Midtown Plan Executive Summary

Plan Purpose
Midtown has been defined as a portion of the College Avenue commercial corridor, spanning slightly more than three miles from Prospect Road south to Fairway Lane. This has been a priority area for the City given it includes a significant portion of College Avenue and the Mason Corridor, collectively defined as the “community spine” in City Plan. Policy LW 5.2 provides the foundation for continued focus in Midtown stating, “the ‘community spine’ shall be considered the highest priority area for public investment in streetscape and urban design improvements and other infrastructure upgrades to support infill and redevelopment and to promote the corridor’s transition to a series of transit-supportive, mixed-use activity centers over time” (City Plan, pg. 52).

Plan objectives include:
• Complement current and forthcoming investment by articulating a vision for the area
• Ensure multi-modal connectivity and improved circulation throughout Midtown and promote optimum use of MAX
• Craft a parking strategy that supports increased densities
• Improve wayfinding and sense of identity
• Identify opportunities to enhance streetscapes
• Articulate design objectives through varied development prototype case studies, to guide the design of future redevelopment and reinforce the vision
• Provide recommendations for financing and implementing the vision

How to Use this Plan
The Midtown Plan is intended to serve as a policy guide for the City, private investors, and community members as investments are made to revitalize the area. A bold vision for an urban, transit-oriented corridor is put forth, but it is recognized that implementing the vision will take time and require commitment from both the public and private sectors. Each Chapter outlines a vision and key recommendations for different topic areas, as follows:
Chapter 1 – General Framework Concepts
Chapter 2 – Mobility and Access
Chapter 3 – Streetscapes, Signage and Wayfinding
Chapter 4 – Parks and Open Space
Chapter 5 – Development Prototypes
Chapter 6 – Design Guidelines
Chapter 7 – Implementation

Vision
Midtown will be a vital corridor with a mix of uses and activities that serve a broad spectrum of the community. It will have a distinct identity that distinguishes it from other parts of the city and should be a destination in its own right. Streets will be inviting to pedestrians, and public art and civic facilities will be located throughout the area. Midtown is envisioned as an urban area with higher densities. It will be an economic generator that is conveniently accessible from abutting residential areas, while continuing to serve the community as a whole.
Public Process
Work began in summer 2012 on the Midtown Plan. The project was managed collaboratively between the Economic Health and City Planning departments, along with a consultant team led by Winter & Company from Boulder, CO. Information and guidance from the community was collected through various means of public outreach, which helped to shape the vision and key recommendations of the Plan.

Phase 1 (July – October 2012): included extensive information gathering to gain an understanding of how Midtown exists today. This included tours of the corridor and meetings with City staff, residents, property owners, business owners, City Boards and Commissions, and other community organizations such as the South Fort Collins Business Association.

Phase 2 (November – February 2013): developed preliminary design concepts for the corridor, and included an intensive, hands-on workshop that was attended by more than 70 community members. These concepts were presented and explored more thoroughly with City Council at a work session on January 8, 2013.

Phase 3 (March – June 2013): incorporated feedback into a draft document. Staff coordinated extensive outreach throughout June to obtain feedback from stakeholders. The draft document was available on the project’s website and provided an opportunity to review and provide comments electronically. Additionally, a public open house was held June 27 for community members to visit with staff and review the recommendations of the plan.

Triple Bottom Line
The concept of sustainability is interwoven throughout the Plan, with considerations given to social, environmental, and economic factors that will make the revitalization of Midtown successful. Making the corridor accessible for all modes and abilities, increasing public spaces, and encouraging higher density and affordable housing are some of the social recommendations. Encouraging the preservation and enhancement of natural amenities, and promoting energy efficient buildings and site design assist in furthering environmental goals. Midtown is a hub of economic activity, and the goal, through the Plan’s suggested improvements, is to continue to support investment in this vital commercial corridor. New financing tools to encourage and enhance future investment are suggested to assist with the Plan’s long-term implementation, recognizing partnerships between the public and private sectors will be essential.

Major Recommendations

Mobility and Access
- Include car and bike lanes within existing road widths. Outside of curbs is an envisioned enhanced public realm, including wide, detached sidewalks, which sometimes suggests additional right-of-way (ROW).
- Improve frontage roads to be more bike-friendly. When frontage roads end, continue bike circulation through wide, detached sidewalks along College Avenue, similar to the mall’s current plans.
- Construct a pedestrian promenade adjacent to MAX between the Spring Creek Overpass and Horsetooth MAX station. The ideal cross section allows for a 15’ multi-use path (bikes & pedestrians only) with 15’ landscaping and 10’ buffer between path & buildings. Where ideal cross section doesn’t fit, it may be more feasible to narrow the cross section, but should not be less than 10’ for the path.
- Provide continuous, designated bike facilities. Where gaps in current system and sufficient ROW is available, provide on-street bike lanes/buffered bike lanes/cycle tracks. Where ROW is not sufficient, use shared lane markings or bike route markers to direct cyclists.

The Framework Map
The Framework Map (left) is a graphical representation of the high-level design concepts and recommendations of the Midtown Plan.

Legend
- Midtown Plan Area (darker aerial area)
- Character Area Boundary
- Gateway
  - (Future) Civic Amenity (approximate locations)
  - May be a park, plaza, or other gathering place
  - One per Character Area
  - (Future) Privately developed Plazas and Open Spaces
  - Approximate locations for illustrative purposes
  - Intricacies may be provided
  - At owner’s option
- Key Streetscape Node
  - Each design palette relates to the respective MAX (Station)
  - Visually links MAX with College Ave.
- MAX Guideway
- MAX Station
- Potential Structured Parking Location
- Locations are illustrative
- Promenade Segments
  - Design varies by Character Area
- College Avenue Corridor
- Internal Circulation Opportunities
  - Many include auto, bikes and pedestrians
  - Some are bi-modal, depending on specific development
  - Locations are illustrative, specifics depend upon individual development projects
- Existing Underpass
- Future Grade Separated Crossing
  - Potential or potential
- Ped/Bike Access to Neighborhoods
- Mason Trail
- Upper Midtown
- Central Midtown
- Lower Midtown

Midtown Public Workshop image – A “game piece” activity took place at a November, 2012 workshop where residents cut out various conceptual land typologies and placed them on maps to envision what redevelopment scenarios could look like.

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The promenade is envisioned as a grand public space adjacent to MAX to be used solely by bikes and pedestrians. Existing and new development is encouraged to front onto the promenade, thus creating a second entrance for businesses or new residential in the corridor.

- Improve intersections. Safety improvements such as signage, pavement markings, medians, signal detection, green paint, and “bike boxes” or two-stage turn boxes.
- Connect to transit. Bus stop designs along major east/west streets should be enhanced to match quality of MAX stations, and fit within recommended streetscape palette for Midtown.
- Keep parking subordinate by encouraging developments to locate parking behind structures, and use structured parking as an incentive for increased density.