Downtown Plan Character District Charrette September 14, 2015 Notes - Draft



#### **Entryway Corridor**

- CL zoning should not apply to housing
- Riverside feels like a back door to Old Town
  - o Needs wayfinding
  - o Gateway treatment
  - Art in Public Places feature planned for Riverside & Mulberry
- Need pedestrian continuity from Mulberry Bridge  $\rightarrow$  West
- Move RR tracks over
- Bike plan shows protected bike lane on Riverside

- Need to understand what space the railroads control
- Remove access to Riverside to free up space for landscaping/pedestrians
- Most of the pedestrian stretch is in streets/driveways (no sidewalk)
- Landscaping with rythem on southwest side of street
- Access Control Plan (1998) addresses access to Riverside

## **Historic District**

- Downtown Strategic Plan "remain historically authentic" and a center for all types of activity
- Walkability generally pretty good in this area challenges on edges and in other character districts.
  - Property owner maintenance of sidewalks
  - More tree plantings to provide shade
- Patio culture is good, at the same time trying to manage items plantings, bikes/bike racks, boards, etc. What is the vision about encroachments?
- Preference for smaller, more distributed bike racks closer access to destinations. Balance onstreet bike racks with sidewalk racks, bike parking in garages
- Some pedestrian congestion is a part of Downtown character (vibrant)
- Car-free areas? Linden → River District (see also DDA design that removes curbs; funded in BOB 2.0, similar to Fillmore in Cherry Creek)
- Business starting to face (improved) alleys
  - 11 alleys total design schedule reflects adjacent development
  - o DDA discussing priorities at retreat next month
- Jefferson lower vehicle speeds/speed limit widen sidewalk? Make Jefferson/Linden easier to cross for bikes and pedestrians.
  - Parking can help calm traffic, provide a buffer. Question about number/% of semis, other options.
  - Enhancements (e.g., ped lighting, planters) would help
  - Could be a gateway (to downtown, garage, etc.)
  - Artist space?
- Parking garages impact on shading?
- Redevelopment potential:
  - o in the vicinity of College/Maple/Jefferson
  - o Mason/Oak
  - o Jefferson/Pine
  - Old Elks Lodge street parking? Use rooftop?
- Event location options
  - o Oxbow
  - Old Town Square + Linden St new design will increase capacity
  - o Legacy Park

- o Woodward
- o CSU
- Events downtown are good for people new to town and good for vibrancy
  - Some merchants feel we have too many, not seeing the benefits. Though they recognize the increase in exposure, it's hard to measure.
  - o Consider mentioning capacity in the plan?
- Inclusivity
  - Consider people in mobility devices, with strollers wide sidwalks
  - o Challenges with disruptive behavior
- 1989 Plan vision has been successfully realized
- Refresh corners furniture, etc.
- Maintain District 1 police presence
- Mountain/Walnut potential single-lane roundabout works for hotel-related cars and could do within existing pavement. De-emphasize vehicles on Walnut?
- Redistribute parking example: shared use with churches, etc.
- Consistent wayfinding for specific needs in the area (e.g. to taxis, CSU buses)
  - Signage and space for transportation services (taxis/uber, car share, pedicabs, Transfort/DTC, bike wayfinding)
- Car share for employers
- Improve crossing near La Luz? Slight dist. challenge with northbound right turn motorists
- College/LaPorte "sea of asphalt"
  - Do advanced pedestrian phase? (like testing at College/Laurel)
  - Bulbouts to shorten crossing distance (like @ Mountain) could decrease pedestrian time – maybe include pedestrian time with each cycle? 2-stage southbound left turn for bikes? Bike Box?
- Bike rack utilization data
  - Where do we need more? (ex: bikes parked on trees)
  - o Operations & Management policies about rack maintenance: private v. public
  - o On-street parking how to manage with festivals? Challenge for Traffic Ops
  - Consider design of rack that works well high capacity without damaging bikes portability?
  - Bulb out from southwest for racks (helps with plowing, etc.)
  - Equinox plenty of racks, security camera
- Get bike racks as close to destinations as possible
- Opportunity for solar access on roofs, tops of parking garages (solar provides shade)

## North Mason/Civic District

- Civic Center How to give it life after 5pm?
  - Integrate other concepts/uses activate

- Core land use occupied only 9-5 is a missed opportunity
- "Oval" concept may not fit civic center vision
- Safety later at night large dead spaces don't feel safe think about use of space beyond 9-5
- Important to keep civic/government uses downtown, civic pride
- o Need critical mass of residential to support office & retail
- o Stone, brick, parks, setbacks feels like a more residential than commercial character
  - Support businesses in Old Town rather than trying to expand
- Civic and residential uses a good fit together a unique feature of Fort Collins
  - Municipal buildings should be close to people rather than set far away
- Howes Street like Portland's "green mile"
- Civic Center may be too big bringing civic uses close together would provide more land for private development
- Context transit center will always attract transit dependent populations need to provide for diversity of uses/people
- More space(s) needed for open air markets, large events
  - o But risk being "empty" at night
- Need big green spaces integrated with residential development
- Mixed income and affordable residential
- Approachable buildings less formal
- Mixed use City buildings (e.g. retail/restaurant first floor)
- Residential opportunity for variety of building types (apartments, townhomes, etc.)
- Civic uses very compatible with residential
- Opportunity for a coordinated streetscape along Howes
- Civic Center
  - Programmable space for recreation/sports to bring people in at other times of day/week
- Future performing arts center
  - o ~1800 seats and ground level retail
  - Preserve civic spine? Already fragmented/hasn't been successful
- Live/work and studio spaces would be a good fit with civic areas
- Should Howes be the pedestrian spine instead? Boulevard
  - Bikes, pedestrians, green space, slow traffic
- Mason as a bike/ped/bus spine? Significant constraints (RR)
- Internal block circulation more important than "civic spine"
  - o More opportunity for surprises, internal gathering, art, organic
- Howes farmers market/booths or along civic spine
- Innovative environmental projects
  - Solar vs. tree canopy taller buildings
  - o Microgrids, DC power

- Railroad abandoned ROW by Dazbog wasted potential → previous plan for a parkway, solar canopies would provide connectivity to civic spine
- Affordability requires subsidies, smaller units, efficiency studios
- Trolley barn
  - Community marketplace
  - Winter crafts/farmers market
- Need land use code to support mixed uses (require it)
  - o Need density to support other uses
  - o Plan for flexibility
    - Office → retail over time? Live-work?
    - Form-based rather than use-based? (open, transparent first floor strong base)
       don't preclude other uses
- North Mason character
  - o Townhomes, urban living lofts, single-family attached
  - o Cherry St. lofts
  - Owner-occupied > rental
- Does zoning need to be "right-sized" to better fit the market/expectations (what site can actually accommodate, how compatibility can be achieved, etc.
- Use city-owned land for affordable housing? Leverage for more diversity/affordability
- How to incentivize/require a range of building heights, variety
- Changes to allowable density could also change level of investment in transit, infrastructure, energy efficiency, etc. (in a negative way)
- City Plan most people don't realize the development potential, could change with next update
- Clarify compatibility standards massing more relevant than height
  - Establish more grounding/reality for developers
  - What <u>can you do vs. what can't</u> you do
- Large \$\$ difference from ~5 stories to taller buildings (material/construction type)
- Energy efficiency/sustainability an important consideration
- Diagonal streets allow for different building types
- Rather than maxing out building envelope...podium w/spires
- Taller buildings = more parking requirements, can no longer do podium parking only
- Paris, Santa Barbara, other cities don't have very tall buildings e.g. consistent 5-6 stories
- Biking
  - Mason = long-distance through route
  - Howes low stress parkway
- Street for alternative vehicle types carshare, EVs, etc.?
- Disguising railroad tracks on Mason
- Need education for community about plan, expectations post-adoption (lack of awareness)
- Decouple conversation of <u>density</u> and <u>intensity</u>
- Losing ways for developers to be creative code doesn't allow for it

## **Lincoln Corridor**

- Funding for corridor west to bridge
- Maintain connectivity along corridor
  - o Wide tree lawn
  - o Parkway
- Industrial with attraction/activation
- Explore bike path and/or sidewalk @ west of Odell
- Non-homogenous → mixed uses, flexibility
- Don't constrain industrial use
- Explore 300 ft. buffer change  $\rightarrow$  smaller buffer, higher quality habitat?
- Lemay/Mulberry
  - Design vocabulary like Lincoln
  - REI as example (Denver addresses the river), hotel
  - o Destination use
- Downtown circulator
- Connection from Woodward to Home Depot plaza
- Connection to Poudre Trail (e.g. Taku hyro redevelopment)
- Wayfinding/branding
  - o Bus stops
  - o Sensitive to neighborhoods
- No 'glacial speed' beer bikes

#### **Canyon Avenue District**

- Route to parking?  $\rightarrow$  free up Mason, Remington for other modes
  - Conduit better use of existing parking
  - Signage, wayfinding, etc. take pressure off College
- Gateway to Downtown
- Quiet street opportunity for bike/pedestrian enhancements
- Hard to access (e.g. from Mulberry) crossing Canyon/Mulberry
- Linear park connecting Lincoln Center and Courthouse promenade w/ Art in Public Places projects?
- Redevelopment potential in corridor
  - o 7+ stories
  - o Incentives for development can go higher if provide additional parking?
- Parking
  - Shared parking (i.e. residential + commercial)
  - o Parking structure at Lincoln Center shared with Blue Ocean

- Transit: straight shot to DTC?
- Car and bike share identify hot spot locations
- EV charging locations? Business incentives to install? People don't know where these are located, need wayfinding signage.
- Floodplain challenges Magnolia
- College/Mulberry, Mason/Mulberry
  - College/Mulberry gateway
  - o Redevelopment opportunity
  - Needs to accommodate all users better
  - Street interactive development create more density within these blocks, can still include existing buildings, if desired
- Shared parking opportunities
  - o Lincoln Center
  - o Civic Center
  - Old Steele's Mountain/Howes or next to Key Bank
  - Consider transition/sensitivity to neighborhoods, church
- Mason enhance for transit, bikes, pedestrians
  - o Users will make more stops at businesses than drivers
  - Shift parking away from high-stress locations
- Businesses think of public parking spaces in front as "theirs" need a way to offset changes: add wayfinding to better use existing garages/spaces
  - Help manage employee parking
  - Educate about the value of a car parking space vs. bike parking space(s)
  - Decrease suburban style parking (large surface parking lot with small buildings)
- Howes heavily used for cycling (but bike lanes/areas are in door zone)
  - Find the right balance parking, bike facilities, travel lanes within right-of-way
- Magnolia good east-west bike corridor, except challenging at Canyon. Greenway?
- Example: Canyon as festival street food trucks, farmers market, art
  - Canyon shared street (like Linden plans) cars are accommodated but not the primary user
  - Hybrid street hook-ups for food trucks/events, traffic normal throughout the day or when events aren't happening
  - o Downtown circulator
  - o Great opportunity to be creative
- Re-imagine Canyon to get back to original intent: align w/ Horsetooth Rock. Can we bring back/realign this viewshed?
- Intersection of Canyon and Howes also needs attention
  - Opportunity for gateway
  - Permeable entries from multiple places
- Building Heights

- Seems unfair to tell developers they have the heights as listed in the code identify areas that require more sensitivity needs more clarity
- o Good location for affordable housing, especially with higher heights allowed in this area
- Concern: wind tunnel from 10-12 story buildings
- Where should height go relative to the street? Back/away from pedestrian street areas
- Step-backs: opportunity for views, green roofs, patios, rooftop decks...build a great city higher up. Parks on top of parking structures. Solar combined with green space.
- o Preserve connectivity with the street
- "soft density" will keep MAX alive provide density in a softer way
- Variety in massing is important (from building to building)
- Significant tree canopy is unique here. Need to retain while adding density
- Nature some spaces exist (Lincoln center patio, for example) but are underutilized
  - Programming?
  - People visit small outdoor spaced because they're near something else (coffee shop, etc.)
  - Mixed-use, locate pocket parks etc. at intersections of bike/ped corridors
- Opportunities to incorporate art?
  - o Art distinguishes Canyon by block
- Canyon is not as active due to other spines in town
- Otterbox activates the area to the west of downtown
- Thinking about this area as employment (esp. office) and housing, less commercial/retail
  - Traffic counts are low for retail...but could work as time goes on. Think about transition from ground-floor office/residential to retail over time
- Sherwood becoming a popular path to CSU
- Need for basic merchandise and essential services small-format general merchandise
- Glass brings a "lightness" to a building
- Offset buildings to preserve views

# Poudre Natural/Oxbow District

- Reality of Poudre district? What is available for development given the floodplain, protected land, etc.
- Lemay  $\rightarrow$  Riverside on Mulberry
  - o Visual and physical access to the river
- Connections between downtown and airpark area (e.g. for live/work or creative spaces)
  - Poudre River/Lincoln corridor/Vine Dr/North College/etc.
  - Connection between Oxbow and Innovation District arts-focused
    - Combo of fine arts and creative industry/sector
- Mobility needs
  - o Bike walk, transit

- Hard to get north safely and comfortably
- River District
  - o Historic Mill Race celebrate with Willow improvements
  - Expose Mill Race for interaction with water restore old one
- New Belgium = major destination
- Transition between Innovation and Oxbow what happens to the mini storage?
- Oxbow area industry not out of context with historic neighborhood
  - Enhanced river frontage more plaza areas, more public access
- Wayfinding from river to destinations (e.g. Steamboat path)
- Discovery Center what is within walking distance?
- Circulator to bring people down Linden
- More residents in the area Legacy, Millhouse, Block 1
- Walking on Linden not inviting (Jefferson Park, Rescue Mission)
- Education, interpretation, branding
- Need flexibility for more interesting signage
- Interpretation near Powerhouse
- Need more areas "stitched together" for pedestrians (e.g. across river)
- Connection from Hotel to river
- Oxbow one of the most beautiful areas of town with groves of trees
  - Protect some open space
  - o Important themes history, nature
- Design
  - o Horizontal roof lines (e.g. Lincoln corridor graphics)
  - Emphasis on open space
- Residential development is it possible for new development here to be affordable (like Buckingham)
  - o Mobility for residents is critical (e.g. Capstone Cottages)
- Oxbow potential for large employer campus (a la Woodward) preference for a large project rather than piecemeal
- Gustav Swanson not desirable/comfortable for walking around (homeless camps)
  - o Connection between NA and new development at storage units
- Fort Ram opportunity site
- Quonset huts reuse and redevelop could be very interesting
  - Waive parking/infrastructure needs to make more affordable? Need to overcome the infrastructure burden/cost
- Buildings on Riverside prime for redevelopment
- Need traffic calming, improve safety and comfort on Riverside (Mulberry  $\rightarrow$  Mountain)
  - o Drop 1 lane?
- Art along Riverside to celebrate river, history interpretive art along scenic byway
- Barstown Rd in Louisville look at example
- Theme Utilities (River Natural District)

- o Solar power, water treatment, stormwater management all exist here
- Parallel trails on both sides of river (i.e. Udall Natural Areas)
- Education/interpretation focus
- Salida riverwalk example balance
- Oxbow buildings fronting on Linden
  - o Interesting architecture to draw you in
  - o Programming
  - o "urban forest"
- How realistic is "affordable living and working spaces for creatives"? Can we deliver on that vision?
  - o Shared workspaces
  - o Gathering spaces, energy

## **Innovation District**

- Floodplain constraints
- Innovative businesses: RMI, New Belgium, Engines Lab, Museum...
- Public art to brand innovation
- Showcase innovation/sustainability through site and building design
  - Home for green building
    - o District energy
    - o Solar gardens
    - Innovative <u>agricultural</u> concepts where development can't happen: park with innovation, floodplain agriculture
- Buildings/sites that engage the river
- Capitalize on sports element: kayak park, running, bike
- Water history/info energy tour (MAX too)
- Solar garden on corner lot: Cherry/College w/public art
  - Connected to rail-trail: sculptural
- Energy gateway
  - o Hydro power with river
  - o Geothermal
- Interactive solar gardens/energy intallments
- Showcase vs. utility
- Parking shade/solar ports
- Landscaping on College Ave (Legacy Park Ridge)  $\rightarrow$  Gateway
- Safety: small hiding places
  - o Transportation needs to be improved
  - Residential (24-hour activity)
- Naturalistic river = homeless habitat

- Homeless in the area as a complement to the district
- Security: no dead ends, call boxes
- Services: restaurant etc.
- Residential? Does the district need 24 hour activity?
- Innovation campus: employment and residential

#### **River District**

- "alley" network (vacated right-of-way) pedestrian access
- Pedestrian crossing of river
- Connect to Lincoln Linden
- Quonset huts container arch (Jefferson Street)
  - o Artist: live/work
  - o Fabrication
  - o Artist alley
  - o Pedestrian alleys
- Mid-block crossing: flasher at Chestnut
- History celebration
- Vine Drive site planning: suburban? (RMI)
- Can we embrace the railroads and celebrate innovation?
- Mini-storage may have a long timeline before redevelopment
- Working farm/restaurant
- Mission/Jefferson Park could redevelop
- Industrial where will it go?
- Jefferson intersections with Mountain and Linden need to be pedestrian friendly
- Consider where the Parks Shop will be located could it be close to Old Town Historic District?
- Northside Aztlan and park for events
  - o Alcohol?
  - o Infrastructure: H2O, electric
  - o Policy
- Celebrate the River
  - o "we have a river"
  - o Signage
  - o Branding
- Streetscape
  - o Linden (water theme)
  - Bridge gateway (Linden)
  - o Wayfinding
- Affordability
  - o Taller buildings

- Not a matter of how high but massing
- o Design and height
- o Code expectations
- o Design guidelines
- o Height and open space/air
- "Fort" signage/monument: north corner of Willow and Linden (Park)
- Transition between River District and Historic Core?
- Gateways and Branding
  - o Linden (both ends)
  - o Lincoln
  - o Willow
- Bike share
- Trucks on Jefferson (CDOT)
  - Character feels overwhelming
  - o Design and speed reduction
  - o Parking doesn't feel safe but creates a buffer
- "Welcome to Downtown!" wayfinding

## **Campus North District**

- Overall
  - Hasn't ever had/been part of a master plan
  - o Significant tree canopy
  - o Little on-street parking
  - A "mishmash"  $\rightarrow$  design/character
- Potential for Redevelopment: 5-10 years, maybe stable. 10-20 years, might see more redevelopment
  - o Howes stable residential area...a few spots possible
  - Fair number of 40-50 year old, 2-3 story apartments. What about those?
  - Why are the blocks near CSU (Howes/College/Mason) low potential? (according to "stability map"
- Mason
  - Goal to advance MAX quickly through the corridor, <u>more</u> quickly than now. More bike/pedestrian access, less car access/parking
  - Perhaps Mason is a more urban corridor character
  - Mason for bikes good route, but not comfortable
    - Direct trail connections
    - Supports mixed use along corridor
    - Connections between CSU and downtown

- How to fix comfort level: better clarity (what do I do?), remove cars, add bike lanes, add bus islands (avoid crossing bike lane)
- BUT...on-street parking is GOLD
- AND...we need north-south access to destinations; one on east and one on west side of College ave
- Opportunity for bike trail/cycle track along Mason?
- What are the ramifications of removing parking on Mason? Opportunities for shared parking?
  - Impacts to business if remove on-street spots
- There are proposed plans to stripe bike lanes throughout Mason corridor downtown.
  Some loss of parking on 3 block faces for 5-ft lanes, some buffered and some not. Tessa
  @ FCMoves has more info.
  - Sharrows used only at intersections; Transfort has signed off on this
  - Plan is an ongoing process, currently working on engagement of business owners
- Opportunities for alley improvements between Laurel and Mulberry
- College Ave parkway character
  - o Setbacks, median enhancements
  - o Gateway
  - o Realistic to have 5 stories?
    - 2-3 story podium adjacent to neighborhoods, build in height/intensity as you move north on College, approaching Mulberry
- Defining Campus North "keep Campus North weird"
  - o Gateway
    - College Ave wayfinding get people ready to turn for parking, campus, other destinations
    - City facility (DDA/DBA/Welcome Center) to welcome people?
    - Intersection @ College and Mulberry
  - Campus West is well-recognized as a place...how can we do that here?
    - Alleys near Alley Cat, 24 hour activity
    - Ethnic food destination
    - Eclectic nature, college atmosphere, "hippie, bohemian, college feel"
    - Hip, approachable, funky
- How do we get people (especially CSU staff) off campus? College and Shields are barriers. People are comfortable leaving via Laurel and Mason
- Transportation
  - o Howes: express route to Old Town from CSU Transit Center?
  - Meldrum usually preferred because of the Oval on Howes, destinations on Meldrum like Lincoln Center and post office
  - Car-share: expanding on campus, but need more locations where students <u>live</u> (60-70% live off campus)

- Bulb-outs to help pedestrians feel safe
- "Urban Funky" for redevelopment?
  - Step backs on taller buildings, have program on them
- College Ave sidewalk west widen sidewalk to create space for cycletrack, connect with future cycletrack on CSU campus → reestablish historic setback on College
  - FYI: 1,000 bikes on Mason Trail @ CSU per day → only saw increase of 200 bikes when school came back in session. These are commuters.
  - More bike counters coming on Mason this week
- Opportunity at Presbyterian Church lot daytime/nighttime shared use parking
- Also opportunity for bike and car share throughout area
- Building character on Mason
  - o Doesn't necessarily need same setbacks as College
- Alleys intended outcome of improvements is to connect all the way to downtown
- Energy and Environment; Nature
  - o LED lighting
  - o Parkway encourages good stormwater management and pedestrian comfort
- Arts and Culture
  - o More murals (light or rain-activated)
  - o Train music
  - o Plant murals/living walls
    - What works on an east-facing wall? A west-facing wall? Urban Lab wants to study this.
  - Pocket sculpture parks/plazas off alleys or streets very small
- Urban Lab design competition for Mason "Railway Design Competition"
  - o Ideas from around the world
  - 2 block area of Campus North area
  - March-May of 2016, estimated timeframe
- Note: this area is outside of city maintenance area think about this when onsidering parks, flowers, etc.
  - Parks Department maintenance ends near Olive
  - Private owner responsibility
- Building heights CSU-owned properties held to same standards?