontage. While other vehicle-related uses may have some similar effects, concerns about proliferation are not as pronounced.

Vehicle-related uses are expected to remain a prominent part of the North College economy and market for some time, even as the city and its market continue to evolve around the corridor. There is general agreement that vehicle-related uses can fit into a more mixed commercial district, along with more active, attractive, and valuable urban uses, using design and public improvements.

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USES

The corridor has been a place for industrial and supply uses related to the railroad and highway, and also for office and light industrial uses. Increased employment would be a positive contribution to the corridor, as additional employees would add to the immediate market for goods and services. Whether and how to promote the corridor to companies is an issue.

HOUSING

The economic strength of businesses in the corridor is largely dependent upon customers in the trade area. As noted previously, market analysis indicates a need for building up the customer base within the trade area and the corridor itself.

Market analysis encourages a mix of housing, which in this case refers to a need to encourage some moderate and higher income housing in addition to lower income housing, which is naturally expected given the nature of the area and its existing housing stock.

As part of the original 1994 plan rezoning, residential uses are not permitted along North College Avenue itself – a minimum setback of 200 feet was established. The main reasons had to do with appropriate use of limited highway frontage land, and livability concerns. This issue should be revisited with regard to the possibility of future vertical mixed-use development – that

is, specialized dwelling units above ground-floor commercial use. The standard was not intended to preclude such upper-story mixed use.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CONCENTRATING SOCIAL SERVICE AND TAX-EXEMPT USES IN THE CORRIDOR

The corridor's concentrations of social services and tax-exempt non-profit uses have raised extensive concern and discussion. Concerns focus around negative effects on the business climate, economic activity, and property tax increment financing revenues. The negative behavior of some of the clients of these social service agencies has been bothersome for businesses, and requires special police services within the corridor. As with vehicle-related uses discussed above, these tax-exempt uses have exhibited a self-reinforcing tendency to concentrate in the corridor.

There is opposition within the corridor to further concentration, based on a belief that the area already has its "fair share" of such uses; and that any further concentration will be detrimental. This opposition is coupled with a desire for a shift toward uses more beneficial to business synergy and economic health of the corridor, including a growing property tax base.

However, no good mechanism or idea has been identified to prevent the location of additional agencies or facilities in the corridor.

Issues of

River and Connections to Downtown

EDGE/SEPARATION

The Poudre River corridor generally defines an actual and perceptual edge and separation between the North College corridor and Downtown. This divide has significance beyond the actual distance between the two areas, in terms of public perception.

This issue has more to do with discontinuity in quality of development and streetscapes, than with the presence of the river itself, particularly since the enhanced "Gateway Bridge" was built, creating a fully functional and attractive crossing of the river. The railroad has also been mentioned as a factor contributing to perceptions of separation.

There is very strong interest in more attractive and active connections between North College and Downtown. A key aspect of these ideas is a very careful balance between desires for human activity close along the river, and needs to minimize impacts of human activity on the river corridor as sensitive and important wildlife habitat.

Similarly, another key aspect of river issues, particularly regarding any changes to structures or the ground plane, is that the area is subject to flooding. While the Poudre River could offer a multitude of potential economic and social

benefits for the North College corridor, the protection of people and property from flooding through floodway regulations is necessary. Floodway regulations and policies reflect a balance between risk and regulation.

Across the spectrum of interests and issues, there is broad agreement that the status quo of existing conditions needs to change.

RIVER FLOODWAY LIMITS INVESTMENT

While the Poudre River could offer a multitude of potential economic and social benefits for the North College Corridor, the protection of people and property from flood damages through floodway regulations is also necessary.

Highly visible, key property in the floodway was subdivided and developed in the past with low-activity, unattractive uses, characterized by truck and trailer operations, vehicle repair, and outdoor storage. Properties exhibit varying degrees of disinvestment, as do Vine Drive and North College Avenue; but reinvestment in changes of use and development upgrades is hindered by floodway regulations.

Thus, the status quo is inadvertently favored as the outcome, even though it is contrary to desired visions of various interest groups and the City as a whole for the river corridor.

CITY PURCHASE POLICY FOR FLOODWAY PROPERTY

As a solution to the status quo noted above, the City's Stormwater Department has a policy to purchase these floodway properties as they come available from willing sellers. Under this policy, the City will buy the property, clear the development, and typically establish dryland grass as the outcome.

However, this standing policy appears to be a very long term approach at best. It does not appear to be an effective way to enhance the river corridor in the foreseeable future.

To become willing sellers, owners typically require a price based on replacement land and buildings elsewhere, and/or a price for the business, which tend to raise prices well beyond appraisal values of outdated floodway properties. Thus there is little incentive to sell, and if properties do come onto the market, prices tend to reflect continuation of revenue-generating commercial use, rather than City goals to remove the use.

Furthermore, the Stormwater Department faces many competing demands for funding, and motivation to actively pursue this policy as a priority has been low in terms of leveraged benefits, compared to other projects such as constructing needed facilities. In fact the North College corridor itself contains many other competing infrastructure needs for Stormwater funding. A few possible sources of joint public funding have been noted: the City's Natural Areas program; the DDA; the URA; and the City Parks Department.

Whether floodway property remains in private use or public ownership, there is a question whether streetscape improvements to Vine Drive between North College and Linden Street will ever be needed, and if so, how they could possibly be funded.

An aspect of this issue which has not been fully evaluated is the costs vs benefits of buyout from willing sellers, as opposed to modifying the floodway to remove property from it.

RIPARIAN HABITAT CORRIDOR

The Poudre River corridor is one of the most important habitats in the Fort Collins area. A key aspect of any river-related issues is the balance of impact of human activity upon this sensitive corridor. Extensive past discussions of land use in this stretch of the river have led to a general vision: 1) emphasizing a continuous natural area buffer along the north bank of the river, and 2) allowing carefully managed recreational activity along the south bank related to the paved Poudre River Trail. However, past discussion has been less clear about a specific vision and goals for Vine Drive and North College Avenue frontage, or for Legacy Park, which currently have activity along the north bank within the floodway.

SPECIAL ATTRACTION OR FEATURE

Public discussion has emphasized strong interest in the river becoming a much more special focus feature shared by the North College corridor and Downtown, rather than an edge. The range of general ideas includes:

- special landscaping, signage, sculpture, etc. oriented to passers-by on North College Avenue, regardless of any other changes to property;
- pedestrian streetscapes and walking trails, possibly with new, fun pedestrian bridges (e.g., suspension bridges) and special intersection treatment at Vine Drive;
- “floodable” development without buildings, such as overflow parking for downtown, community gardens, or park-like space and pavilions for events;
- places for wading, tubing and kayaking on summer days; and
- development of flood-proofed revenue-generating attractions, such as restaurants with decks or patios.

Different ideas and desires are not mutually exclusive — different portions of the river corridor could accommodate different uses. All ideas are based on the premise that any design and activity would respect natural area buffers, fit the character of the riparian landscape setting, and address floodway issues.

At one end of the range, there is strong interest in improving a stretch of river landscape as a hub that attracts people to come to enjoy the river and provides facilities to accommodate activity. This perspective emphasizes benefits of having a beautiful, popular attraction shared by North College and Downtown, thus overcoming the edge/separation effect noted previously.

At the other end of the range, there is recognition of strong community-wide interest in very careful long-term stewardship of the river corridor, minimizing human activity and commerce. This perspective emphasizes purchase and removal of existing development in the floodway, restoration of the riparian landscape, and limited use, with a few paths and benches for quiet enjoyment of nature in the heart of the city.

Issues of

Transportation

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES INSEPARABLE FROM LAND USE CHANGES

Transportation is a primary aspect of several other issues discussed in previous sections. A disjointed pattern of streets and drives has resulted from decades of ad hoc development; and additional new streets or drives will be a critical part of improvements in the corridor as noted previously.

There will likely be an ongoing need to continually clarify how new streets and drives can realistically be retrofitted to complement, enhance, and help achieve desired character. Existing and proposed land uses will help dictate transportation demands, and transportation demands will help dictate land uses. They are inextricably linked, as in the proverbial chicken or egg question.

MODES OF TRAVEL

It is important for all of the future – short-term and long-term – transportation improvement projects along the North College Avenue corridor to enhance opportunities for all modes of travel – vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit.

TRANSIT

City Plan, the City's Comprehensive Plan, indicates that an 'Enhanced Travel Corridor' will extend across the river along the College Avenue corridor and then turn east along Conifer Street, providing an important connection to/from Downtown and the Mountain Vista area. Enhanced Travel Corridors are envisioned to serve as primary mobility corridors for community-wide connectivity, featuring high-frequency transit.

Furthermore, the linear focus of the North College Avenue corridor presents a good opportunity for transit to operate in an efficient manner. The nature of uses within the corridor corresponds to needs for high levels of service. So, just as the area is an excellent area to focus on improving facilities for walking and bikes, so too is it an excellent area to improve public transit.

PRIORITY AND IMPORTANCE

Similar and related to the street system, basic utilities need to be upgraded and extended within the corridor. There has been comparatively little public discussion about these issues as part of the update process, except to acknowledge their priority and importance as prerequisites to desired (re)development.

RETROFITTING A DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Almost any (re)development project has multiple infrastructure needs and one requirement leads to another, all the way down to the lack of a drainage system for the entire area. While a drainage system is not an end in itself, it is perhaps *the* first priority in land development. Land development depends on drainage as a prerequisite, to handle runoff from streets, which define building sites that also generate storm water runoff.

A complete drainage system is needed throughout most of the corridor; and it must be retrofitted across existing subdivided and developed properties. As with the street network, cooperation among owners will be crucial; and accounting for costs and benefits among various owners will be very complicated.

The number one “drainage” issue in the original 1994 plan was the Dry Creek flooding issue; that has been resolved by a multi-year, \$10 million system of upstream facilities. The lack of any adequate drainage system in most of the corridor then emerged as the next primary obstacle to desired streets and development. The City Stormwater Department promptly addressed this aspect of the issue, by producing a design for an overall drainage system. The design report is called the *North College Drainage Improvements Design (NCDID)*, completed in 2006. It presents alternatives for different combinations of channels, street flows, underground pipes, and detention ponds, with preferred alternatives and conceptual cost estimates. It is a design report only; it does not explain implementation.

Implementation raises the next set of major questions about how a drainage system can be built up incrementally. Ideally, it would start at the downstream outfall and work its way upstream in logical order. However, existing development makes such a unified approach impossible. Instead, a system is expected to be built up largely in response to development projects, when and where they happen to emerge.

SIGNIFICANT LAND NEEDED FOR DETENTION PONDS

The *NCDID* revealed that about 17 acres of undeveloped land will be needed for ‘regional detention ponds’ in the preferred alternatives. This is a significant land use that needs to be reflected on the illustrative Framework Plan, and accounted for in projections of development capacity. These needed ponds will occupy land previously considered to be key development opportunities; however, they eliminate the need for on-site detention in individual (re)development projects – a tremendous simplification and efficiency benefit.

CITY ROLE IN DRAINAGE SYSTEM

It appears that Stormwater and other City departments will need to use a collaborative attitude and approach with multiple owners and developers, and may in fact need to continue with certain proactive efforts, following the efforts on Dry Creek and the *NCDID*.

OTHER UTILITIES

Aging utility infrastructure is extraordinarily challenging to maintain and replace due to inadequate street right-of-ways combined with varying depths and sizes of multiple lots.

Some of the few remaining overhead power lines in the City exist along the rear of lots facing North College, and along Hickory Street as well. These overhead lines are deteriorating, and have exceeded their expected life in some places. Conversion to underground and upgrading capacity is planned for the future; however the conversion process is problematic due to the lot layout which does not provide a continuous public right-of-way network, nor an adequate system of easements.

An old sewer line exists on the west side of College Avenue between Willox Lane and the Poudre River. This sewer was constructed as part of the former North College Sanitation District with no street, alley, or other adequate public easement or right-of-way. The sewer is vitrified clay pipe and has structural problems. Over the years, buildings were built on and near the sewer making it difficult to maintain and impossible to replace at the same configuration. Similarly, an aging, inadequate 6-inch sewer line exists on the east side of College Avenue between Willox Lane and Grape Street, behind the buildings which face College Avenue.

Issues of Financing

IMPORTANCE

There has been comparatively little public discussion about financing issues as part of the update process, except to acknowledge that ultimately, they may be most *important* – i.e., adequate funding could address any of the other issues.

FINANCING GAPS

Obviously, the costs of (re)development projects will be borne primarily by developers and their investors who see a market for their projects. However, the private market alone typically can not afford to deal with all of the complications and costs of upgrading and retrofitting infrastructure systems to upgrade an aging, substandard area like the corridor.

City staff has analyzed needs for drainage, utilities, and streets in the corridor, and estimated the costs of infrastructure needed for full build-out of the corridor at about \$70 million. Standard development requirements are estimated to cover about \$20 million, leaving about a \$50 million gap in total infrastructure funding needs. These estimates help to frame the general magnitude of infrastructure financing issues. They affirm and articulate the common, general understanding that revitalization of aging redevelopment areas entails extraordinary costs requiring public/private partnerships.

PUBLIC SOURCES OF FINANCING

Colorado's Urban Renewal Law addresses precisely this kind of situation by enabling Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The City's first Urban Renewal Plan under this law was prepared for the North College corridor in 2004, to help cover financing gaps using TIF. The incremental taxes projected to be generated for this purpose add up to as much as \$32 million over the 25-year life of the Urban Renewal Plan. TIF allocates taxes already collected; no new taxes are involved.

Further public financing and investment may come from a number of sources, with involvement of City, State, and federal government. It is worth noting that a vision with strong public support provides context that is instrumental in allocating public funding. Such clear political support has led to a number of implementation projects in the corridor since the original 1994 plan (see inset on p. 1); and it will continue to be important.

The City's Stormwater Department may be able to budget future funding for high priority area-wide projects that exceed the scope of individual development projects. Any such funding would represent a continuation of previous commitments to Dry Creek flood control facilities and the *NCDID*.

The City's Stormwater Utility collects stormwater fees citywide and these moneys are used to develop stormwater master plans and construct facilities to solve drainage problems in existing developed areas of the city. Because funds are limited, prioritization of capital projects in the stormwater master plan determines the order in which projects are built across the city. Projects receiving the highest priority are generally those with the highest benefit to cost ratio, the highest number of structures removed from the floodplain and highest number of streets removed from flooding. In the North College corridor area, funding for projects would represent a continuation of previous commitments to the Dry Creek flood control facilities and the *NCDID*.

The 2005 voter-approved ¼-cent sales tax initiative known as Building on Basics, or BOB, will provide \$4 million for improvements to North College Avenue. Programming and scheduling are in process at the time of this plan, and design and construction are expected within 5-6 years. This local funding provides an opportunity for leverage with additional state and federal funding sources.

BOB also includes funding to implement the City's *Pedestrian Plan*, which can be used for gaps in the corridor's sidewalk network and could provide additional leverage opportunities.

Future capital improvement initiatives, similar to BOB, may provide additional opportunities to fund needed public improvements.

With all of the City investments in the corridor since the original 1994 plan, the time may be right to revisit various types of Improvement Districts, which tax property in order to pay for improvements to the subject property. The premise of these districts is that the benefit conferred on each property owner exceeds the cost of the tax assessment on that property. The idea of any new taxes was discussed and rejected in public discussion during the original plan process; but the magnitude of City investment and overall level of progress since then offer an opportunity to revisit this aspect of financing as a follow-up effort to this plan. Exploration of any particular Improvement Districts was not within the scope of this plan.

Chapter 3 – Vision

Over the years, it has become apparent that the overall vision needs to be clarified to guide revitalization and enhancement efforts. Various investors, decision makers, and interested parties, both public and private, want to know how their decisions and actions can contribute to positive community development, to maximize the value of those decisions and actions.

The corridor presents an unparalleled need for collaboration among neighboring owners, city departments, and other agencies, in adapting to circumstances in the corridor. The key is a vision with wide support, followed by ongoing conversations on a new generation of projects.

To meet this need, a multifaceted vision for the area's future has been developed through public discussion of the issues.



Overall Vision Statement

A series of interesting places evolve along the corridor, becoming more urban in the best sense of the word.

In general, this urban evolution leads to

- more efficient use of land,
- higher values,
- more complete public infrastructure, and
- more economic activity;
- while keeping the strong sense of civic ownership that led to this plan.

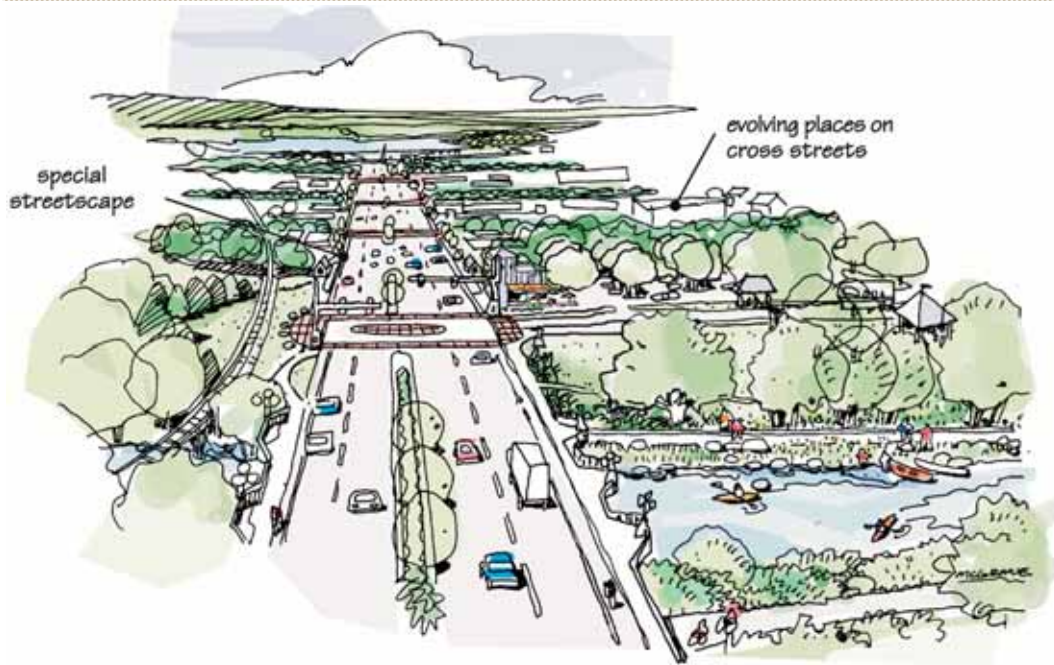
Active civic discussion continues to stimulate City projects, private sector redevelopment, upgrades to existing properties, and new development. Each project helps set the stage for further investment in real estate development and improvement projects in an evolutionary process. Where collaboration among multiple owners and City departments is necessary for changes to occur and be positive, it will be an increasing attribute.

The vision has different facets. It is not possible to make one simple statement about it. One attempt at a simple statement, heard during the process, is “fix the junky, but keep it funky”

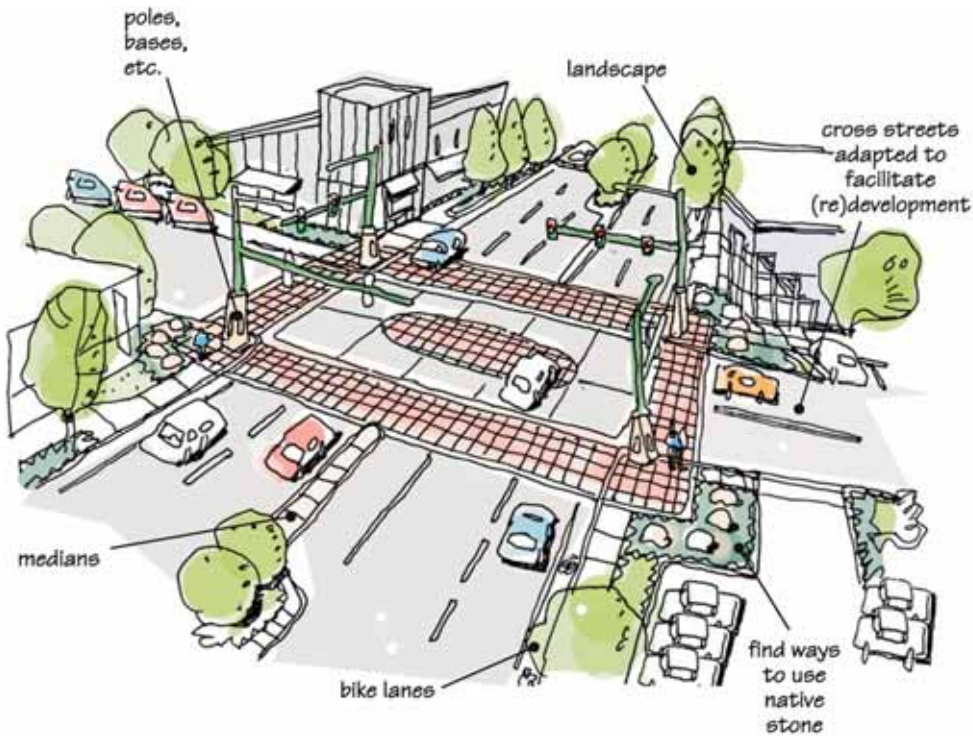
Facets of the Vision:

The Highway Itself -- North College Avenue/SH 14/US 287

The corridor stays naturally focused on the highway as its backbone. North College Avenue evolves into a more inviting and comfortable commercial street with an increasingly positive connotation to its name. This stretch of our main thoroughfare grows safer and more enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities who walk, ride bikes, and riding transit, as well as for car and truck drivers. North College Avenue is becoming a welcoming local and regional gateway. It fosters attention for travelers, and pride for the local community, as an interesting and attractive stretch of the *Colorado Scenic Byways* system. The highway emphasizes mobility for people and goods moving *through* the corridor and coming *to* pedestrian-oriented places, “more like Downtown”, evolving along inviting cross streets. Vehicle access to properties shifts away from the highway frontage itself a more complete network of cross streets and side streets, which invite parking.



This sketch captures the vision of North College Avenue as a primary transportation mobility corridor along the lines of standard arterial streets, but with special streetscape. Interesting places and street-fronts evolve along cross streets that feed into the highway.



This sketch captures some ideas regarding a whole strategy for the highway and its streetscape. Elements could include light and signal poles, special pole bases with identity elements such as native stone, North College logos, *Colorado Scenic Byways* signs, color themes, banners for seasons and events, and a unique landscape image. This sketch also leads into the next facet of the vision regarding cross streets adapted to fit circumstances and facilitate redevelopment.

Facets of the Vision:

More Complete Street Network

This facet of the vision is very closely related to the highway itself. Redevelopment and retrofitted public infrastructure projects add a more complete network of streets, drives, and alleyways. The network is forward-looking; supporting intensified land use as the area evolves, bringing access, utilities and urban services into formerly vacant and underused areas. The linear strip of North College Avenue is punctuated by new street corners, with cross streets leading to a diverse series of interesting places off of the main frontage.

New street corners do a lot of things:

- add value to development, helping pay for expensive new infrastructure,
- bring character of new places along side streets within visibility of College Avenue,
- calm traffic,
- create a more “town-like feel”, and
- generally make the linear strip more interesting with multiple new dimensions.

The layout and design of access and parking is finer-grained than in standardized new growth areas, with closer spacings as needed to adapt to compact development parcels, to existing development, and to desired scale and character of evolving new places.

If a large footprint user can find an adequate site, they are welcomed and fitted into the overall pattern of new streets through careful, customized design adaptation.



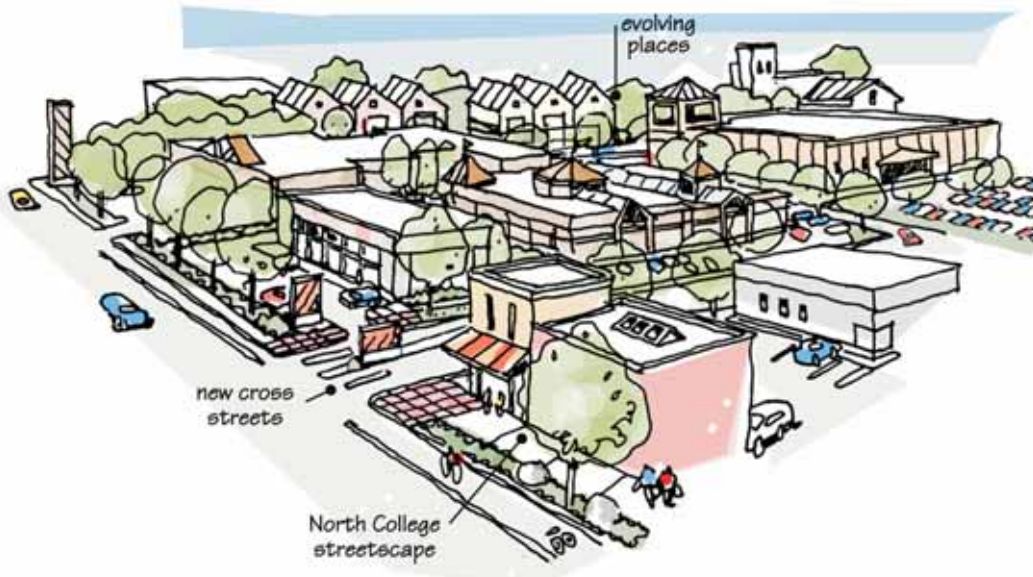
Left: Example of new development in an older commercial corridor. In adding new streets, land must be carved out of existing properties; the value of new corners can help make up for lost square footage. North College Avenue is expected to evolve with 8 or 9 new street corners, with more new corners in the network off the highway.

Right: Example of a new pedestrian-friendly cross street along a highway in a redeveloped semi-industrial area on the outskirts of a small city. Maximized on-street parking and a pedestrian-friendly place reflect aspects of the vision for places in the North College corridor.

Paths, trails, and landscaped drainage and utility corridors add to the network. The pattern and details of new infrastructure systems will be uniquely adapted to fit circumstances. New streets are sensitively fitted into evolving, funky places that are different than standardized new growth.



This sketch captures ideas for an example redevelopment area on the west side of North College, north of Hickory street. New cross streets and side streets are specially adapted to facilitate development, with on-street parking shown in response to the issue that as new streets use land, remaining land for development will be tight, and a street network can provide useful overflow parking. Also, street parking brings activity to new street-fronts and encourages pedestrian oriented building faces. The sketch indicates how a closely-spaced network of access can create modest building sites offering opportunities for small business, including current owners who wish to remain in the new format. It also captures the idea of storm drainage and detention as part of the framework, providing landscaped focal points for development.



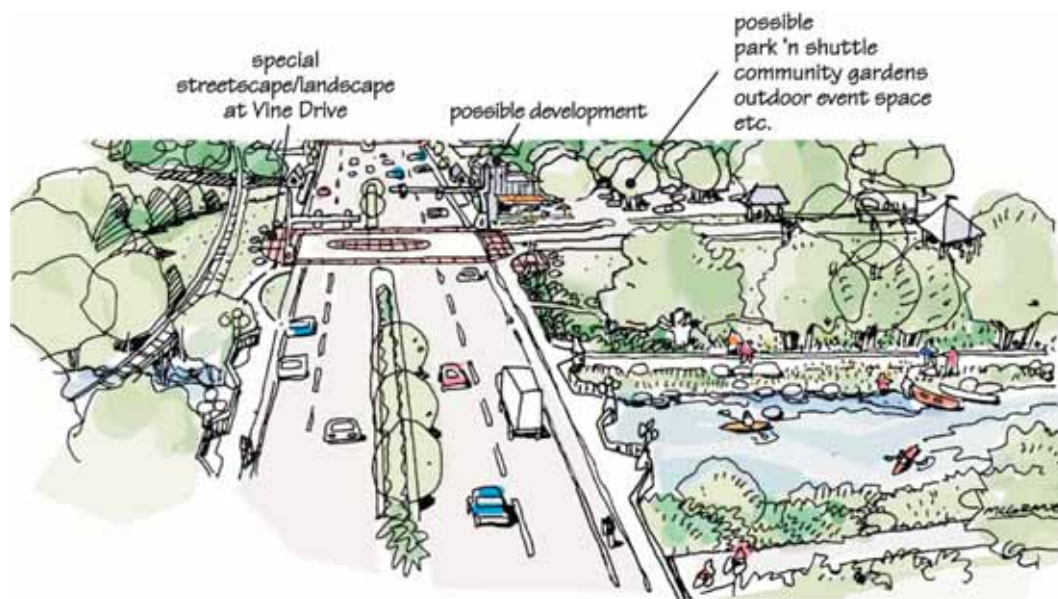
This sketch shows similar ideas, but includes the idea that large-footprint uses are a welcome part of the vision, if they can find a site. A new drive leads to rear areas on the east side of the highway. A sign providing visibility, which may be a necessary aspect of developing rear areas in some cases.

Facets of the Vision:

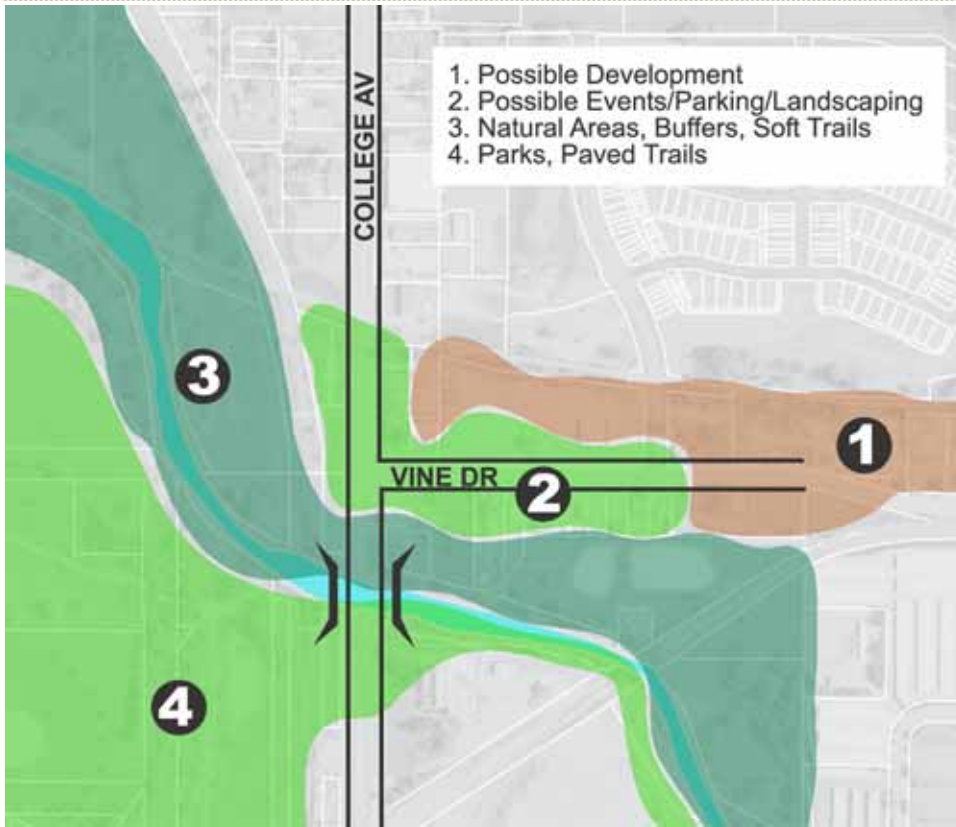
Connections to Downtown Across the Poudre River Corridor

The river corridor links and binds the North College corridor with Downtown and the rest of the community. People convene, collaborate, compromise, and find solutions to the complex problems of creating more attractive and active connections across the river corridor and its floodway.

Crucial public perceptions are transformed by an inviting and seamless transition, so that the river corridor is seen as an attraction shared with Downtown, rather than an edge and barrier as in the past.



Streetscape and landscape projects can create more attractive visual connections across the river corridor. A very careful balancing act is needed regarding facilities or events that invite the presence of significant numbers of people – this is a place where activity must be carefully considered in light of river flood flows, and the habitat corridor of the river.



Vine/North College area, with a diagram of general levels of activity as envisioned. This general vision emerged during plan discussion of possibilities for the river corridor. Generally, the lowest levels of human activity are most appropriate along the north bank. Intermediate levels of activity are most appropriate on the south bank and east of North College Avenue, with the paved trail, parking access, and park-like settings. Higher levels of activity, e.g., outdoor spaces for events, festivals, and markets, trailheads or other parking, and possibly a limited amount of actual development with buildings, would be appropriate higher up above street grade along Vine and North College.



Left: modest example of “re-branding” of an aging building – that is, creating a new image and identity (the “brand” in terms of public perception) to emphasize river influences in a positive light.

Right: parking lot with informal cottonwood grove and native stone is one modest example of detailing that could highlight the river. (A typical parking lot island would have a standardized spacing of individual non-native trees and shrubs.)

Facets of the Vision:

Community Appearance and Design

The corridor evolves in such a way that it keeps a unique and interesting feel, avoiding tendencies for standardization in new development. Design of development and public improvements responds to circumstances, history, and citizen preferences for a distinctive complement to Downtown.

Along North College Avenue, streetscape design elements highlight the outdoor recreation aspect of the region, the Scenic Byways designation, and the river.

Positive downtown-like design qualities such as interesting street-fronts with on-street parking and facing buildings, are carried northward and adapted to contemporary circumstances of the corridor in places focused on cross streets.

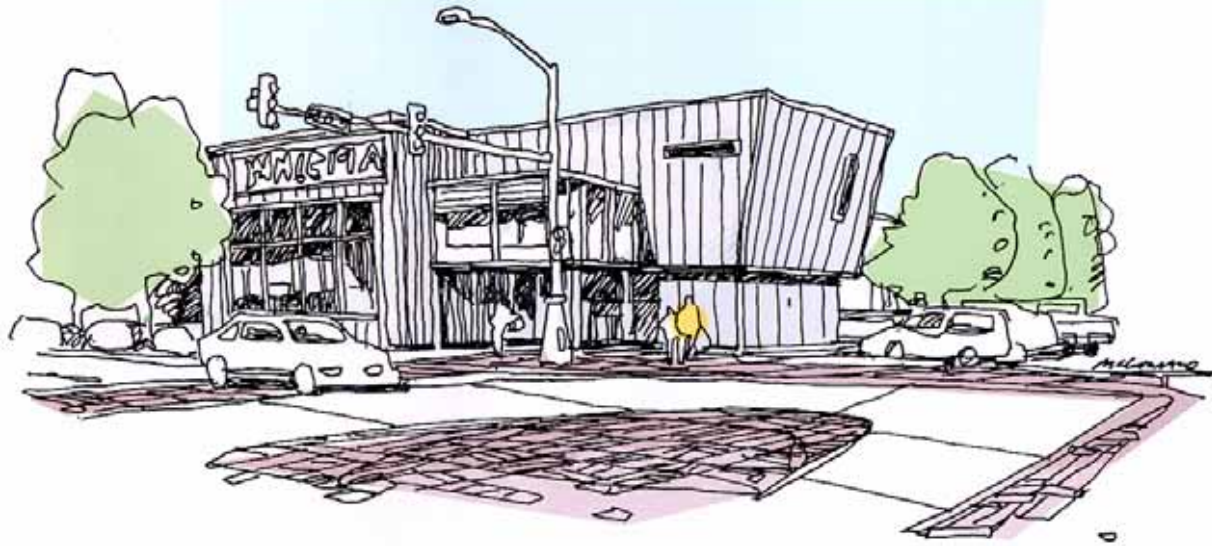
The nature of the corridor creates a special opportunity for design character in new buildings to offer an interesting counterpoint to newer suburban areas. Contemporary, semi-industrial building styles and materials offer particular opportunities to build up a fitting character which relates to the north-downtown setting.



Photos show examples of image and identity features – pedestrian bridges over canals and other streetscape structures offer a chance to use materials, colors, and special touches like flower baskets.



Examples of semi-industrial simplicity and informality. Simple materials and styles can have an authentic urban charm by emphasizing pedestrian-oriented building faces with glass, extensions, awnings, colors, signage, and well-kept planters. This kind of design is envisioned as having potential to create a fitting identity for key parts of the corridor.



City Plan and the Land Use Code already call for responsive design to fit local circumstances, vs. corporate prototype design. This sketch is intended to convey a general idea of what that could mean in the corridor, showing a new building and corner with contemporary semi-industrial styles and materials.



Examples of semi-industrial character made interesting with glass, projections, recesses, light, shadow, and internal use that flows out and contributes to a place.

Land Uses and Activity

The eclectic mix of uses evolves stronger underpinnings of higher-activity uses that create synergy, and contribute to a whole greater than the sum of the parts – in this case, a more active and healthy economy. The area still accommodates a broad mix of land uses, including service, repair, and supply-type businesses, but the general direction of change is toward housing, jobs, and commercial uses that bring more people into the area.

Commercial uses naturally fall in a range that complements Downtown, rather than competing – the corridor accommodates types, sizes, and styles of uses that don't fit Downtown, as in the past. Commerce continues to include vehicle- and tourism-oriented uses, and the corridor remains a secondary Fort Collins shopping and dining area, catering primarily to the comparatively small population north of the river.

A few exceptional retail attractions find a place in the corridor, and are able to draw from a larger market area -- most notably, businesses related to outdoor recreation, fitting the niche created by the Scenic Byways aspect of the Avenue. These uses bring the 'Great Outdoors' aspect of Northern Colorado and Wyoming close to Downtown as an added dimension.

Various studio, craftsman, workshop, repair, printing, food prep, and other modest light industry with pedestrian-friendly fronts mix with compatible urban dwellings in places along cross streets and back streets.

Some older small businesses remain even as redevelopment projects and larger corporate businesses bring higher-density, higher-value development. Some new re/development projects accommodate or relocate existing owners who wish to remain in the area in updated formats.

Hispanic culture is evident, with cultural characteristics featured in buildings and businesses in the corridor.

Different uses are integrated by the street network and by responsive architectural design. Even workshop, service, and repair uses contribute to the sense of place as building fronts are brought together along streets with generous glass and deep façade enhancements.



The vision for mixed uses has a strong tie to community design facets of the vision. In transitional areas behind highway frontage, businesses with pedestrian-friendly fronts can mix with compatibly styles of dwellings.

Facets of the Vision:

Public Support/Dealing with Change

Broad public support and active civic participation stimulate evolution toward the vision and goals. Collaboration will maintain the continued interest and active citizenship of those who have spent time and effort to focus civic attention on the area.

Discussion and education improve mutual understanding about tradeoffs between the need to hold to an overall vision, and the needs of individual property owners working with existing conditions and current market realities.

Education and understanding leads to collaboration on the infrastructure systems that have been missing: a drainage system and streets that need to cross subdivided land. Collaboration leads to successful land pooling among property owners in certain parts of the corridor where past subdivision has been an insurmountable obstacle to proper urban utilization of property. Public support also leads to new public/private partnerships in financing area-wide public improvements.



Discussion, collaboration, partnerships, etc. will be crucial to transformation of the corridor.

Facets of the Vision:

Financing and Administration

City investment in the Dry Creek floodway, which removed the #1 constraint to economic growth, leads to public/private collaboration on further financing and administration.

Active civic discussion continues to stimulate City projects, private sector redevelopment, upgrades to existing properties, and new development. Each project helps set the stage for further investment in real estate development and improvement projects in an evolutionary process. Where collaboration among multiple owners and City departments is necessary for changes to occur and be positive, it will be an increasing attribute.

Chapter 4 - Goals

List of Goals

THE HIGHWAY ITSELF -- N COLLEGE AV/SH14/US 287

- Improve the safety, image and identity of North College Avenue
- Find Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) with the CDOT for street design as needed to reflect unique circumstances and the City's vision and goals

MORE COMPLETE STREET NETWORK

- Evolve a more complete pattern of streets, drives, and alleyways forming interconnected blocks of development, serviced by public access and utilities, behind highway frontage
- Adapt the pattern and details of new streets to fit circumstances and facilitate development projects consistent with the vision and goals

CONNECTIONS TO DOWNTOWN

- Capitalize on the river corridor as an attractive, more active connection with downtown, eliminating perceptions of an edge and a separation

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE AND DESIGN

- Establish a distinct image and identity along the highway with streetscape improvement
- Build up a distinct image and city character in evolving places along the corridor
- Highlight exceptional gateway locations
- Promote the positive attributes of the whole North College corridor area with a unique image and identity program

LAND USES AND ACTIVITY

- Strengthen market underpinnings and economic activity
- Support and complement the Downtown core
- Maximize multiple story buildings

FINANCING & ADMINISTRATION SOLVE PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE

DEFICIENCIES

- Solve drainage system needs where required to allow street and development projects
- Leverage and stimulate further investment with infrastructure projects
- Leverage City investments with additional financing derived from land value, as needed to make necessary infrastructure feasible
- Foster a positive investment climate for projects that contribute to the vision and goals
- Assemble key properties where needed to allow development projects and urban upgrading to proceed

The goals in this chapter are to organize, guide, and stimulate efforts to implement the vision and address the issues. Goals are categorized to correspond to the "facets of the vision".

Likewise, many of the goals can only be realized with collaboration among multiple different parties, as is noted in a column listing of parties that must collaborate on each goal, included with explanations of individual goals.

There is one overarching goal which does not fit any one category:

Improve Public, Consumer, and Investor Perception of "North College"

Goals in all categories significantly contribute to this goal in particular, as it involves a number of interrelated elements: development and redevelopment projects, property upgrades, street improvements, beautification efforts, maintenance, an image and identity program, utilities to support all of the above, and financing and administration of all the above.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT/DEALING WITH CHANGE

- Continue the broad public support which prompted this plan, and much of the progress in the corridor since 1992 will continue
- Increase collaboration and mutual understanding among multiple owners and City Departments
- Public support, civic discussions, and citizen initiative will continue to lead to financing solutions and other property agreements to implement goals

EXPLANATION AND POLICIES FOR EACH GOAL

Goals are repeated below with policies that expand upon the goals along with a column listing of primary interests that must collaborate on goals. Note the column OTHERS typically includes CDOT and other utility providers.

Goals for the

Highway Itself (N College Av / SH14 / US287)

Goal HWY 1 - Improve the safety, image and identity of North College Avenue.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X			X	X	

This goal is a primary priority because of the importance of improving public, consumer, and investor perception of the corridor.

Policies

HWY 1.1 - AMP. Development projects and public highway improvement projects will implement the adopted Access Management Plan.

HWY 1.2 - Part of a Whole Approach. Projects will be formulated to be part of the urban evolution of the corridor as envisioned – facilitating desirable (re)development and establishing a unique identity. They will be designed and built in collaboration with affected interests, both public and private, linking functional and aesthetic improvements.

HWY 1.3 - All Forms of Travel. Short-term and long-term highway improvements will balance multiple functions. Projects will not only improve traffic safety, mobility and access, but will also foster a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly atmosphere reinforced by attractive transit stops and better transit service over time. Highway improvements will tie into inviting places along cross streets at pedestrian-friendly intersections.

HWY 1.4 - Image and Identity for the Corridor. All streetscape elements should be evaluated for special design enhancement opportunities -- e.g., curbs, sidewalks, crosswalks, medians, landscaping, pedestrian and street lighting, signal poles, transit facilities, pedestrian bridges over canals, wayfinding and identity signage, etc.

HWY 1.5 - Drainage. Because highway improvements will require significant new area-wide drainage facilities, City and URA staff will collaborate with owners and developers to implement the 2006 *NCDID* related to highway projects and development projects that involve the highway.

Goal HWY 2 - Find Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) with the CDOT, as needed to reflect unique circumstances and the City’s vision and goals.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X					X

CSS is an emerging approach by the CDOT toward highway projects in local communities. A CSS considers the whole context in which a transportation improvement will exist. It involves different disciplines, and all project stakeholders. This involvement insures that a project fits its unique local setting while maintaining safety and mobility.

Policy

HWY 2.1 - Context Sensitive Solutions. Highway improvements will be designed, built, and maintained in a manner that is sensitive to the built environment in the corridor. As North College Avenue improvement projects are designed, the application of design standards will balance transportation needs for all modes with the needs of adjacent businesses and (re)development projects. Unique design adaptations will enhance safety and identity, and minimize negative impacts of widening and access changes upon adjacent properties to facilitate economic and community development.

Goals for a

More Complete Street Network

Goal STN 1 - Evolve a more complete pattern of streets, drives, and alleyways forming interconnected blocks of development, serviced by public access and utilities, behind highway frontage.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X		X	X	

This goal is inseparable from Access Management goals for North College Itself. It will be realized incrementally over the long term.

Policy

STN 1.1 - Multiple objectives. In addition to access control, new infrastructure will be developed in a manner that facilitates redevelopment.

Goal STN 2 - Adapt the pattern and details of new streets to fit circumstances and facilitate development projects consistent with the vision and goals.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X		X	X	

Policies

STN 2.1 - Collaborative Approach. City staff will collaborate with owners and developers on desirable projects which achieve vision and goals, invoking the flexibility built into city-wide street standards, as needed to foster the kinds of places that achieve the vision and goals.

A proactive, flexible, solution-oriented approach is needed due to compact, mixed areas of old and new development where new streets and North College Avenue widening will remove land from existing properties. Many properties are small, shallow, downtown-size parcels; and the few larger parcels are constrained by demands for new infrastructure as well. Every foot of space is important. Ultimately, decisions will balance local circumstances and desires with broader highway mobility functions.

Examples of key standards likely to involve needs for flexibility include street and drive cross sections, streets vs drives, alignments, curvatures, design speeds, stacking lengths, driveway spacing, parking setbacks, and on-street parking.

STN 2.2 - On-street Parking. The network will provide on-street parking to accommodate overflow demands and bring pedestrian activity to streets (or drives). Redeveloping compact land areas with more ground devoted to public infrastructure means less buildable ground to pay for the infrastructure. This will require increased intensity of development, thus placing parking spaces at a premium on building sites, increasing the importance of an overflow network.

STN 2.2 - Other Infrastructure. Utility corridors, easements, channels, and detention basins will be integrated with the network for multiple purposes (e.g. recreation, personal mobility, image and identity.)

Goals for

Connections to Downtown Across the Poudre River Corridor

Goal RIV 1 - Capitalize on the river corridor as an attractive, more active connection with downtown, eliminating perceptions of an edge and a separation.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X		X	X	X

This goal is a primary priority because of the importance of improving public, consumer, and investor perception of the corridor, and reflects strong public support. This goal is integral with goals for The Highway Itself and for Community Appearance and Design.

The best way to achieve the goal is to create a place that attracts people; the second-best way is to establish bold gateway landscaping with integrated signage, sculpture, etc; and a possible third-best way is to enhance the appearance of some existing uses with building facelifts, added landscaping where possible, flower planters, etc. In reality, a combination of such efforts may be needed.

Public input has acknowledged that all efforts should demonstrate sensitivity to the riparian landscape; that the river is the reason Fort Collins is here; that the floodway must be respected; and that the river is the most important habitat corridor in the region, despite past abuses and human alterations.

This goal overlaps into areas on the south side of the river and north of Cherry Street, particularly on the west side of North College Avenue, which are outside the North College Corridor Plan area per se, but which have a role in the goal.

Policies

RIV 1.1 - Attractive Connection – Public Infrastructure Projects. The City will explore all elements of public infrastructure projects to add special enhancements wherever feasible, to create a strong visual gateway effect and highlight the river corridor setting. The City will coordinate the urban design aspects of various projects for maximum effect in achieving the goal.

RIV 1.2 - Attractive Connection – Landscaping. The City and URA will seek opportunities to formulate landscape projects on City-owned property between Cherry Street and the Lake Canal. Potential opportunities may originate in various sources, e.g. transportation, parks/trails, natural areas, stormwater, the DDA, or the URA.

RIV 1.3 - Active Connection – Redevelopment. The City will explore possible ways to accommodate a degree of redevelopment on key commercial properties in portions of the floodway outside of habitat buffers, as an alternative to City purchase and clearing of the properties.

RIV 1.4 - Active Connection – Trails. The City will explore possible extensions and enhancements to the trail network to expand appropriate recreation and enjoyment of the river landscape in the heart of Fort Collins.

RIV 1.5 – Sensitivity to Riparian Landscape. Any land use decisions will balance desires for a more active connection across the river corridor with habitat and floodplain management values associated with an intact riparian landscape. Careful consideration and sensitivity to these riparian landscape values will ultimately drive planning and design of further alteration of the river corridor.

Goals for

Community Appearance and Design

Goal CAD 1 - Establish a distinct image and identity along the highway with streetscape improvement.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X	X	X	X

Policy

CAD1.1 - Design Influences. Highway streetscape improvements will be designed to celebrate the colorful history of this stretch of US287, particularly emphasizing the role of the Poudre River, and North College Avenue as a local and regional gateway to and from recreational and scenic lands of Colorado and Wyoming.

Highway improvement projects will incorporate special urban design features and details reflecting influences of the Poudre River, and North College Avenue's role as the route to the Poudre Canyon and the mountains of northern Colorado and Wyoming. Other appropriate design influences along the corridor include semi-industrial and Hispanic influences.

Goal CAD 2 - Build up a distinct image and city character in evolving places along the corridor.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X	X	X	

This goal is needed to make the most of the very special (re)development opportunity which the corridor presents, based on its location near the heart of Fort Collins; maximize lasting value from infrastructure investments, by creating interesting places with a comfortable neighborhood feel; and offer a distinct city counterpoint to standardized suburban development.

Policies

CAD 2.1 - Architecture will be the primary, most visible means of achieving the goal. *City Plan* already calls for architecture to respond to local context; here in the corridor, the City will seek ways to foster a distinct architectural character reflecting the vision and unique qualities in evolving places.

CAD 2.2 - Character will be contemporary semi-industrial, combined with familiar, traditional Old Town and Hispanic-derived character. Durable, simple, authentic materials and design will be prevalent.

Architectural design featuring exposed structural elements, brick instead of concrete block, corrugated or ribbed metal instead of artificial stucco, and a palette of colors rather than beige, will create urban places that complement Downtown and offer a distinct alternative to standardized suburban development. Other characteristics consistent with the vision and goals include:

- Use of metal for semi-industrial character must be used in site-specific architectural design, and not pre-designed or pre-fabricated buildings.
- Use of glass, deep protrusions and recesses, juxtaposed forms, awnings, and color will add urban interest to metal in building design.
- Allowing internal building uses to be open or visible through generous doors and windows.
- exposed structural elements to create a semi-industrial feel;
- use of materials and colors to emphasize massing and forms;
- multiple stories to relate to downtown and create an urban rather than suburban feel;
- clerestories, lanterns, and other significant, functional roof forms to add height and interest to one-story buildings;
- High quality design is the goal, high cost and complexity is not. Simplicity, informality, and authenticity will meet the goal with knowledgeable, artful design of functional places.
- In and adjacent to the river corridor, emphasis will be on integration with the surroundings.

CAD 2.3 - The City will explore possibilities for design standards, examples, and explanations as appropriate to refine current code standards to guide developers and architects.

Goal CAD 3 - Highlight exceptional gateway locations.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X			X

Policy

CAD 3.1 - Gateways. Highlight exceptional gateway locations with bold landscaping, signs, sculpture, other urban design features as the opportunity arises.

Four locations have been noted as have been noted as exceptional, marking a transition from one condition to another:

- o Gateway Bridge area
- o Vine Drive
- o a future new intersection configuration at Conifer/Hickory
- o the area just south of the ‘Y’ intersection at State Highway 1
- o Additional, smaller gateways may be warranted to mark entries and transitions into evolving places along the corridor.

Goal CAD 4 - Promote the positive attributes of the whole North College corridor area with a unique image and identity program.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X			X

Policy

CAD 4.1 – Elements. The program will identify and pursue a worthwhile and appropriate package of elements such as a logo and other graphic imagery, special signage, seasonal and event banners, colors, and materials.

- o The program will ultimately apply to a long list of potential design elements such as poles, pole bases, planters, landscape walls, railings, bollards, monuments, curbs, sidewalks, medians, pedestrian bridges, transit shelters and stops, fences, landscape areas, etc. The program will also support marketing efforts by businesses and the NFCBA.
- o Many image and identity elements, if within the right-of-way, may require special agreements with the CDOT and encroachment permits issued by the City.

Goals for

Land Uses and Activity

Goal LU 1 - Strengthen market underpinnings and economic activity.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X		X	

Policy

LU 1.1 - Synergy. Zoning, City actions, URA, and business association efforts will assist “high multiplier” uses that bring people and economic activity, and add synergy with surrounding properties. Examples include 1) dwellings, 2) stable living-wage jobs, 3) retail sales and 4) attractions.

a. Uses that detract from these attributes will be discouraged, restricted, or limited to appropriate portions of the area. (Examples of such uses include used car lots, outdoor storage, and storage units in areas with potential for more active mixed-use development.)

b. Zoning will continue to allow for a very broad mix of uses and businesses realistic for market conditions, serving neighborhood and community commercial needs of the trade area; serving the highway and commuters; and continuing a service, supply, and light industrial role; all with incremental improvement of the community infrastructure and image.

Goal LU 2 - Support and complement the Downtown core.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X			X	

Like other transitional areas close to the downtown core, evolving land uses in the corridor will fit City Plan’s broad view recognizing Downtown as the primary focal point of the city; and its retail/entertainment core the source of its vitality.

Policy

LU 2.1 - Complementary Uses. Development in the North College corridor will support Downtown with jobs and housing bringing residents and workers; will add different attractions ‘across the river’ for people who come Downtown, as Jax Outdoor does at the time of this plan; will improve the attractiveness of Fort Collins for travelers and visitors, ideally with a new or refurbished hotel; and will accommodate expansion of Downtown arts uses, especially with supporting custom small industry and workshop space.

Goal LU 3 - Maximize multiple story buildings.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
		X			X	

Multi-story buildings help make the most of the close-in opportunity offered by the corridor and infrastructure investments in it; create more synergy; create more significant architecture; and create a stronger sense of place.

Policy

LU 3.1- .The City and URA will encourage multi-story buildings, and additional height in one-story buildings, in development projects.

Goals for

Financing and Administration

Goal FAD 1 - Solve drainage system needs where required to allow street and development projects.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X		X	X	X

Build on the foundation set by the Dry Creek and NCDID projects to make the most of those investments.

Policy

FAD 1.1 - NCDID Strategy. Formulate an implementation strategy for the NCDID, both proactively and in collaboration with public and private projects that implement the vision and goals.

Goal FAD 2 - Leverage and stimulate further investment with infrastructure projects.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X				X

Policy

FAD 2.1 - Seek Leverage Opportunities. Continuously seek and find ways to improve exceptional, image-changing locations by making transportation and drainage improvements; this sets the stage for additional development and public improvement projects to fill in gaps. Seek out transportation and drainage projects that combine multiple funding sources to create multi-functional benefits.

Goal FAD 3 - Leverage City investments with additional financing derived from land value, as needed to make necessary infrastructure feasible.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X		X	X	

This goal is integral with 'Goals for Community Support/Dealing with Change', later in this chapter.

Policy

FAD 3.1 - Tap Land Value. Pursue appropriate and fair public/private partnerships to fund needed infrastructure that benefits properties. The premise is to find ways to use a portion of the benefits accruing to properties, to help pay for infrastructure that creates the benefits. Example possibilities include special purpose property tax districts, special land pooling agreements, and land dedications.

Goal FAD 4 - Foster a positive investment climate for projects that contribute to the vision and goals.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X	X		X

This goal is integral with all other goals.

Policy

FAD 4.1 – Appropriate zoning and development standards. Updated development standards will be explored as part of a positive investment climate in which appropriate efforts can proceed per the vision and goals; investors can count on a level of quality and improvement; and inappropriate changes that undermine progress are not supported.

Goal FAD 5 - Assemble key properties where needed to allow development projects and urban upgrading to proceed	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
		X		X	X	

Goals for

Community Support/Dealing with Change

Goal COM 1 - Continue the broad public support which prompted this plan and much of the progress in the corridor since 1992 will continue.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X	X	X	

Goal COM 2 - Increase collaboration and mutual understanding among multiple owners and City Departments	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X			

Policies

COM 2.1 - Convene. Convene City Departments, the Business Association, the URA, and owners, periodically as needed. Discuss and evaluate costs and benefits of changes and choices to maintain as much common understanding and mutual buy-in as possible.

COM 2.2 - Local Character. Emphasize unique character local to the corridor in the design of development and civic projects, so that people can still feel a sense of community even as the corridor evolves.

COM 2.3 - Existing Owners. Make reasonable effort to manage changes to accommodate property investment needs and desires of existing owners who want to remain and be part of changes.

Goal COM 3 - Public support, civic discussions, and citizen initiative will continue to lead to financing solutions and other property agreements to implement goals.	CITY	URA	NFCBA	OWNERS	DEVELOPERS	OTHERS
	X	X	X	X	X	

Policy

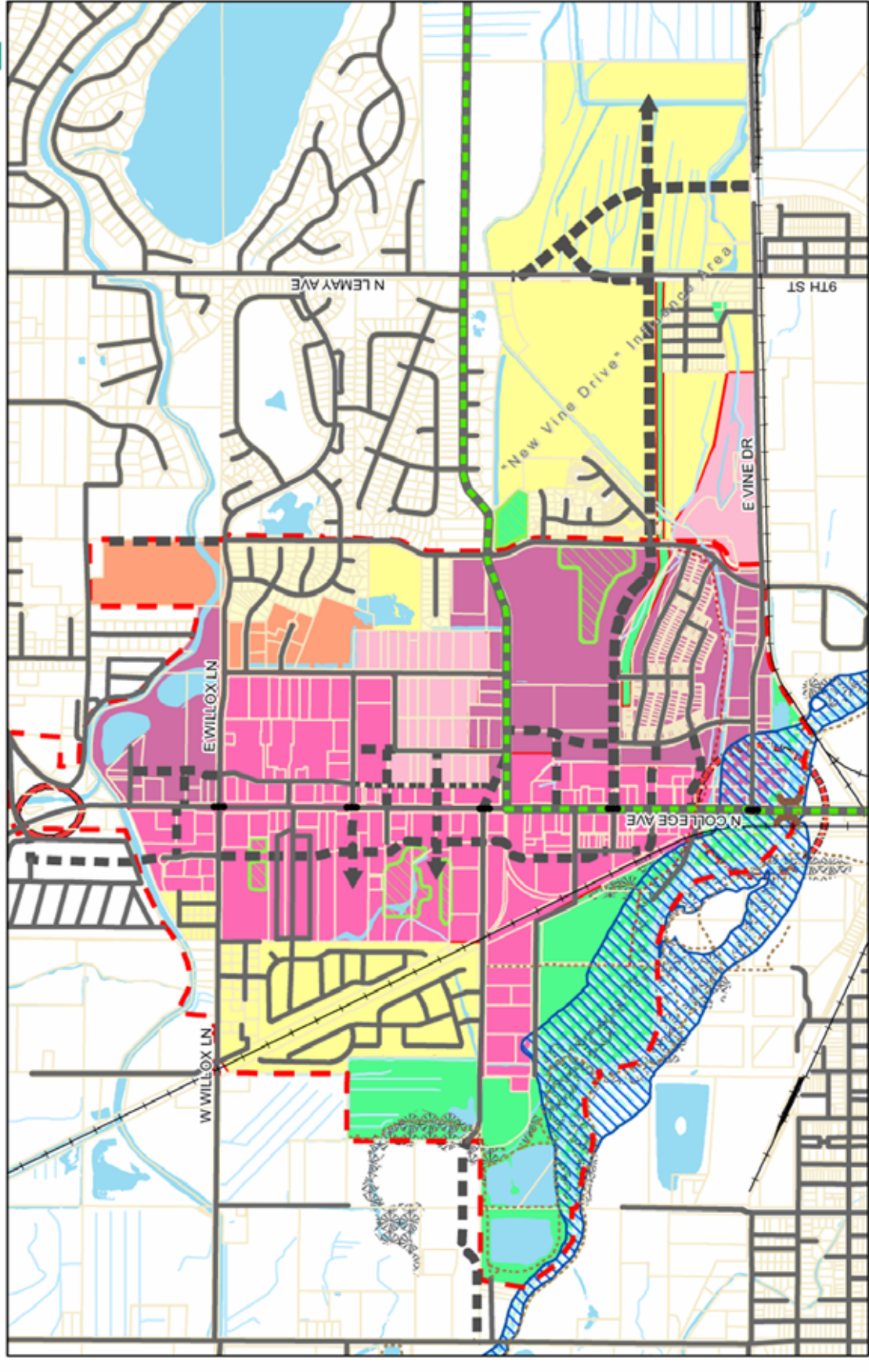
COM 3.1 - Owner Financial Participation. Property owners share in financing of key drainage and street projects, to build on the City's investments and partner in further investments as needed. This goal is inseparable from goals for Financing and Administration.

Chapter 5 Framework Plan

The Framework Plan illustrates the general, preferred land use and transportation framework for continued community evolution in the North College corridor, consistent with the vision and goals. Its land use pattern is a guide for zoning regulations; and its recommended street network will be required or encouraged as part of (re)development projects, and will also help guide public capital projects.

The original 1994 plan led to new zoning, and also first articulated the need for a more complete street network in the corridor. Most of the 1994 framework is now 'institutionalized' by the Land Use Code and the *Access Management Plan* for North College Avenue. Also, the *NCDID*, while not an officially adopted document, further builds on the framework.

North College Corridor Plan FRAMEWORK PLAN



Legend

Land Use

Scale: 0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet

North Arrow

SOME NOTES

Land use patterns have been fairly well established, particularly within the residential neighborhoods and industrial areas. The vision and goals for continued evolution of the corridor pertain mainly to the two mixed commercial areas – the Commercial North College and Community Commercial areas shown on the map. These areas have been the main focus of analysis and discussion in the planning process. These two areas along with the industrial area contain most of the property which likely to be developed or redeveloped within the foreseeable future.

The corridor contains a wide range of land uses from industrial to commercial to residential uses. Most of the various types of uses fit the secondary, supporting, service role of the corridor as an area of relatively low levels of investment and land values, compared to areas of the City south of the river.

In the C-N and C-C-N areas in particular, the vision and goals reflect a desire to improve the area with reinvestment and new investment, redevelopment and new development, both public and private, to address problems and deficiencies and give the area a more positive character.

STREETS

Black dashed lines show the updated skeleton and circulation system of future development patterns, with new streets and intersections providing a more complete street network, on-street parking, new access to areas east and west of College, and localized travel connections. A few additional local streets and connections will likely be needed as part of development plans, but will be determined in the development design process.

“NEW VINE”

The Master Street Plan has been updated since the original 1994 adoption date of this plan, and the *Access Management Plan* was adopted in 2000. These efforts identify the need to realign Vine Drive, moving it approximately ¼-mile to the north, and sizing it appropriately to manage larger traffic volumes. As Vine Drive does now, it will continue east to the Interstate 25 frontage road, connecting to industrial areas east of Lemay Avenue in the East Mulberry corridor. The proposed realignment of Vine Drive would bring a standard arterial street into and through an area of the corridor previously envisioned for a mixed-use neighborhood development pattern, similar to transitional areas around Downtown to the south and west of the core. The realignment bisects this area, and the major traffic facility affects the land use pattern.

ENHANCED TRAVEL CORRIDOR

City Plan designates an “Enhanced Travel Corridor” along Conifer Street, and southward from Conifer along North College Avenue connecting to Downtown and the Mason Transportation Corridor. Along Conifer, the Enhanced Travel Corridor continues eastward to ultimately connect with future development in

the Mountain Vista area. An Enhanced Travel Corridor is envisioned to provide a primary, multi-modal transportation corridor with high-frequency transit in future phases of the City's transit system.

HICKORY/CONIFER INTERSECTIONS

The City's Master Street Plan and the Access Management Plan for North College show Conifer and Hickory as needing to be reconfigured into a single intersection to fix safety problems. This is a major issue, potentially involving major portions of abutting properties, as explained in Chapter 2. A new intersection at this location is envisioned as an exceptional location worth special urban design treatment as a central feature.

POUDRE RIVER

The Poudre River marks the south gateway to the corridor, providing opportunities for interesting spaces, image enhancements, and pedestrian amenities linking Downtown with North College. Its floodway, shown on the map, is the area reserved for the passage of flood flows, with corresponding limitations on development.

DRY CREEK

The significance of this feature is that it is not shown on the map -- after more than a century of alteration and partial removal by ditch companies, property owners, developers, and farmers, it has been completely removed from the corridor area as a physiographic feature by City flood control facilities.

DRAINAGE

Although Dry Creek and its floodplain have been removed, stormwater runoff remains a key issue for this area. There is a need for an area-wide drainage system throughout most of the corridor. Approximate areas needed for significant detention ponds are shown in green on the plan. These areas will require additional study as development is proposed, for determination of actual size and location. These facilities will allow for more urban-level intensity of development on other property in the area, as the need for on-site detention within each individual project will be eliminated.

NEW VINE DRIVE INFLUENCE AREA

The Framework Plan shows a "New Vine Drive Influence Area" extending east from the North College corridor study area, along the proposed realignment of Vine Drive, to the proposed realignment of Lemay Avenue. These proposed realignments involve major transportation implications which directly affect the North College Corridor with significant rerouting of arterial traffic, and effects on development potential. (The area being referenced is roughly south of Conifer, East of College past Lemay, and north of Vine.)

The plan update process highlighted the magnitude of changes introduced by the proposed realignment of “New Vine Drive” through the middle of the largest area of undeveloped land in and adjacent to the corridor. The effects of the realigned arterial street are further magnified by two major water lines proposed to parallel the roadway, and a major channel or pipe to carry stormwater flows.

And furthermore, Dry Creek flood facilities upstream of the corridor have begun to open up this land to new development potential.

Influences of these facilities are tied to the whole stretch from North College Avenue to Lemay Avenue. Influences include extraordinary costs and significant impacts on land use and transportation. Specifically, some of the influences of the realigned Vine depend on whether it can intersect with the existing Lemay Avenue in the short term, and on the eventual replacement of the existing Vine/Lemay intersection with a completely new intersection based on realignment of both streets into open land to accommodate a full size arterial intersection.

Conifer Street is currently designated as an Enhanced Travel Corridor at the time of this plan; however the proposed realignment of Vine Drive has launched conversations about whether that designation may shift from Conifer Street to the “New Vine Drive”, with implications for the North College Corridor.

Another consideration in expanding the “North College Redevelopment and Infill Area” eastward along realigned Vine Drive came from market analysis done in 2005 as an input to the NCCP. That analysis highlighted a very important need to increase residential development in the trade area. While the introduction of “New Vine” has raised questions about a greater potential for non-residential uses, the proposed area to be added is still envisioned as a good opportunity for residential development directly tied to the North College corridor by the new roadway.

For all of these reasons, this area is shown as an integral and essential influence related to the North College corridor. Inclusion on the map generally means there is an increased policy basis for the City to help fund extra-ordinary infrastructure needs due to deficiencies in existing infrastructure, and to provide special features or assistance needed to accommodate the impacts of major changes which are envisioned.

This area is officially a part of the City’s *Northside Neighborhoods Plan*. That plan from that neighborhood plan illustrated this area as LMN – Low-Density Mixed Use Neighborhood.

Chapter 6 Implementation Actions & Financing

The purpose of this chapter is to launch crucial conversations on the next generation of projects and efforts to accomplish the vision and goals. Everything in this plan requires broad buy-in -- the corridor presents an unparalleled need for collaboration among multiple owners, multiple City departments, and other agencies in adapting to circumstances.

As emphasized throughout this plan, all its aspects are interrelated. This is evident throughout this chapter, and will remain true for ongoing efforts to put the plan into effect over time. All efforts depend on convening both strategic and general interests, building understanding, and educating all parties to see the true range of possibilities and deal with complications of renewal areas.

It is worth noting the City's Development Review process and the Urban Renewal Authority's administration of the *North College Avenue Urban Renewal Plan* will involve day-to-day implementation actions and decisions. The URA should be proactive in seeking and advocating solutions for projects to significantly further these vision and goals.

In addition, a priority list of needed infrastructure projects, prepared by staff in 2004, is available from the City's Advance Planning department. Willox/North College intersection improvements topped this list, for safety reasons and to remove a barrier to desired development. Realigned Vine Drive was listed next, because its parallel stormwater improvements were viewed as a key to improving North College Avenue itself from the river northward. Improvements to North College Avenue from the river northward then rounded out the "high priority" improvements due to their potential to enhance transportation and identity. All three of these projects would include upgrades to the various utilities, such as stormwater, water, wastewater, and electric. This *North College Corridor Plan* is in agreement with the 2004 infrastructure analysis but adds a more whole view of the evolution of the corridor.

Actions and financing needs are listed in general order of priority and importance, but because all efforts are interrelated, the exact order is not crucial and should not be seen as any kind of limitation on any efforts.

This chapter also captures "Some Details" – ideas generated during this planning process which appear to be worth more consideration, or may be useful in formulating "Actions and Financing".

Actions & Financing

Construct adequate drainage system to allow building and renewal

Seek and find funding for area detention ponds and other crucial components of the *NCDID*, as needed to facilitate private development and public improvement projects that implement the vision and goals.

The *NCDID* identified stormwater facilities that would address existing drainage problems through a unified system of detention ponds and storm sewers for the area. Some of these facilities would be constructed as part of the City's stormwater program while others will be constructed as part of redevelopment of lands and the construction of other public infrastructure.

The coordination of funding for area detention ponds, storm sewers and other crucial components of the *NCDID* is necessary to this plan's vision and goals. Having a unified approach to the public infrastructure would help guide redevelopment of the area and as well as assist construction of other public infrastructure. Products may include financing arrangements, land acquisitions, facility design, and construction projects.

Evaluate appropriate improvement districts and forms of participation by property owners who benefit from City investment in Dry Creek flood improvements, the *NCDID* and other public investments. Convene conversations on funding to supplement City Stormwater Department investments to jump-start land acquisition and facility construction. Identify stakeholders who benefit from key improvements, estimate revenue potential, and explore logistics and timing, particularly for creation of special purpose property tax districts.

Who: A multi-departmental staff team led by URA staff, with core representation from Transportation, Current and Advance Planning needs to coordinate City capital improvement projects and collaborate strategically with developers, affected property owners, and other agencies involved in capital improvement projects in the area (e.g. Greeley and water district pipelines.)

The scope of the needed stormwater infrastructure improvements is area-wide and complex, integrating development projects with other phased infrastructure improvements. Thus, there is no private entity reasonably capable of convening necessary conversations, or taking the lead in necessary efforts. However, developers may catalyze and galvanize efforts with development initiatives consistent with the vision and goals.

Why: A drainage system is a crucial part of any street improvement or development project. In Chapter 2, 'Issues of Drainage and Utilities' explains the importance of drainage infrastructure.

When: Solutions in this area need to be given a high priority both immediately and into the future. Certain needs are crucial. Strategies for

timing and phasing are a major aspect of the effort that is needed in formulating implementation strategies. The prioritization of Stormwater funds needs to be weighed against other stormwater needs citywide.

Financing area-detention ponds is a first priority to allow additional capital projects and development projects in key areas, by providing a place for storm water to go as other projects add facilities over time to convey runoff to the ponds.

How (financing possibilities): Stormwater and Transportation budgets, appear to be key ingredients, possibly with other City funding sources. Developer investments are the next key source of funding, as some improvements will be constructed with new development. Other possible sources the team should evaluate include Special Improvement property tax Districts, repayments to or from developers with city departments as revenues are collected, and tax increment financing.

Actions & Financing

Coordinate North College Avenue Improvements

Develop and maintain an operating strategy to maximize benefits and synergy of multiple projects including:

- voter-approved Building On Basics (BOB) capital project funding for North College Avenue improvements,
- BOB capital project funding for Pedestrian Plan Implementation,
- BOB capital project funding for Pedestrian Plan Implementation,
- CDOT Hazard Elimination and Safety (HES) Grant funding for Hickory/Conifer/North College Avenue improvements,
- Greeley and water district pipeline capital projects (GWET and NEWT),
- other potential State and Federal transportation funding managed by the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO),
- drainage system projects, (re)development projects,
- (re)development initiatives - both known and prospective,
- possible participation by owners, such as dedication of land to maximize improvements
- possible gateway landscaping on City property at Vine/North College
- possible NFCBA beautification and maintenance efforts
- possible future voter tax initiatives if needed, and
- any other efforts toward the vision and goals.

Other considerations in developing a whole strategy include the following:

- Evaluate whether and how key intersections at Vine Drive, “New Vine Drive”, and Conifer/Hickory, can be built as priorities for their power to strengthen identity and economic activity, using BOB and other sources.
- Clarify the role and responsibilities of private development projects in relation to capital improvement projects, and whether capital projects create an incentive for owners to delay development.

- Review whether City-wide street standards or CDOT standards appear particularly problematic in the uniquely constrained circumstances of the corridor. For example, if a standard requirement would thwart desired (re)development, inadvertently reinforcing the status quo, then the requirements should be evaluated for context-sensitive solutions (CSS). In particular, minimizing additional land dedication for North College Avenue R.O.W. and easements would leave more land available for redevelopment and for additional alternative circulation and access, needed for access management.
- Examples of key standards affecting the use of land include design speeds, lane widths, median widths, auxiliary lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping, driveway spacings, and parking setbacks.
- City Street Standards should be modified as needed to develop a successful CSS design approach for the corridor, balancing the needs for all modes of travel and including visually appealing improvements.
- The Hickory and Conifer intersections are a particular problem for safety and capacity, with particular impacts on redevelopment. The two intersections should be analyzed to determine the best way to combine them into a single intersection per the *AMP*. Reconfiguration into a single intersection per the *AMP* would require major redevelopment of abutting properties, which may be a long-term proposition. However, because of more immediate development and traffic needs, the City should lead efforts to clarify possible interim solutions feasible with existing development. Any intersection improvements should be viewed as a major urban design opportunity as well.

Results of this item may include public discussions, verbal understanding, meeting notes, memos, funding initiatives, grant applications, and ultimately, design and construction projects. Actions should focus on using special North College Avenue enhancements as catalysts to further steps.

Who: City Transportation Planning staff needs to lead a multi-departmental staff team, including the CDOT as a core participant. The staff team would then strategically involve various other interests as appropriate.

Why: It is crucial to leverage and maximize all capital improvement and private investment dollars to maximize goals. An effective approach will leverage developer initiatives, and also leverage exceptional locations, to maximize benefits of various projects for the vision and goals.

When: Immediate and ongoing.

How: The list of projects to be coordinated, at the top of this section, is a list of financing possibilities – some confirmed, and others to be evaluated and pursued over time.

Actions & Financing

Evaluate River Floodplain Near North College/Vine intersection

There is a need to determine the feasibility of modification of the floodplain in conjunction with a land use vision for the area, particularly on the north side of Vine Drive. Before a floodplain evaluation can be performed, proposed land use concepts need to be determined. Then an interactive evaluation can then be performed that would balance potential floodplain modifications and desired land uses along the river corridor and in the vicinity of College and Vine Drive. Key questions are:

- what type and degree of redevelopment would be realistically feasible within floodplain/floodway regulations;
- what it would take to shrink the floodplain with landform changes or structures to allow desired redevelopment of key properties;
- the costs and benefits of purchasing and clearing properties, vs floodplain alteration, floodproofing to allow some careful, and special redevelopment of key properties that otherwise are likely to remain in the status quo; and
- related impacts of any changes on the wildlife corridor.

If such redevelopment could be feasible, it could address a number of the Issues, Vision and Goals in previous chapters. It would reduce the burden of purchasing and clearing commercial property, with subsequent maintenance by the City. Also, it would add activity and attraction to the connection across the river.

The City and URA would need to set parameters for redevelopment that would occur on such specially created sites, to maximize the vision and goals.

The evaluation should also clarify the role of the City’s “willing seller – willing buyer” program, to address issues discussed in Chapter 2. For example:

- prices in excess of appraised values due to replacement cost;
- relative priorities compared to other funding needs;
- opportunities to partner with other departments or entities to achieve the vision and goals;
- what to do with the property once purchased; and
- how Vine Drive can be improved where redevelopment is not feasible or properties are owned by the City.

If the evaluation affirms the City’s policy to purchase properties, the City should evaluate appropriate uses for portions of the floodway outside of buffer areas, where habitat restoration is not a goal, yet buildings are not allowed. For example, ideas have included outdoor space for festivals or events near Downtown, trailhead parking, overflow/remote park-n-shuttle lots for Downtown, community gardens/demonstration landscaping, and seasonal markets as potential types of uses that reflect the Vision and Goals.

Who: A multi-department team led by Advance Planning staff should be formed comprised of members from Stormwater, Transportation, Current Planning, Natural Resources, and Parks and Recreation. The staff team would then strategically involve various other public and private interests as appropriate.

Why: Floodplain implications for land uses and activity are central to the vision and goals regarding the river corridor. Also, if alterations to the floodplain are a viable alternative to pursue, it could have implications for roadway improvements to North College Avenue and the North College/Vine intersection as well.

When: This should be considered a high priority. It affects current conversations and imminent choices about roadway improvements and land uses at the time of this plan.

How: This needs to be done as part of City departmental operations.

Actions & Financing

Enhance Public Projects Near River

Various elements of City projects (and any other public infrastructure projects) will be enhanced with special design to highlight the river. The Gateway Bridge is a modest example, with its special walkways and overlooks, railing design, columns and accent pedestrian lighting, materials, concrete textures, colors, plantings, and signs.

Who: The initiating City department will lead efforts and solicit input from other departments and entities as appropriate. Public improvements projects will likely be led by Transportation Planning, Stormwater, and possibly Natural Areas initiatives.

Why: A whole approach to public improvements is crucial to the vision and goals. Street projects, and possibly drainage projects as well, offer highly visible opportunities to achieve the vision and goals in addition to meeting technical or functional requirements.

When: Ongoing, whenever public projects are being formulated.

How: Funding needs to be part of the design process.

Actions & Financing

Landscaping of City-owned Property in River Corridor

Special, bold landscaping on City-owned property along North College Avenue near the Vine Drive intersection. The landscaping would extend and reinforce the effect of streetscape and intersection improvements to create a bold visual

beautification statement. Landscaping could include signs, sculpture, and trail connections; and would require irrigation. Design, installation, and maintenance must be programmed.

Who: Advance Planning staff need to lead a design effort, and coordinate with other departments on design, funding, timing, and maintenance. Some initiatives may require property owner participation such as an area-wide special purpose tax District (BID or GID) to help fund beautification and maintenance.

Why: This is an exceptional location, at the gateway between North College and Downtown, yet without landscaping, this property contributes little to the vision and goals for this area. It is an opportunity to enhance the identity of the corridor and improve public perception of crossing the river. These issues have area-wide significance.

When: The opportunity is imminent due to immediate availability of funding for a sidewalk under the Building On Basics capital improvements program, and also due to scheduled design of North College Avenue improvements in 2008.

How: The City should provide funding for a preliminary design to be used in conjunction with BOB projects for the roadway and sidewalk. Further funding and installation beyond the scope of BOB projects could then be done later. The URA, Parks Department budgets, and a special purpose tax district for beautification are funding possibilities.

Actions & Financing

Explore New Trail Connections Near River

Evaluate additions to the system of soft trails in portions of the corridor devoted to Natural Areas, parks, and habitat buffers. Include connections to the Vine intersection for crossing the highway. Consider another pedestrian bridge(s) in association with trails; possibly including a suspension bridge as a special attraction. Include further evaluation of possible changes to Legacy Park. Evaluate potential partnerships among Departments (e.g. Natural Areas, Parks, Stormwater,) the DDA, and the URA to make progress toward the goal.

Who: Natural Areas, Advance Planning, and Parks staff, with input from other departments and public interests as appropriate.

Why: Enhance the river corridor as an attraction for appropriate use.

When: Timing is flexible.

How: Funding needs to be part of the evaluation.

Explore Property Assembly to Create Redevelopment Sites of Significance

Feasibility analysis of property assembly for redevelopment. Formulate a conceptual plan (alternative plans) for a promising group of properties where redevelopment appears beneficial, and test the plan for financial feasibility with pro forma analysis.

The plan(s) should address obstacles and solutions; estimate realistic development potential; and describe what it would take to increase value in excess of costs. One particular issue the plan should address is how to adapt new street segments to fit constrained circumstances typical of the corridor, as explained in previous chapters.

The analysis should address possible equity participation arrangements between existing owners and developers, if useful to meet the desires of all parties.

Findings should then be explored with property owners and all other relevant interests. The exploration can then assist negotiations and agreements creating assembled property that can be offered for redevelopment.

Who: URA staff should lead the efforts, with input from other departments as needed. Consulting expertise may be needed for proforma financial analysis.

Why: There is a need for better understanding about property assembly in the corridor. The information is needed for productive, realistic discussions about redevelopment among the URA, property owners, and the City.

When: As soon as possible within staff work programs. The main time factor is the Urban Renewal Plan with its 25-year time frame.

How: The URA and/or Advance Planning would likely need to cover any expenses.

Actions & Financing

Formulate an Image and Identity Program

Formulate a program of themes and elements that could be incorporated into various projects, signs, banners, marketing, etc. Examples of elements include a logo, other images, typography, a name for the corridor, colors, materials, styles, special plantings, holiday lighting/decoration, events, etc. The program should be continuously maintained, updated, and reevaluated. Physical maintenance must be a crucial aspect of any physical elements as well.

Who: The URA should convene discussions with the NFCBA. Consulting expertise may be needed for professional design/marketing services.

Why: A program will allow various different investments and efforts to contribute to a 'whole greater than the sum of the parts, adding value by improving public and consumer perception of the corridor.

When: Work should start by 2008, and then be ongoing.

How: NFCBA and URA budgets appear to be the necessary catalyst. Evaluate a Business Improvement District (BID) or General Improvement District (GID) to finance a program over time.

Actions & Financing

Adjust City Plan Redevelopment & Infill Map

Revise the *Targeted Redevelopment Areas Map* in *City Plan* -- expand the North College targeted redevelopment area east to Lemay Avenue along the proposed realignment of Vine Drive.

Who: Advance Planning staff.

Why: The plan update process highlighted the magnitude of changes introduced by the proposed realignment of Vine Drive through the corridor, in combination with major parallel utility lines and the required replacement of the Vine/Lemay intersection with a new intersection. Influences of these facilities are tied to the whole stretch from North College Avenue to Lemay Avenue. Influences include extraordinary costs and significant impacts on land use and transportation.

When: Concurrent with or immediately following plan adoption.

How: No funding is required.

Actions & Financing

Revisit Expansion of Urban Renewal Plan Area

Revisit expansion of the URP area east to Lemay Avenue along the proposed realignment of Vine Drive.

Who: Advance Planning Staff.

Why: For the same reasons noted above regarding *City Plan's Targeted Redevelopment Areas* map. The area is integrated with the North College corridor by the Vine Drive realignment, and the URA could assist needed infrastructure and development.

When: Evaluation should begin immediately. Timing of actual plan amendment should be one of the topics of the evaluation.

How (financing possibilities): No funding is required.

Actions & Financing

Rezone Conifer Street, North Side

Change City Structure Plan and Rezone properties with Conifer Street frontage from I, Industrial to CCN.

Who: Advance Planning staff.

Why: The vision for North College emphasizes cross streets leading to and from North College Avenue to foster active, attractive, pedestrian-friendly public places. Properties along the north side of Conifer Street offer a very good opportunity to achieve this in conjunction with development along the south side of Conifer, which is already zoned CCN. The Industrial zone allows a number of land uses that would be incompatible with the vision due to low visual quality and low levels of improvement and human activity (e.g. junk yards, storage, warehouses.)

Evaluate implications, address property owner concerns, and bring changes forward.

When: Concurrent with plan adoption or as soon as possible within staff work programs; and as appropriate per results of evaluation.

How: No funding is required.

Actions & Financing**Explore Revisions to Commercial-North College Zone District**

Review the Permitted Uses in the Commercial-North College (CN) zone district for implementation of the vision and goals. The particular issue is, consider removal or limitation of new storage uses which could undermine the vision and goals for redevelopment due to low levels of improvement and synergy with other uses in support of revitalization.

Who: Advance Planning staff.

Why: The vision and goals depend on a shift away from low activity storage uses in rear areas, toward higher activity uses that bring a higher level of investment and improvement.

When: Immediately or as soon as possible within staff work programs.

How: No funding is required.

Actions & Financing**Explore Revisions to Community Commercial-North College Zone District**

What: Revise the Community Commercial-North College (CCN) zone district to add Large Retail Establishments.

Who: Advance Planning staff.

Why: In 2000, the City Council added Supermarkets to the zone district, finding that large buildings and parking lots can be appropriate in the zone if they provide responsive design and needed infrastructure. The proposed realignment of Vine Drive through the middle of a C-C-N area further adds to the justification for allowing large retail establishments, by introducing a large scale traffic facility.

When: Immediately or as soon as possible within staff work programs.

How: No funding is required.

Update Building & Development Standards Special to the Corridor

Repeal existing Standards and Guidelines for the CN and CCN zone districts, and explore possible new design standards to be placed into the Land Use Code as appropriate to implement the vision and goals for character and image. The primary topic needing further clarification is building design. The City should convene a group of architects and other stakeholders to evaluate whether and how building design standards, or other examples and explanations of the vision and goals, could improve the investment climate, by fostering a distinct, positive overall character that improves public perception of the corridor. Another topic to explore is street design, possibly leading to street standards developed for the area that fit the unique vision and goals.

Involve the NFCBA and inform the public to foster a broad base of understanding and support.

Who: Advance Planning staff, with input from a whole range of interested parties, including a focus group of architects.

Why: The Land Use Code and Access Management Plan have clarified the topics covered in the existing Standards and Guidelines; and the zone districts have been updated and renamed. New standards may be appropriate to implement the clarified vision and goals in this updated plan; however the issue needs further exploration beyond the scope and time frame of this plan.

When: As soon as possible within staff work programs.

How : No funding is required.