



Downtown Plan

Stakeholder Interviews Summary – April 2015

Overview

The Fort Collins Downtown Plan serves as a guide and inspiration for budgets, projects, programs, investments, regulations and other efforts focused in the downtown area. Adopted by council in 1989, the previous plan helped shaped the downtown as it exists today. The new Downtown Plan will update the vision, policy direction, and action items for the next 10-20 years.

Initial outreach for the Downtown Plan included more than **25** interviews with key stakeholders in the downtown area. The following organizations and interest groups were represented in the interviews:

- Aspen Grove Marketing
- AU Workshop Architects
- Blue Ocean
- Catholic Charities
- Clothes Pony
- Coopersmith's Pub & Brewery
- Downtown Artery
- Escentuals
- First Bank
- Fortified Collaborations
- Garwoods Jewelers
- KRFC
- Larimer County Farmers Market
- Local Realtor
- Nuance Chocolate
- Post-Modern Development
- Rescue Mission
- Additional downtown stakeholders/individuals

Summary

Conversations with stakeholders covered a wide range of topics, including a number of issues and opportunities that may be addressed as part of the new Downtown Plan. Comments from the interviews are summarized as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as described below:

- **Strengths:** Characteristics of the downtown (and relevant organizations) that could help achieve the desired vision or goals for the area.
- **Weaknesses:** Characteristics of the downtown (and relevant organizations) that could interfere with achieving the desired vision or goals for the area.

- **Opportunities:** External factors or forces that could help achieve the desired vision or goals for the area.
- **Threats:** External factors or forces that could interfere with achieving the desired vision or goals for the area.

Comments are further divided based on their relevance to the six working groups: **Arts + Culture – Urban Design – Downtown Management – Transportation + Parking – Energy + Environment – Market + Economy**. Certain key issues – namely parking and homelessness – received heavy input and are subtopics here. There is redundancy where comments were relevant to two working groups, expressive of the many linkages involved. One stakeholder stressed the importance of all departments and stakeholders being on the same page – this document is a step in that direction.

**Indicates mention by a quarter or more of stakeholders

ARTS + CULTURE

Strengths

- Something for everybody – feels like a small town with big city amenities
- Downtown is a unique experience; one is constantly discovering new things.
- Events invigorate the space
- TRAIN! Like the train. Celebrate the train.
- Oak Street Plaza – a child space.
- Historic. Beauty. Community mix, with the neighborhoods connected and close. People can bike to us.
- Activity: Skating. Fountain. Playground is great. Children's things. Music. Family things.
- Serve 6.8 is a Timberline Church function and is leading a steps-to-success effort. Harvest Farm is part of it. Mike Walker is contact.
- Focus on youth
- Bike-centrism (as culture, as much as transportation)
- Generally, high quality exists now, to be maintained and expanded upon
- Overall Culture and Energy
- Historic fabric through which the rest develops – a robust juxtaposition of historic and "hip"
- Festivals
- Informal arts – pianos, etc.
- Entertainment, bringing business component
- Tourist Destination
- Like all the people. CSU, Homeless., Okay.
- Ability to hang out – inclusivity
- Creativity, craftsmanship, entrepreneurship
- Place for children; a place of energy

- Great Plates

Weaknesses

- Carnival rides at New West Fest are often not local – should be restricted to local vendors
- Designate SOME key weekends as event-free. Example of Pro Challenge during week when CSU starts up. That hurts a crucial week for business. Other events also. Event fatigue is an issue. Understand the purpose of events but they also don't always actually help. A key issue for the new DBA to discuss and clarify.
- Need a good solid event location venue. Have been using Civic Park, Washington Park, Legacy Park not ideal. No infrastructure to support. Barely large enough for some events. Legacy Park requires bringing everything in.
- Tour de Fat significantly hurts Farmers Market on "trifecta" (peaches, pears, apples) weekend (other events have little effect)
- Limitations on inclusivity
- Issues with drinking at events

Opportunities

- Encourage the arts and innovation.
- Activate the River. Accentuate the positive qualities of the River
- Integration of activities – Recreation/Work
- Interaction between people on the streets and the storefronts
- Increase spectrum of "play" – for all ages – chess, bocce, kid's attractions
- Some unique novelty feature? (example mentioned: Missoula's merry-go-round)
- Expand festivals and events (like 1st Friday Artwalk) at a range of scales
- Performing Arts Center at Mountain and Mason
- More events.
- History. Tie activity to historic design.
- Community building. Smaller scale, participation. Engagement. PLACES for people to gather, that are interactive. Support interesting interactions.
- Diversity
- We need a variety of things to do. Not all bars. Creatives. More emphasis on "family outings". Not just drink and party. Galleries going away. How to support these things?
- Events: have one central agency for events. Clearinghouse with guidelines, criteria, mission. [Mark J. is hiring this person].
- Things to interact and entertain, e.g., Discovery Museum...a telescope?...Scavenger hunt?...Boulders in the river?...The Farm is great...Saw a great Alice in Wonderland sculpture in [another city] that was really fun.
- Create a more affordable art district
- Greater mix of employment and culture

- Better integration of Hispanic culture
- Expand retail, arts, and cultural opportunities
- Need for a major market building (e.g. The Source in Denver's RiNO) including restaurant, bakery, butcher, art, merchants...
- Tourism industry
- River District; kayak park
- Package plans (tourism)... especially with public transit (MAX)
- Pursuing a creative district for arts and culture – a State sanctioned designation, can come with some funding. Qualification criteria must be met.
- Outdoor venue urgent. Could use an indoor venue also, but outdoor first. Need a conscious plan for that.
- Performance space in central area, like Rialto. Mountain/Mason site fits this bill. Then CONNECT Lincoln center to downtown PAC site.
- Food truck rallies as an event. Create a good location for that. Civic Center park has been used. Are there better locations? Don't infringe on businesses, but provide a place. Should be a flexible, multi-purpose space. Dynamic. Accommodate changes. Like Old Town Square. 100 block of East Oak? Mason Lot?
- Lee Martinez Farm is underutilized; could be better integrated
- Craft events so that people want to stay longer
- Wide scope of University participation
- Do Great Plates in conjunction with entertainment

Threats

- Art – feels like it's getting thin on galleries. Need a space for artists to be able to be and work at low cost. Possibly provided by City if necessary to keep it affordable.
- Events tipping point. Not sure what that is. Event fatigue is already an issue.
- People moving in from out of town – Republicans, wealthier to afford high costs, pushing residents out.
- Is it within the scope of the plan to deal with rising rents, costs, living abilities. Would like to learn more about that. Are "rent controlled" or lower rent spaces possible? Creative district needs planned spaces for people to work and live. RiNO having similar problems with success driving out cool things.
- Restrictions that prevent "hanging out"
- Tension between business, breweries, and events
- How many festivals is too many? Fatigue...

URBAN DESIGN

Strengths

- Something for everybody – feels like a small town with big city amenities
- Sense of Place
- Density
- North College Improvements
- Compact with amenities and resources for a range of needs
- Authenticity –Historic scale and character (signage, architecture, and storefronts)**
- Activity 24/7 - residential
- Example: East side of Remington, balance of growth and historic preservation
- Linden being a little off the beaten path of the district keeps rents lower
- Walkability and interaction between building activity and pedestrians
- Eclectic architecture and stores/businesses including – but not limited to – the historic buildings
- Complex/random “surprise” features (alleys, Oak Street Plaza, Art installations)
- Downtown’s architecture and streets give it a unique sensibility.
- Anchors the surroundings/the city.
- Source of City identity – authentic/specific while a “kaleidoscope” of diversity
- Old Town Square as a central/gathering space
- River District and other surrounding areas represent city at large
- Good mix of retail, restaurant, office
- Alleyways and little spaces. Medians, Fountains, little touches.
- Great people, great vibe. The life, attracts the community. Feel, lifestyle. Great people. Beautiful place. Places for meetings, like here! (Crooked Cup).
- Oak Street Plaza – a child space.
- Not an intense urban feel: it would be odd to have 8 story buildings; 4 story is the right scale
- History. Keep the historic facades.
- Historic. Beauty. Community mix, with the neighborhoods connected and close. People can bike to us.
- Activity: Skating. Fountain. Playground is great. Children’s things. Music. Family things. Things to interact and entertain, e.g., Discovery Museum...a telescope?...Scavenger hunt?...Boulders in the river?...The Farm is great...Saw a great Alice in Wonderland sculpture in [another city] that was really fun.
- Generally, high quality exists now, to be maintained and expanded upon
- Square Redevelopment is a huge deal, and a good example
- Too many high-end residential units is forcing a demographic change, forcing out long-time residents and businesses
- Planning and educating for the district and people

- Historic fabric through which the rest develops – a robust juxtaposition of historic and “hip”
- Walking and Biking

Weaknesses

- Emergency shelters for homeless close April 1
- Not all shelters serve all demographics (women, men, children, youth)
- Too much control is exercised by Historic Preservation; they should “answer to a higher power.”
- Truck through-traffic creates a barrier between Jefferson and Riverside
- Drainage/parking at CSU Powerhouse and Northside Aztlan Center
- Bland new buildings, with no charm. Make architecture engaging. Civic Center garage an example of what to avoid – that’s a dead stretch. NW corner of Oak and College.
- Retail Market: there’s a north-south divide locally. How to pull in S. Fort Collins people. Transportation and parking are the key. Parking is crucial, even if it was at the edge with a shuttle.
- Things that are out of historic character. Sasquatch Lodge, Drunken Monkey. Things that are jarring like that.
- Narrow design variety
- Parking...
- Need to enhance gateways at boundaries. Deal with Lincoln/Jefferson/Mountain blighted entry - carry past plans forward and implement them.
- Train – quiet, relocate...I know some think it adds to the charm, but it is disruptive. It’s too loud, creates traffic blockage. Solve earlier rather than later
- DMA plaza is in flux – it had a lot of section 8, but rent is up a little and the Board is taking over management
- High costs of development and exorbitant fees (prohibitive for beneficial projects)
- Red tape for permits makes closing out projects cumbersome; costs passed to consumers
- Canyon MISSING a key bit of sidewalk at Magnolia. Do something better with it as a pedestrian connection. [Urban design, management]

Opportunities

- Encourage/maintain high density and mixed use** – important for 24/7 use of space
- Residential co-housing for businesses
- Establish a “small business development park”
- Increase residential use of downtown.

- Integration of activities – Recreation/Work
- Balance of uses: retail/bars/restaurants/offices... more residential
- Variety of Retail and Restaurant and Office spaces
- Hold Downtown to highest design standards – good architecture should be encouraged
- “Business improvement district” with parking, management assessed according to size
- Expand bikefriendliness: remove curbs and reduce curb heights; make continuous bike lanes on every street; remove pedestrian bulbouts and protrusions into intersections; allow all left turns
- More grass and less pavement at Oak St Plaza
- Larger tenant spaces of 3, 5, & 10 K sq ft
- Focus retail in “strip” or “promenade” to avoid competition/interspersal with bars and restaurants – create critical mass of retail. Limited hours?
- Downtown no longer has to pursue being compact. Boulder does a good job of allowing its expansion.
- Continued incremental improvements (in vein of alley project)
- Retain all publicly-owned land for future city growth
- Old is good. If it doesn't appear old, why would you come to Old Town? - Cultivate/stretch “Old” feel
- Outdoor Market. #1 opportunity.
- Durability of projects and long-term planning: Calling Old Town Square decrepit after 30 years is scandalous. This is a nation-wide problem – we must think more like Europe
- Old Town Square larger. Close Linden. Less asphalt. More fun spaces.
- Housing. Some interesting, really walkable housing with more interesting design. How to balance value for the developer with that. You can't really come back and facelift later. Some new buildings have looked a bit on the cheap side. New buildings should have charm. Doesn't have to be historic per se.
- How much do you want to clean everything up? – It's a fair question.
- Community building. Smaller scale, participation. Engagement. PLACES for people to gather, that are interactive. Support interesting interactions.
- We need a variety of things to do. Not all bars. Creatives. More emphasis on “family outings”. Not just drink and party. Galleries going away. How to support these things?
- More loft development at higher price points
- Affordable Housing
- Retail and business mix. Not enough retail in the mix. Retail destinations need a certain critical mass. Need a critical mass of retail. Sioux Falls had a business incubator.
- Reroute Oak street to be straight between College and Remington.

- Retail Market: there's a north-south divide locally. How to pull in S. Fort Collins people. Transportation and parking are the key. Parking is crucial, even if it was at the edge with a shuttle.
- New buildings should have their own charm; don't have to be historic per se. But protect the character with design standards or regulations.
- Variation in design
- Greater focus on alley improvements Better design – greater emphasis on Low Impact Development and architectural style/materials that match desired character
- Celebrate sites along the River (unlike with Legacy Senior Housing)
- Compatible Housing Design
- Focus on live/work environment as a key to vibrancy
- Create a more affordable art district
- Greater mix of employment and culture
- Showcase renewable energy opportunities
- More live/work arrangements
- Construction of truly affordable housing. Some owned, mostly rental. More units like Legacy.
- Circulator trolley for integration of Breweries, Woodward, and dining establishments
- Fulfill need for essential services like an urban grocery store with deli and drugstore
- Retain historic preservation controls
- Need for a major market building (e.g. The Source in Denver's RiNO) including restaurant, bakery, butcher, art, merchants...
- Hotel-Convention Center
- Attract large/mid-size companies (employment centers); Otterbox *campus* is a good example
- Idea behind new City Hall concept plan: need a good civic park. Town to Gown, opposite the Oval on the south end... There is desire to run the trolley to new City Hall block.
- Outdoor Market. #1 opportunity.
- Pursuing a creative district for arts and culture – a State sanctioned designation, can come with some funding. Qualification criteria must be met.
- As discussed in past GID discussions – get a BANNER SYSTEM. Long term infrastructure for a managed banner program. Don't look outdated, make it easy to switch out banners. Old Town Square was the only place that had this and the City has relied on DBA for tying and piecing together a program. The City should step up and participate. Mark the boundaries of pedestrian core area. The City has 3 horizontal banner locations currently. Maybe look for those along with poles.

- Need a good solid event location venue. Have been using Civic Park, Washington Park, Legacy Park not ideal. No infrastructure to support. Barely large enough for some events. Legacy Park requires bringing everything in. Outdoor venue urgent. Could use an indoor venue also, but outdoor first. Need a conscious plan for that.
- Linden – discuss making it closeable. Interesting, host farmers markets etc.
- Is it within the scope of the plan to deal with rising rents, costs, living abilities. Would like to learn more about that. Are “rent controlled” or lower rent spaces possible? Creative district needs planned spaces for people to work and live. RINO having similar problems with success driving out cool things.
- Performance space in central area, like Rialto. Mountain/Mason site fits this bill. Then CONNECT Lincoln center to downtown PAC site.
- Food truck rallies as an event. Create a good location for that. Civic Center park has been used. Are there better locations? Don’t infringe on businesses, but provide a place. Should be a flexible, multi-purpose space. Dynamic. Accommodate changes. Like Old Town Square. 100 block of East Oak? Mason Lot?
- Fruit trees – food in public places
- Growth will happen – just keep it responsible
- Make it easier for developers with tax incentives, utility incentives
- Benches and bike parking
- City has to be willing to step up for Affordable Housing, but this will not happen downtown
- Design:
- Desired character or vision: variety.
- DDA just approved criteria describing the design enhancements they will be looking for in building proposals. Innovation is the key. Should promote design that hits across the plan categories (e.g. energy, market & economy, urban design); and reflects our time. Smart design.
- Avoid design getting pretty stodgy and a little dated relative to other places. Promote *good design*, not *compatibility*. Good design = use of rhythm, proportion, lines...but not matching materials or style. Be careful of trying to re-create the past.
- Seeing examples of building touches in other cities that make you stop and do a double take. Fun little things to get more interaction. Little recent example of painted people up against walls. Places sto be surprised. Kansas City Plaza example of variety with a unifying sameness.
- Re Austin hodge podge quality – love the hodge podge!
- Create NEW history, don’t replicate the old. It’s a balance, because TOO edgy can be scary.
- Be careful of trying to re-create the past.

- New buildings may get watered down design because architects don't want to fight the battle of compatibility review. Can't tell what is worth bringing forward and what will be shot down. It would help to clarify how much flexibility there is in design. Have seen examples where this exact question is a determining factor in design. Need variety. Not a formula.
- Maybe don't need new RULES, maybe need a PROCESS fix. An Architectural Review Committee, using goals rather than rules? Go back to goals and objectives.
- Or, maybe NOT an ARC but rather build in flexibility for good design in existing process.
- LPC and LUC 3.4.7 in particular, do not allow for needed flexibility. These criteria raise major questions about design. Need to consider tradeoffs with historic preservation.
- 1st Bank modernistic building at College and Mountain is now seen as worthy of preserving, but wouldn't be allowed to be built.
- Buildings could be more urban, edgy. Need more latitude in code for innovation. If not an ARC, provide a way for applicants to SHOW WHY something is good design. PDOD seemed to get at that. More like LDGS criteria. Allow ways to ignore stated rules if something is good design.
- The River District design guidelines come close as a good example of design guidance.
- Dynamism in other urban areas – comes from CONTRAST. Height, variety in massing.
- But still focus on the comfortable streetscape. Trees.
- The vacant lot at Pine/Jefferson is an example of an opportunity for something new and exciting.
- Infill down to Laurel in the next 20 years – shouldn't have to look like historic downtown.
- To get housing, you need height and density.
- Need to address sidewalk obstructions – getting out of hand in some places, can hardly make it through. Trailhead West Mountain block. [Urban design, management]
- What's missing, should be added: Parking at College/Mason/Mulberry. Per Parking Plan.
- Mason/Mulberry – back sides should open to Mason. Don't latch onto historic preservation of, say, the gull wing roof, at expense of adapting the back to orient to the key intersection. Example of need to consider tradeoffs with historic preservation. Maybe keep the swoop in front, but allow the building to be updated.
- Holiday lights summer equivalent? Water? What could it be?
- FoCo Café-ish design concepts

SUB-DISTRICTS

- Themes and character for districts. Like the district map.
- Activate the River; Take advantage of River – “could be boom for downtown”, - it is “natural to extend Downtown to the nature found along the River” – etc.
- Focus on River as a “decompression area”
- River - view it as infrastructure. Highlight it, how it helps retain brewing industry. Relate river plans to water quality.
- Continue North College improvements
- Connect district edges (Linden, Willow, Lincoln...) into the core so that movement within and among them feels seamless
- Riverside is a critical gateway – particularly with Woodward – A good location for office development
- Development of Howes as “civic spine” connecting CSU to City Hall
- Growth in Old Town North, as a possible platform for the future movement of local small businesses
- Improve business accessibility, especially Old Town East and Lyric Cinema Café.
- Align character of new development, especially the “industrial zone”, with downtown.
- Linking across Jefferson in a comprehensive view of the full Downtown
- Implement Linden and Lincoln Bridges and Lincoln Boulevard – prosperity of Downtown affected by that.
- Maybe connect Lincoln Center to Downtown better. MAX>B-cycle station>Lincoln Center. Might help.
- Lee Martinez Farm is underutilized; could be better integrated
- Accessible, large event spaces
- Tie in the new Stadium
- Community marketplace and Food Coops
- Affordable, dense office space
- Increase downtown’s ties to the University
- Bring together farmers, brewers, artists in Old Town Square... maximize shared space
- Permanent market structure; *keep fees as low as possible* for Farmers Markets

Threats

- Don’t build right on the Poudre River – *Encompass*
- Gentrification (on viability of Rescue Mission; in Tres Colonias)
- Avoid any reduction in density.
- Sleek/modern development (Should maintain OLD town character – historic, brick buildings) – need for sign guidelines
- Update planning regulations/building codes to encourage building diversity and avoid “monotonous campus feel” that exists in downtown Boulder

- Tension between breweries/cideries/distilleries and the historic neighborhoods over rights, responsibilities, and needs. Need for a community forum. Lincoln Corridor development showed this issue – should be addressed with non-City facilitation
- Never repeat a stunt like that on N. N=College which forced Albertson's to close. I hope any attempt at a similar project will be met by a major lawsuit.
- Hiding the homeless as a solution – don't do this
- Too much focus on historic replication would restrict continuation of diversity... should celebrate unique, newer ideas with flexible planning and zoning codes
- Constraints prohibitive of growth
- Issues of height, especially in development of Riverside
- CSU's growth projections – how much is predicated on a different in-state/out-of-state/foreign ratio? May have too many out-of-town...
- Downtown subsumed as another "student district" (esp. with the many bars)
- Overshadowed patios.
- Retail Market: there's a north-south divide locally. How to pull in S. Fort Collins people. Transportation and parking are the key. Parking is crucial, even if it was at the edge with a shuttle.
- FEAR = Boulder. Growth is positive; maybe inevitable; but don't price out the cool people. Don't shift to chains that are everywhere. Don't dilute local feel! IF inevitable, then sad. Like it the way it is, but know that change come.
- Feeder Supply building doesn't match the River District Standard and Codes
- Downtown infrastructure not equipped to handle new development

DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT

Strengths

- Flowers and Landscaping
- Lights on trees
- Great people, great vibe. The life, attracts the community. Feel, lifestyle. Great people. Beautiful place. Places for meetings, like here! (Crooked Cup).
- Love the solar belly recycling bins.
- District One activities -- Day Patrol, 2 plus sergeant; Night Patrol 6 + sergeant. Community outreach. Participation in discussions. Day focuses on behavioral issues, more related to homelessness and youth; night focuses more on bars and alcohol-related issues. Response to calls, and officer-initiated incidents.
- Police Officers appreciate their ability to get out and interact personally w/citizens – presence on the ground. Firsthand knowledge deter relationship. Walk. Bike.
- Generally, high quality exists now, to be maintained and expanded upon
- Ability to hang out – inclusivity

- Urban forest
- Clean and Safe

HOMELESS

- Rescue Mission's Steps to Success job preparation program
- Homeless/Poverty Programs Catholic Charities: 1) residential shelter for 60 people up to 120 days. Goal to get people back to stable housing, and address issues with money, health, bills. Work closely with Julie Brewen on Redtail Ponds. 2) Overnight shelter for 24 men and 6 women, 10 pm-6:30 am. 3) Staff @ Murphy Center Day Shelter in the am, then day shelter services in pm. 4) Noon community lunch. Also, a 5) - utility assistance. City, energy outreach Colorado – help with bill relief. 6) Senior Services. Help with benefits, bill paying. All programs 30% AMI or less. All aspects of poverty and homelessness.
- Homeless Issues: Discussions have been occurring. DDA sponsored. Focus is on BEHAVIORS. Educate. Monitor.
- Homeless Issues - mental illness: Touchstone tries to help. They have some pretty good response mechanisms for the specific issues. Dan Dworkin, Police, coordinates on this.
- Catholic Charities tries to get people ENGAGED. Offer places to engage, hang out, have a reading room, tell people they have to be respectful, provide civics education for the homeless.
- Like all the people. CSU, Homeless., Okay.
- FC Rescue Mission Meals – emergency shelter served 93 the night before the interview
- Murphy Center
- Touchstone for mental/medical issues – but they are extremely busy
- Rescue Mission tries to do well in their limited scope
- Catholic Charities
- Farmer's market accepts SNAP

Weaknesses

- Under-policing
- Cleanliness
- Inconsistency of snow removal
- 'No smoking on the patio' was a failure
- Lack of public restroom access
- Drainage/parking at CSU Powerhouse and Northside Aztlan Center
- Customers feel unsafe at ATM (panhandling)
- Need to address sidewalk obstructions – getting out of hand in some places, can hardly make it through. Trailhead West Mountain block. [Urban design, management]

- Canyon MISSING a key bit of sidewalk at Magnolia. Do something better with it as a pedestrian connection. [Urban design, management]
- Concerns about selective enforcement of smoking ban

HOMELESS

- Murphy Center Management Issues
- Benches with bumps
- Profiling of the Homeless (packs, etc.)
- Businesses seem pitted against homeless
- Lack of Lockers (esp. for homeless)
- Limitations on inclusivity
- Among homeless, some mental illness, about 20% chronically. Abuse. Trauma.
- Among homeless, there is some marijuana traffic.
- "Travelers" are a minority, but the most visible, with no respect for the community.
- Responsible local people perhaps 50-60%. Situational, e.g. behind on bills, can't catch up. Lots of locals. One example: a landlord's property failed, person moved to Redtail scared, did not want to be on the street, wants to follow the program.
- Sometimes a bus ticket to stable support is provided. In general, people that are part of our community are OK with business owners. vs. those coming to a service utopia.
- Mental illness is a State issue. FCHA is trying to get some rooms in Redtail for these. Mostly locals.
- Homeless Issues - Housing – concentration of poverty, like in Redtail has stigma.
- Panhandling rule's effect on Old Town and homelessness; how it effects choice of OldTown as a destination
- Homeless issues are a factor. A few negative encounters can undo a lot of work and investment done over the years. Stay welcoming to all, but the key is to be welcoming for everyone. Some non-residents don't respect the community. They have infiltrated the library now. Old Town Square and library – huge investments, now not so appetizing.
- Rescue Missions reaching capacity; turning folks away
- Rescue Mission does not serve children and minors
- Rescue Mission "steps to success" job training
- Harvest Farm program for men (70 men); transitional program (20 people)
- Misunderstandings about homelessness; blame and homogenizing views; stereotyping; systemic issue, but the homeless are held accountable
- Homeless support institutions deal with negative perceptions of business, residential communities

- Pot traffic, especially in summer, is bad for homelessness in the district... Summer increases homeless population by 100-150
- Dichotomy of hungry homeless and rising wealth
- FoCo café... apparently not serving the hungry... a disconnect?

Opportunities

- Sidewalk improvements and repairs
- Maintain safe feeling
- "Activate transients??"
- Extend tree lighting duration
- 'Adopt a Tree' program for downtown trees (by businesses?)
- Incentives for recycling and renewables technology
- Continued incremental improvements (in vein of alley project)
- Improve and maintain road surfaces especially at Maple and Laporte
- Downtown Restrooms funded through BFO
- More events
- How much do you want to clean everything up? – It's a fair question.
- Bring all the different people working on homeless issues together – bring that whole homeless story together. Understand it, work on it.
- Need more officers for night shifts
- Poles: banner fittings, holiday light fittings if needed, wireless fittings.
- As discussed in past GID discussions – get a BANNER SYSTEM. Long term infrastructure for a managed banner program. Don't look outdated, make it easy to switch out banners. Old Town Square was the only place that had this and the City has relied on DBA for tying and piecing together a program. The City should step up and participate. Mark the boundaries of pedestrian core area. The City has 3 horizontal banner locations currently. Maybe look for those along with poles.
- Holiday lights infrastructure -- if it's needed, get that into the plan. If it's on poles, could it relate to a banner signage system? Again, build in convenient Infrastructure.
- Wireless digital infrastructure! If digital infrastructure on poles is clutter, relate to banner infrastructure.
- Fruit trees – food in public places
- Diversity
- Safety and Comfort for everybody
- Lights in trees all winter

HOMELESS

- Homeless/Poverty Programs Catholic Charities: Coordination with Homeless Gear, providing survival food, gear, and education. Working to expand that. Coordination with Community of Christ, One Village One Family.
- Wider inclusivity – especially in the square
- Bring back Human Rights Officer
- “Multi-cultural diversity Retreat” to garner ideas about inclusivity
- Homeless/Poverty Programs Catholic Charities Example of Police officers volunteering at lunch for travelers at Catholic Charities. Cuts down on fear, walls, etc.
- Homeless – help and support. Be ahead of it. How to support and still have a town people want to walk around. Library is working like a shelter. Build it in to the program if it’s going to be like that. Maybe have the second floor be a shelter space?
- Homeless Issues : Vermont has a successful community outreach program. Jeremy Yonce knows about that
- Serve 6.8: Want win-win. Want to grow. Want to add women and children.
- Need accountability by users. Redtail Ponds is an example lacking accountability.
- Raise awareness about Rescue Mission – not fair to think it is responsible for homelessness; and raise awareness that not all homeless people are alike – that there are very different circumstances.
- Want to change perception of the facility (Serve 6.8) as the open sore in the area. Want to coexist and be a good neighbor. Be more involved in the area. Be clean, safe, and run a good program. Denver facility is an example of what that means. Growth came to that shelter. The Director there is getting to know people. Personal relationships are important. There’s a new day shelter done in partnership with the City.
- Homeless – don’t shun or push out, but support... need a new type of homeless shelter; need job placement (City could be a trend-setter here)
- Homeless/Poverty Programs Catholic Charities 600 volunteers a year. Have a volunteer coordinator. Sign up online. Volunteers help offer meals. Dayroom monitoring, like a hotel desk clerk. Beautification. Users also help with that.
- Homeless Issues - mental illness: Continue involvement of many players – Police, Touchstone, Larimer County mental health. Interagency meetings with Sustainability Services, Dan Dworkin with Police. Homeless Gear. Brandi _____. Fort Collins Coalition for the Homeless - Cheryl with Bohemian?
- Homeless Issues - Needs – education; enforcement; service provision
- Interagency cooperation on homeless issues (with police department, led to Redtail ponds and widened involvement

- Partnerships and widened cooperation are key to homeless support... Library as a stakeholder
- Public education to improve understanding of homelessness in the community
- Transfort Passes for Rescue Mission users
- Visitors/homeless need a win-win. Coexistence, integration, set up exchanges of help, knowledge, and culture.
- City leaders in partnership with homeless support institutions
- Cooperation between business and the homeless; [if businesses are worried about economic impacts of panhandling] businesses must be willing to work with/employ the homeless
- Summer open house among homeless support institutions
- Holiday lights summer equivalent? Water? What could it be?

Threats

- Address growing impact of homeless population on business and
- Uncleanliness – need more trash cans, power washing – reduce clutter due to sandwich boards garbage, people – need a clear sidewalk zone
- How much do you want to clean everything up? – It’s a fair question.
- Police and public Not recognizing the problems and then collaborating to actually solve those with the multitude of people and resources involved. Working at cross purposes.
- Increased residential will reduce cleanliness of downtown
- Downtown infrastructure not equipped to handle new development
- Restrictions that prevent “hanging out”

HOMELESS

- Homeless: Don’t aim for Portland, Eugene, enabling a larger population. Don’t overbuild capacity.
- Homeless Issues - Look for opportunities with developers. Some affordable units. Efficiencies. Get a bit of a mix, rather than isolating people.
- Can the plan have any impact on WHERE homeless shelters go? The physical environment of Catholic Charities vs the Mission is a major difference.
- Address the homeless population expansion and impacts related to this expansion
- Panhandling rule’s effect on Old Town and homelessness; how it effects choice of OldTown as a destination
- Be careful with closing Jefferson Park. It could just push that use to the library.
- Address growing impact of homeless population on business and community; causing concerns of decreased visitation to downtown**
- Gentrification (on viability of Rescue Mission; in Tres Colonias)
- Hiding the homeless as a solution – don’t do this

- If the homeless are pushed out of downtown, where will they go?

TRANSPORTATION + PARKING

Strengths

- MAX is an “asset”; is “wonderful”; is “great”; etc.
- Trolley
- Pedestrian and bike friendly**
- Walkability, especially interaction between building activity and pedestrians
- Parking my car in one spot while attending to multiple errands, meetings, and lunch on foot
- 15 minute parking spots work well
- Bike parking.
- It is much appreciated that the first parking ticket is a warning
- High volume, functional bike parking, giving direct access to businesses
- Bikeability. Don't personally care about parking and cars.
- TRAIN! Like the train. Celebrate the train.
- Historic. Beauty. Community mix, with the neighborhoods connected and close. People can bike to us.
- Transit and circulation - MAX is great. More things like that.

Weaknesses

- Street closure for events is bad for business; likewise for trail closures.
- Truck circulation/access is at odds with pedestrian safety
- Road safety at district periphery
- Truck circulation (semis) not adequately attended to
- Bike to MAX transition
- Generally, high quality exists now, to be maintained and expanded upon
- Train – quiet, relocate...I know some think it adds to the charm, but it is disruptive. It's too loud, creates traffic blockage.

PARKING

- Parking restrictions not enforced Saturday/Sunday and in the evenings
- Parking is overused (20% employees).
- Parking, esp. employee parking and moving cars between 2 hour spots
- Public expectations for parking right in front of specific stores – drivers should be comfortable with parking on outskirts/in garages and conducting errands on foot
- Visitors uninformed about Sat/Sun free parking
- Non-functional TOD parking standards

- Retail Market: there's a north-south divide locally. How to pull in S. Fort Collins people. Transportation and parking are the key. Parking is crucial, even if it was at the edge with a shuttle.
- Parking – demand outweighs current provisions
- Drivers unwilling to use garages
- Small business mortality rate... due to parking? "everyone wants to be in Old Town, but we can't properly service customers"
- What's missing, should be added: Parking at College/Mason/Mulberry. Per Parking Plan.

Opportunities

- Trolley (downtown circulation)
- Extend trolley service
- Encourage bike-friendliness in new Downtown Plan – corridors for biking.
- "Small regional transportation systems"
- Improve pedestrian experience – codify privilege within district?
- Improve business accessibility, especially Old Town East and Lyric Cinema Café.
- Mason corridor as target area (re: benefits of MAX)
- Smoother multi-modal traffic flow (parking, bicycles)
- Interaction between people on the streets and the storefronts
- Connect district edges (Linden, Willow, Lincoln...) into the core so that movement within and among them feels seamless
- Bike parking – more of it. More than car parking. Maybe someday more car-free areas.
- Wayfinding. For peds; in garages; driving around; out on the highways.
- Improve road safety (esp. along Lincoln and Willow; for all vehicles and pedestrians)
- Circulator trolley for integration of Breweries, Woodward, and dining establishments
- Package plans (tourism)... especially with public transit (MAX)
- There is desire to run the trolley to new City Hall block.
- Improve cross-town connectivity
- Truck through-traffic creates a barrier between Jefferson and Riverside
- Expand bikefriendliness: remove curbs and reduce curb heights; make continuous bike lanes on every street; remove pedestrian bulbouts and protrusions into intersections; allow all left turns
- Systematic small vehicle public transit to relieve congestion issues.
- Improve and maintain road surfaces especially at Maple and Laporte
- Time signals to eliminate interference of pedestrian crossing with motor vehicle turning
- Reroute Oak street to be straight between College and Remington.

PARKING

- Parking is the limiting factor
- Regulate oversized vehicle parking(monster and muscle trucks), which take up car spots and pose a danger to bikes.
- Pressure by Otter and Woodward on Parking Supply
- Establish employer-mandate parking for employees.
- Make validate parking known and available.
- Adequate parking is a key to JOB encouragement, and a step toward developers building in the district
- Mapping of groundwater by the City – give predictability to owners and developers – would inform discussion of parking below grade
- Implementation of a parking fee to subsidize public parking? Move parking to Downtown's perimeter.
- On-street paid parking – start at rate equal to parking garage
- Heavy business days (e.g. Black Friday): valet parking by parking enforcement staff
- Consider a parking improvement fee/fee in lieu
- Perimeter parking structures at low cost; more expensive parking on the street
- Parking suggestion: 3 hours free in parking garage; 1 hour at the curb; 2 hours at the center island
- More parking, particularly structures – Structure north of 215 Mason within 5 years
- Don't personally care about parking and cars – focus on bikeability
- Parking - do bikes compensate for parking? Maybe a bit.
- We think parking may sometimes be used as a scapegoat for business difficulties. Not sure if that's what causes failure. Maybe it sometimes prevents a business from coming here. Of course, we don't know who's not coming to our business because of parking, but business is growing and doing fine. We have noticed people don't complain as much as they used to. Our back door on the alley with access to the garage seems to be helping. Parking seems to be different for old timers and new folks.
- Parking pay on-street – we're in an informal retailers group and that group is divided on pay parking.
- Parking - make the garages more FUN.
- Paid parking is "inevitable" - on-street should pay; structures presently charge too little
- Mechanisms to achieve goals – a BID? Pay parking?
- Ambassadors, esp. tied to pay parking if that happens. At the DBA, we have hired holiday greeters for directions, info. Gave out candy.

Threats

- Increased traffic congestion
- On-street paid parking is undesirable (reported by business owners)
- Taking away vehicle parking to provide bicycle parking
- Lack of on-street parking will kill retail

ENERGY + ENVIRONMENT

Strengths

- Proximity to River
- Cycling – as culture, as transportation

Weaknesses

- How much water is used from fountains at Oak St Plaza and OTS?
- Drainage at CSU Powerhouse and Northside Aztlan Center

Opportunities

- Activate the River.
- Focus on River as a “decompression area”.
- Bike parking – more of it. More than car parking. Maybe someday more car-free areas.
- Develop energy management job sector
- Showcase renewable energy opportunities
- More food production (take advantage of our existing agricultural focus; compared to Boulder, which is less agriculturally-oriented but has a more advanced food production sector)

Threats

- Developers emphasizing alternative energy should be cautioned, as this does not “pencil or pay back.”
- Consequences of activating river for business and infrastructure-heavy culture

MARKET + ECONOMY

Strengths

- Something for everybody – feels like a small town with big city amenities
- Downtown is a unique experience; one is constantly discovering new things.
- Collaboration vitalizes businesses, within and among them (marketing, development).

- Rescue Mission's Steps to Success job preparation program
- Events invigorate the space for businesses when inclusive of them
- Otter Box, Woodward, major employers
- Window Shopping (as pedestrian)
- Good mix of retail, restaurant, office
- Local businesses (why we feel sad for rents going up)
- Food Co-op.
- Historic. Beauty. Community mix, with the neighborhoods connected and close. People can bike to us.
- Good mix of retail, restaurant, office
- Encourage/maintain high density and mixed use** – important for 24/7 use of space
- Thriving independent businesses
- Generally, high quality exists now, to be maintained and expanded upon
- Maintain City and County presence as primary employment base. Crucial underpinning for everything else that follows. Private primary employers are great also – Woodward is a great addition to Downtown.
- Creativity, craftsmanship, entrepreneurship
- Employment drives most elements – retail, restaurant, and housing
- Farmer's market accepts SNAP
- Great Plates

Weaknesses

- Street closure for events is bad for business; likewise for trail closures.
- Rent is a struggle for local businesses, whose overheads are higher than chains (\$60,000 more per year)
- Business inaccessibility – Old Town East
- Parking, esp. employee parking and moving cars between 2 hour spots
- Not enough retail in the mix of businesses.
- Things that are out of historic character. Sasquatch Lodge, Drunken Monkey. Things that are jarring like that.
- Retail Market: there's a north-south divide locally. How to pull in S. Fort Collins people. Transportation and parking are the key. Parking is crucial, even if it was at the edge with a shuttle.
- Dichotomy of hungry homeless and rising wealth
- FoCo café... apparently not serving the hungry... a disconnect?
- DMA plaza is in flux – it had a lot of section 8, but rent is up a little and the Board is taking over management
- Tour de Fat significantly hurts Farmers Market on "trifecta" (peaches, pears, apples) weekend (other events have little effect)

- Never repeat a stunt like that on N. N=College which forced Albertson's to close. I hope any attempt at a similar project will be met by a major lawsuit.
- Tony's is a blight
- Issues with drinking at events
- Linden being a little off the beaten path of the district keeps rents lower
- Pressure by Otter and Woodward on Parking Supply
- Businesses seem pitted against homeless
- Subsidies for large businesses like Woodward and Innosphere.
- Red tape for permits makes closing out projects cumbersome; costs passed to consumers

Opportunities

- Downtown is successful. Why? Study what makes it vibrant. There is something about local businesses. Is there a way to help local businesses stay?
- The trajectory of food-business downtown should maintain its "local tilt".
- Encourage the arts and innovation.
- DBA mission and effectiveness. Relationships with City, owners, etc. Sponsorship vs membership. What it wants to be. It's in flux, starting with a mission statement.
- Establish a "small business development park"
- Increased home and business affordability
- Promote diversity of lifestyles and business models
- Growth in Old Town North, as a possible platform for the future movement of local small businesses
- Residential co-housing for businesses
- Improve business accessibility, especially Old Town East and Lyric Cinema Café.
- Provide incentives, possibly through establishment of an improvement district.
- Issue Bonds for district development
- Commercial and residential rent control measures Integration of activities – Recreation/Work
- Adequate parking is a key to JOB encouragement, and a step toward developers building in the district
- Construction of truly affordable housing. Some owned, mostly rental. More units like Legacy.
- Balance of uses: retail/bars/restaurants/offices... more residential
- Mason corridor as target area (re: benefits of MAX)
- Tax Increment Financing - DDA
- "Business improvement district" with parking, management assessed according to size
- Interaction between people on the streets and the storefronts
- Focus retail in "strip" or "promenade" to avoid competition/interspersion with bars and restaurants – create critical mass of retail. Limited hours?

- Bob Gibbs – tax on liquor license (all sales) can cover costs and go to the general fund
- Expand retail, restaurants, and entertainment
- NoPro's secession from SoPro pursuant to 50 years of poor/non-planning
- Expand of diversity 'local' options
- Need more attainable office space, but don't need to compete with low rents in the Mulberry area
- Too many high-end residential units is forcing a demographic change, forcing out long-time residents and businesses
- Continue to attract unique jobs due to quality of life
- Convert trolley barn into a market
- More events.
- Outdoor Market. #1 opportunity.
- Housing and employment growth to continue
- Tourism, "it's fun to show it off."
- Ways to help local businesses continue to thrive. Are there ways a plan can help? What do they need? Coaching?
- More food trucks. Love them. Use the parking lot behind Rio and make it work for that. Another great little space.
- The small individual shops are important. Rent pressures may drive them out. Understand how it works, values go up, able to get higher rents, but is there anything you can do about it? Would like to know what that is.
- Restaurants – support more upscale culture along with everything else. Missing that component that you can find in other cities, even Boulder. e.g., the Kitchen in Boulder place has better food than Fort Collins'.
- Designate SOME key weekends as event-free. Example of Pro Challenge during week when CSU starts up. That hurts a crucial week for business. Other events also. Event fatigue is an issue. Understand the purpose of events but they also don't always actually help. A key issue for the new DBA to discuss and clarify.
- Retail and business mix. Not enough retail in the mix. Retail destinations need a certain critical mass. Need a critical mass of retail. Sioux Falls had a business incubator.
- Retail chains – want to learn more about that. Is there any way to take a position? Should we? Not sure what I think about that. Having RETAIL of any kind is most important. Not sure I'm against change with more chains. RETAIL is more important than chain question. A destination shopping district requires – MORE RETAIL, relevant retail.
- Promote small retail over industrial and corporate
- Fewer Bars

- Industries to encourage: Shopping. Why not? MAX could encourage a retail chain to improve shopping. 1st National Bank is interested in more mixed use on their block. Incentivize a shopping district.
- Retail key: Building OWNERSHIP. Probably not much a plan can do about that.
- Events: have one central agency for events. Clearinghouse with guidelines, criteria, mission. [Mark J. is hiring this person].
- More highly individualized amenities like Bean Cycle/Wolverine, Bizarre Bazaar (a loss for downtown), Café Ardour, Paris on the Poudre (loss), Old Firehouse Books, Bike Coop, Food Coop, Avo's. These are loved by locals, and small.
- More food production (take advantage of our existing agricultural focus; compared to Boulder, which is less agriculturally-oriented but has a more advanced food production sector)
- Develop energy management job sector
- Focus on live/work environment as a key to vibrancy
- Expand retail, arts, and cultural opportunities
- More live/work arrangements
- Larger tenant spaces of 3, 5, & 10 K sq ft
- Fulfill need for essential services like an urban grocery store with deli and drugstore
- Need for a major market building (e.g. The Source in Denver's RiNO) including restaurant, bakery, butcher, art, merchants...
- Attract large/mid-size companies (employment centers); Otterbox campus is a good example
- Tourism industry
- Natural Grocer
- National Tenants – retail and restaurant (anchors, to attract people to the downtown)
- Hotel-Convention Center
- Balance housing with business growth
- Package plans (tourism)... especially with public transit (MAX)
- Outdoor Market. #1 opportunity.
- Is it within the scope of the plan to deal with rising rents, costs, living abilities. Would like to learn more about that. Are "rent controlled" or lower rent spaces possible? Creative district needs planned spaces for people to work and live. RiNO having similar problems with success driving out cool things.
- Food truck rallies as an event. Create a good location for that. Civic Center park has been used. Are there better locations? Don't infringe on businesses, but provide a place. Should be a flexible, multi-purpose space. Dynamic. Accommodate changes. Like Old Town Square. 100 block of East Oak? Mason Lot?

- Bring together farmers, brewers, artists in Old Town Square... maximize shared space
- Permanent market structure; *keep fees as low as possible* for Farmers Markets
- Bring people from South of Drake to Downtown, esp. for Farmers Markets where 75% of customers live within 5 miles... part of this is parking perceptions
- Food Cluster roundtable to bring markets together in collaboration. Their current relationship is "positive but separate"
- Grow vendor-base for growers-only market (in its 40th year operated by CSU)... brought \$30-40K in sales tax to city last year
- "Multi-cultural diversity Retreat" to garner ideas about inclusivity
- Focus on non-profits and locally-owned businesses
- Community marketplace and Food Coops
- Accessible, large event spaces
- Small business mortality rate... due to parking? "everyone wants to be in Old Town, but we can't properly service customers"
- High costs of development and exorbitant fees (prohibitive for beneficial projects)
- New project on Block 23: valet parking and parking garage (potentially lease to the City?)
- More centralized promotion, communication, advertising
- Sidewalk sales should be a bigger deal
- Do Great Plates in conjunction with entertainment
- Growth will happen – just keep it responsible
- Homeless – don't shun or push out, but support... need a new type of homeless shelter; need job placement (City could be a trend-setter here)
- Businesses would likely support a circulator
- Connect business to parking – shuttles? Circulator?
- Consider Tax Increment Financing and Public Improvement Fees
- 3rd party inspectors could cut costs of permit fees
- City has to be willing to step up for Affordable Housing, but this will not happen downtown

Threats

- BDA does not necessarily represent business – directly include business in planning process.
- On-street paid parking is undesirable.
- Retail is (but should not be) pushed out by alcohol-related businesses.
- Avoid influx of chains businesses – "choice city" over "chain city".
- Limits placed on liquor licenses.
- Limits placed on liquor licenses.
- Not many options for developers

- Homeless causing concerns of decreased visitation to downtown
- Office and business parking threatens adjacent neighborhoods
- Growth at the expense of “class” and integrity
- Tension between breweries/cideries/distilleries and the historic neighborhoods over rights, responsibilities, and needs. Need for a community forum. Lincoln Corridor development showed this issue – should be addressed with non-City facilitation
- CSU’s growth projections – how much is predicated on a different in-state/out-of-state/foreign ratio? May have too many out-of-town...
- Retail becoming overwhelmingly boutique
- Rising lease rates pushing out small business in favor of large, regional chains
- Need a DBA/DDA steering committee for Downtown. Avoid big money consolidating decision power.
- Corporate subsidies and TIF
-
- Affordable space. Lawrence KS is an example of a nice downtown, but it has a bunch of corporate stores, the Gap and so on. Keep it local, small and unique. Don’t want to lose that. Is there a way?
- We need a variety of things to do. Not all bars. Creatives. More emphasis on “family outings”. Not just drink and party. Galleries going away. How to support these things?
- Events tipping point. Not sure what that is. Event fatigue is already an issue.
- FEAR = Boulder. Growth is positive; maybe inevitable; but don’t price out the cool people. Don’t shift to chains that are everywhere. Don’t dilute local feel! IF inevitable, then sad. Like it the way it is, but know that change come.
- Lack of on-street parking will kill retail
- Challenges of lending in DT... package plans may help
- Parking prices; fluctuating prices
- Panhandling rule’s effect on Old Town and homelessness; how it effects choice of OldTown as a destination
- Tension between business, breweries, and events
- People moving in from out of town – Republicans, wealthier to afford high costs, pushing residents out.
- Businesses in this area must be rent-controlled
- Downtown infrastructure not equipped to handle new development

Stakeholder Engagement

The following groups and individuals have been identified for inclusion in the planning process:

- Businesses – Owners and Employees

- Buckingham Neighborhood
- Residents (in downtown and proximity)
- Land/Property Owners
- Kyle Lundie: (CBRE) 443-2900
- Rich Shannon: 481-4438
- DBA – better communication (esp. through email) requested
- DDA
- Building Department/Planning
- Parking
- Parks and Rec
- Helen Matson with RE Services
- Policy level Jeremy Yonce Lt.
- Permits Jim Byrne.
- Contact Alexi for more coordination with the Mission.
- Mike Walker of Harvest Farm
- Legacy Senior Housing
- Comment: Allow professionals to recommend best practices
- DBA Late-comers... get them to a membership meeting
- Bohemian
- Blue Ocean
- Brian Suico
- Banks... (lending challenges)
- Library as a stakeholder, esp. re: homelessness
- The Growing Project
- Food Cluster – Ashley Colpert
- Teens
- CSU students
- GASP
- Farmers Market
- Old Town residents and other FoCo residents
- Small businesses
- Sue Beck-Ferkiss
- Lee Martinez Farm
- FC Homeless coalition
- Human Resources Commission
- Barrier Busters
- Commission on Disabilities
- Friends of the Poudre River

Further, requests were made that the Plan (esp. in synopsis form) be made readily accessible; that communication with business be maximized throughout the process (esp. by email); and that the community have a PR campaign about expectations.