

The Fort Collins

# Downtown Plan

Phase 2 Summary: A Renewed Vision

October 2015





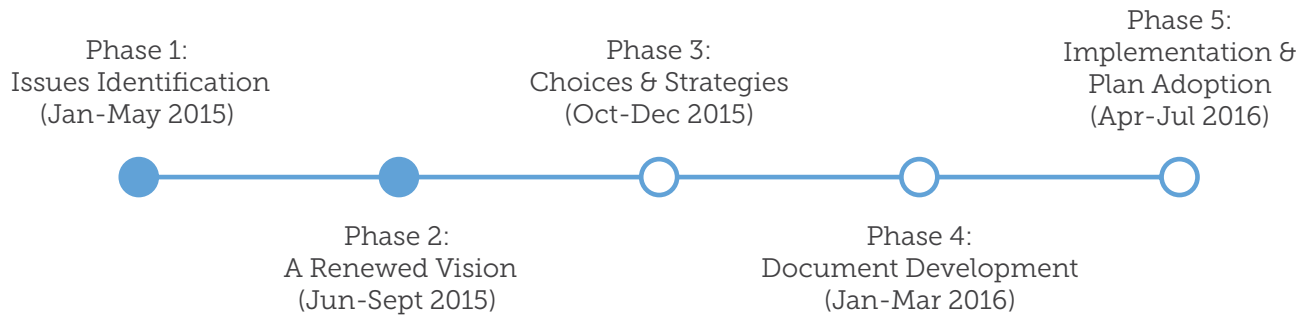


## About the Downtown Plan

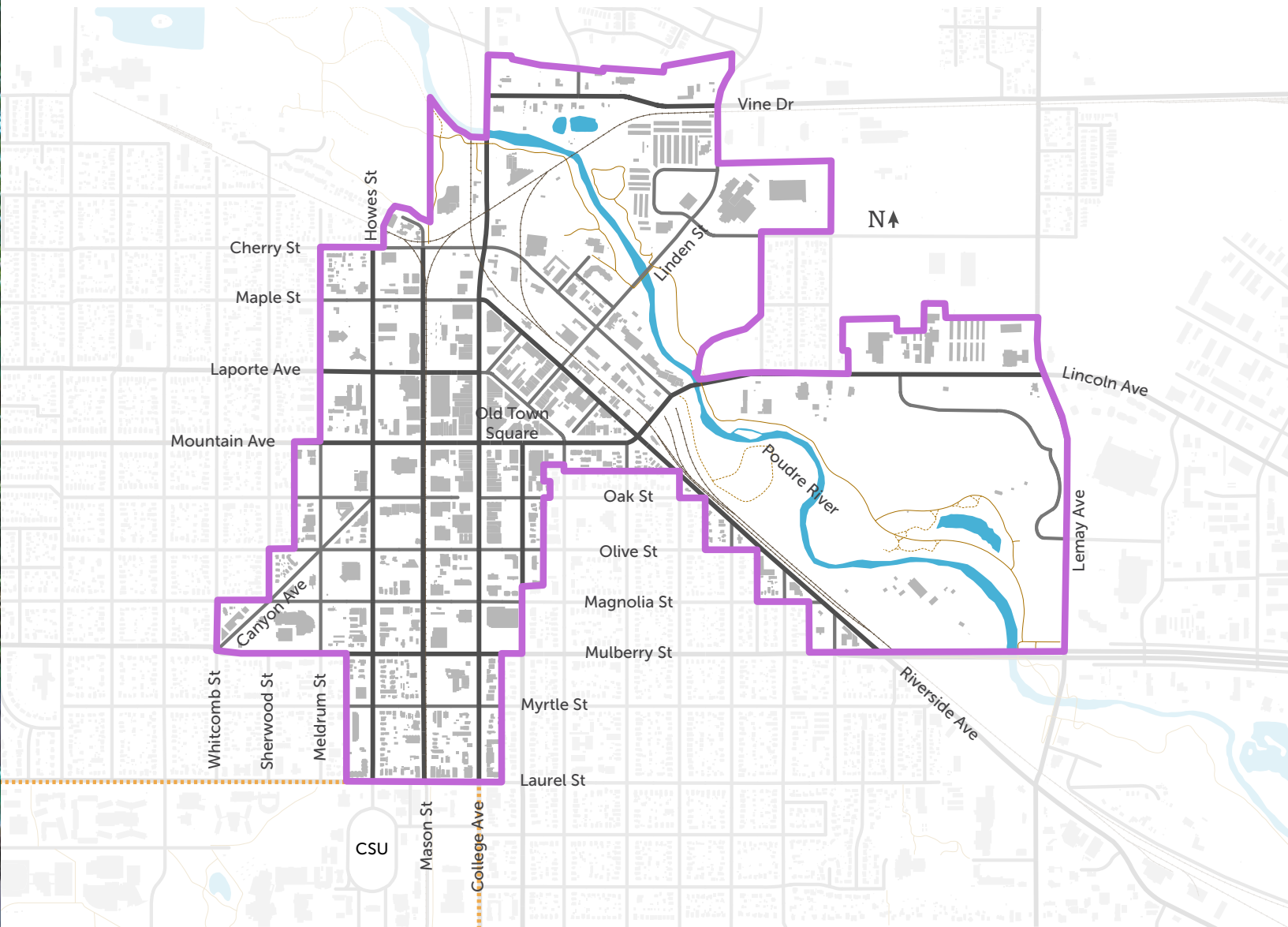
The Fort Collins Downtown Plan serves as a guide and inspiration for budgets, projects, programs, investments, regulations and other efforts focused in the downtown area. Adopted by City Council in 1989, the previous plan helped shape the downtown as it exists today. The new Downtown Plan is a partnership with the Downtown Development Authority and the Downtown Business Association and will update the vision, policy direction, and action items for the next 10-20 years. In addition, the new Downtown Plan will incorporate recently completed planning efforts (e.g., the Poudre River Downtown Master Plan, the citywide Pedestrian Plan, and the Bicycle Master Plan) into a comprehensive plan for downtown Fort Collins. When adopted, the Downtown Plan will serve as the overarching policy document guiding private development and public investment.

## Process and Timeline

The process of developing the Downtown Plan consists of five interrelated phases, each with its own purpose and objectives. The Downtown Plan will be closely coordinated with the Old Town Neighborhoods Plan, which covers the residential areas to the west and south of downtown.



## Downtown Plan Boundaries





# PHASE 2: A RENEWED VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Phase 2 began in June 2015 and concluded in September 2015. The vision phase built on the issues identified in phase 1 to determine what downtown might look and feel like as issues are addressed. The purpose of this phase was to engage working groups, residents, visitors, business owners, downtown employees, and other stakeholders in creating a future vision for downtown. The vision statements developed in phase 2 help guide the selection of choices and strategies for downtown, which will be evaluated in phase 3 of the planning process.



## Stakeholder Engagement

- Working Group Meetings
- Character Districts Design Charrette
- Presentations to City Boards & Commissions
- Presentations to DDA, DBA, and other community groups

## Public Events

- Colorado Brewer's Festival
- Downtown Walking Tours
- "A New Vision for Downtown" event
- Farmers' Market
- Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest
- Character Districts Drop-In Open House
- "City Comforts with David Sucher" event

## Online & Mobile Activities

- Website
- City Facebook and Twitter feeds
- Nextdoor postings
- Online survey (Survey Gizmo)
- Text message survey (Textizen)
- Keypad polling

## Broadcast Outreach

- Project email list
- DBA and business email lists
- Posters, postcards, and business cards
- Press releases
- fcgov.com announcements
- Giveaway items (stickers, tattoos, lip balm, bike lights)

## Outreach

The outreach strategy for phase 2 utilized a broad range of public engagement approaches and techniques including public events, small-group meetings, online and mobile engagement, participation in community events, and broadcast notification and outreach. A series of downtown walking tours helped attendees explore the downtown Character Districts, while attendance at weekend festivals like Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest and the Colorado Brewer's Festival allowed the Downtown Plan team to interact with a broad cross-section of residents and visitors. Over 700 people contributed input through an online Visioning Survey (over 400 completed the survey). Thousands more people shared their thoughts and visions at public events throughout the summer. Translation services for Spanish and other languages were available on an as-needed basis.

## Surveys and Public Feedback

An online survey was conducted during July and August 2015 to collect community visions and preferences for the future of downtown. The survey covered six different topic areas and asked respondents to rank a list of goals and share their visions for each topic area. The survey also included several visual assessment questions that provided respondents an opportunity to select pictures that best represented their preferences.

The visual assessment questions included in the online survey were excerpts from a visual assessment administered at the New Vision for Downtown event on July 13, 2015. An additional parking survey was conducted at Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest (August 14-15, 2015) and Open Streets (September 20, 2015) to explore community preferences about downtown parking.

### Surveys conducted in phase 2:

- Downtown Plan Visioning Survey (701 respondents)
- Parking survey (51 respondents)
- Visual Assessment Keypad Polling (117 respondents)
- Text message survey (44 respondents)

Both the Downtown Plan Visioning Survey and the parking survey included opportunities for respondents to provide open-ended comments. Comments were also collected at public events throughout phase 2 of the Downtown Plan. Hundreds of comments were recorded and synthesized, and this synthesis supplemented formal survey results to inform development of a new downtown vision.

Selected results from the surveys and visual assessment polling are presented in each of the following sections. A full compilation of survey results (including open-ended comments) from phase 2 can be downloaded from the Downtown Plan website at [fcgov.com/downtown](http://fcgov.com/downtown).







# Downtown’s Future

Downtown Fort Collins today is at the core of the City’s identity, serving both as a symbol of the city’s best qualities and as the center of its public and private life. Previous planning efforts have been instrumental in achieving this success – the downtown area has seen tremendous revitalization over recent decades, and is recognized as one of the most successful downtowns in the country. In order to renew and sustain downtown’s success into the future, a renewed downtown vision is needed.

The 2015 Downtown Plan offers a roadmap for the protection of the qualities that have made downtown successful, and for addressing issues that remain or that have arisen, many of which result from downtown’s success and growth. Anchoring the Plan is a vision for downtown’s future. This vision will guide the cooperation of public and private stakeholders on the path toward an even more vibrant downtown.

## Keys to the Vision

ACTIVE – AUTHENTIC – DISTINCTIVE – INNOVATIVE – INVITING

Downtown Fort Collins is...

- The **active** core of the city, with multiple transportation options that can be easily, comfortably, and safely navigated by all users
- An **authentic** urban setting where a commitment to historic preservation blends seamlessly with high-quality new development and architecture
- A **distinctive** regional destination for arts and culture, one-of-a-kind retail and entertainment options, and exceptional architecture in a charming, historic setting
- A center for **innovative** approaches to social, economic, and environmental sustainability that is driven by a creative, collaborative start-up culture
- An **inviting**, friendly place for people of all ages and backgrounds to live, socialize, recreate, and conduct business



Arts + Culture



Downtown Management



Energy + Environment



Market + Economy



Transportation + Parking



Urban Design

To organize the Downtown Plan, six key topic areas were identified. An overarching vision statement was established for each topic area (above) during phase 2. Each statement is supported by 5-6 goals. The goals are followed by suggested strategies to be further refined in phase 3.

## Vision

Extensive public outreach and discussion formed the basis to develop vision statements that guide plan goals, strategies and implementation. Walking tours, workshop events and a detailed online survey shaped the vision.

## Goals

In phase 1, key goals were identified for each topic area. In phase 2, respondents to the online visioning survey were asked to rank each goal in order of its importance. The goals listed for each topic area are presented in ranked order.

## Strategies

Strategies for achieving the goals are a synthesis of hundreds of suggestions from stakeholders and attendees at public outreach events. The effectiveness of the strategies identified in this section, as well as additional strategies that emerge from the planning process, will be explored further in phase 3.



# Arts + Culture

## Vision

In 2035, downtown Fort Collins is the hub of artistic and cultural activity in the City, with a diverse range of creative and social offerings that are accessible to many different audiences. Local artists benefit from affordable studio and live-work spaces in addition to a variety of accessible and well-supported venues. Vibrant social spaces and unique cultural assets enrich the lives of residents, the economic health of the downtown area, and the experiences of visitors. Formal and informal avenues for artistic expression drive the evolution of culture in the community.



**Goals** (in ranked order): In Phase 1, five emerging priorities were identified for Arts + Culture. The visioning survey for Phase 2 asked respondents to rank the emerging priorities in the order of their importance.

- ① Create a culture of support for artists and creative people to maintain downtown vibrancy
- ② Explore ways to support arts and culture with facilities, infrastructure, events, and funding
- ③ Make it easier for creative businesses to thrive downtown
- ④ Improve affordability of live/work and studio space for artists and creative people
- ⑤ Explore opportunities to incorporate more local art into downtown properties and businesses

**Strategies** (How can we achieve these goals?): Potential strategies to achieve the Arts + Culture goals were developed in phase 2 of the plan, and will be explored further in phase 3.

- Establish a **Creative Council** that includes representatives from downtown’s arts and culture community charged with strengthening this niche through marketing, events and resource development. ① ②
- Create an **Arts Coordinator position** at the City that will support the Creative Council and be a central organizer for arts groups, resource development and marketing efforts. ① ②
- Support the effort to create a **State certified Creative District** that includes downtown Fort Collins, and incorporate Creative District implementation efforts into the proposed Creative Council. ① ② ③
- Explore opportunities for **subculture expression through art**, such as graffiti and street performance. ① ⑤
- Promote and market the downtown arts and culture scene both locally and regionally, including the development of events that showcase and celebrate arts and culture. ②
- Explore the creation of an **arts ambassador program** similar to that in Boise, Idaho. ②
- Develop an **arts incubator space** to foster local creativity and retain arts and culture in the downtown. ② ③ ④
- Explore the creation of a **regional sales tax** to support arts and culture similar to the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District in Denver. ② ③
- Explore ways to incentivize **artisan work spaces and galleries** in new development. ② ③ ④
- Develop a plan for better utilization of **public spaces and alleys** to support arts and culture related uses. ② ⑤
- Create a **public arts initiative** that results in more visual arts installations throughout the downtown. ⑤
- Continue the **Art in Public Places program**. ⑤

## Phase 2 outreach – What public art would you like to see in downtown Fort Collins?



Sculptures  
284



Interactive (ex: light swings)  
236



Street musicians (busking)  
230

Sidewalk art (ex: rain activated)  
214

Light projection art  
195

3D murals  
170

Street performers (busking)  
107

Graffiti art  
92

Very large murals  
80

Attendees at the visioning event and participants in the online survey were asked to select types of public art that would be appropriate in the downtown area. The most frequently selected options were sculptures, street musicians, and interactive art installations. Note: Respondents could select up to three options; there were 574 individual respondents.



# Downtown Management

## Vision

Downtown Fort Collins remains committed to high quality maintenance and administration. Downtown continues to be a safe, clean, and beautiful place to socialize, recreate, and conduct business for people of all ages and backgrounds. Law enforcement is predictable and comfortable for all people. Homelessness has in particular been addressed, balancing the rights and needs of all groups. Daily life, business, and cultural events have combined to strengthen the sense of community in the downtown area.



**Goals** (in ranked order): In phase 1, six emerging goals were identified for Downtown Management. The visioning survey for phase 2 asked respondents to rank the goals in the order of their importance.

- 1 Maintain and improve pedestrian space to emphasize walkability and pedestrian priority
- 2 Address problematic behavior; maintain a sense of safety for all to be comfortable downtown
- 3 Work to address the needs of the homeless population & improve understanding of issues
- 4 Increase maintenance capabilities to keep up with growth
- 5 Balance the number and scale of events, activities, and promotions; avoid 'large event fatigue'
- 6 Improve overall communications and messaging about downtown

**Strategies** (How can we achieve these goals?): Potential strategies to achieve the Downtown Management goals were developed in phase 2 of the plan, and will be explored further in phase 3.

- Prioritize pedestrian spaces** by adding detail to guidelines for encroachments onto downtown sidewalks. Revisit the process for permitting sidewalk cafes and other potential obstructions. 1
- Consider peripheral parking** with shuttles or transit to downtown retail areas; incentivize resident, employee and visitor use of parking garages to increase availability of on-street parking. 1 4
- Maintain a permanent District One Police substation** on the east side of the railroad tracks. Continue to focus on quality of life, referral to services, and keeping the peace as primary policing strategies. 2 3
- Form a funding partnership** to hire an outreach coordinator who can develop and lead a downtown outreach program for people experiencing homelessness. 3
- Sustain the current level of maintenance** in the historic core of the downtown area, investigate funding sources to expand maintenance to other areas, and ensure a permanent Parks maintenance and storage shop in a convenient downtown location. 4
- Implement a scheduling system for events and festivals** that will minimize street closures, spread out large events, and offer a wide variety of activities for all downtown visitors. 5
- Create a cohesive wayfinding strategy** for the downtown area. 6

## Phase 2 outreach – What types of wayfinding are most appropriate in the downtown area?



Smartphones  
268

Pedestrian info map  
220

Pedestrian business directory  
134



Avoid sign clutter  
263

Banner system  
167

Design/art theme sign style  
99



Historic sign style  
252

Use utility boxes/sidewalks  
147

Gateway features  
86

Attendees at the Downtown Plan Visioning Event and participants in the online survey were asked to select types of wayfinding that would be appropriate in the downtown area. The most frequently selected options were smartphone applications, avoiding sign clutter, and historic sign styles. Note: Respondents could select up to three options; there were 574 individual respondents.

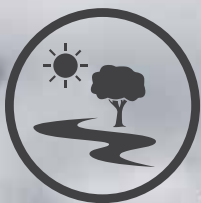
**What's Next?** Phase 3 is underway! All of the strategies developed in phase 2 are being further analyzed and refined. Keep an eye out for outreach events in early 2016 aimed at choosing which strategies will best fulfill the vision and goals.



# Energy + Environment

## Vision

Downtown Fort Collins actively pursues sustainability in all operations and in development. Downtown is exemplary of city-wide climate protection efforts, having incorporated innovative technologies for responsible conservation and energy production. From anywhere downtown, people can easily access the Poudre River, parks, and natural areas. The presence of nature is felt even in downtown's most urban spaces, as it is cultivated as an essential amenity. Recreational access to nature is balanced with the need to preserve and protect natural resources, while stormwater management and utility infrastructure ensures existing and future needs are met.



**Phase 2 outreach** – Which improvements are most appropriate for incorporating more nature into the downtown area?



Street tree canopy  
293

Trail/path  
190

Green roof  
155



Plaza  
250

Community garden  
165

Wetland area  
107



Pocket park  
242

Living wall  
160

Planted courtyard  
87

Attendees at the Downtown Plan Visioning Event and participants in the online survey were asked to select improvements that could incorporate more nature into the downtown area. The most frequently selected improvements were street tree canopy, plazas, and pocket parks. Note: Respondents could select up to three options; there were 574 individual respondents.

**Goals** (in ranked order): In phase 1, five emerging goals were identified for Energy + Environment. The visioning survey for phase 2 asked respondents to rank the goals in the order of their importance.

- 1 Connect to and protect the Poudre River Corridor and other unique natural resources.
- 2 Pursue and support innovative energy and environmental projects.
- 3 Incorporate nature and opportunities to escape the urban environment into existing and new development.
- 4 Enhance downtown's capacity to manage stormwater and flooding.
- 5 Showcase and celebrate energy innovation and environmental stewardship.

**Strategies** (How can we achieve these goals?): A number of potential strategies to achieve the Energy + Environment goals were developed in phase 2 of the plan, and will be explored further in phase 3.

- Support the implementation of the Poudre River Downtown Master Plan, including trail connections, habitat protection areas, recreational opportunities, community gathering places, and educational opportunities. 1 3
- Balance development along the Poudre River to ensure that the river continues to offer natural habitat, flood protection, and other ecological benefits. 1 4
- Explore incentives and regulations to encourage innovative energy projects in new development. Examples of eligible projects could include rooftop solar, electric vehicle charging, low impact development, green roofs, and living walls. 2 5
- Create a program to encourage energy-efficiency for existing buildings and historic buildings. 2 5
- Explore new approaches to waste management, including shared facilities, increased opportunities for recycling and composting, waste to energy conversion, and more. 2 5
- Encourage or require sustainable building materials for new development and public amenities. 2 5
- Develop the civic center complex as a model "green district" to demonstrate innovation in energy efficiency, sustainability, and stewardship. 2 5
- Identify opportunities to implement the Nature in the City Strategic Plan in the downtown area. 2 3 5
- Coordinate with long-range utility and stormwater management plans to implement specific projects that will improve the function of downtown's stormwater system. 4

**What's Next?** Phase 3 is underway! All of the strategies developed in phase 2 are being further analyzed and refined. Keep an eye out for outreach events in early 2016 aimed at choosing which strategies will best fulfill the vision and goals.



# Market + Economy

## Vision

Downtown Fort Collins is the economic engine for the region and one of the most distinctive small downtowns in the nation. Downtown has become a diverse employment center where retail, finance, government, and services thrive. Residents and visitors experience downtown as a center for creativity featuring a wide variety of unique retail shops, high-quality dining and entertainment options, and a strong local business community. A broad range of housing types is available to meet the needs of diverse age groups, lifestyles, and incomes. Downtown is also recognized as a center for innovation, where businesses partner with Colorado State University to advance knowledge-based industries.



### Phase 2 outreach – What is the best way to provide joint living and working opportunities downtown?



Apartment over a store  
293

Loft above flex space  
199

Loft above workshop  
101



Loft above workshop/retail  
266

Apartment above workshop  
168

Loft with ground-level office  
57



Loft above workshop  
226

Housing above/behind office  
124

Housing between office space  
56

Attendees at the visioning event and participants to the online survey were asked to select types of live/work space that would be appropriate in the downtown area. The most frequently selected options were apartments over stores, lofts above workshop/retail space, and lofts above workshop space. Note: Choices varied more by image than title. There were 534 individual respondents.

**Goals** (in ranked order): In phase 1, five emerging goals were identified for Market + Economy. The visioning survey for phase 2 asked respondents to rank the goals in the order of their importance.

- ① Help independent, local, and small businesses survive downtown
- ② Encourage affordability of housing and commercial space, both for rent and purchase
- ③ Develop strategies to ensure available, accessible, and adequate parking
- ④ Maintain emphasis on high-quality development while making approval processes easier
- ⑤ Develop financial and other incentives to create public-private partnerships downtown

**Strategies** (How can we achieve these goals?): A number of potential strategies to achieve the Market + Economy goals were developed in phase 2 of the plan, and will be explored further in phase 3.

- Explore the feasibility of subsidies, incentives, or other financial tools to help small businesses afford rental rates in the downtown area. ① ②
- Investigate opportunities to establish a retail business incubator program that could provide business development services, technical assistance, and general business support. ① ②
- Encourage density in key areas downtown (for example, the Mason corridor) to increase the supply of housing and commercial space. ②
- Examine potential financial or other incentives for new developments that agree to provide affordable housing and commercial space. ① ② ⑤
- Consider a range of options for on-street paid parking, while encouraging longer-term users to utilize parking garages. Develop a coordinated approach with the Transportation + Parking topic area. ③
- Clarify land use code requirements for new and infill development so that the development process is predictable and consistent. Streamline routine processes where possible. ④
- Expand investment from the historic core into other parts of the downtown area by creating new Business Improvement Districts, General Improvement Districts, or other potential funding mechanisms. ⑤
- Investigate a contingency plan for the expiration of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) by identifying alternative organization structures that will continue to promote the DDA's existing mission. ⑤

**What's Next?** Phase 3 is underway! All of the strategies developed in phase 2 are being further analyzed and refined. Keep an eye out for outreach events in early 2016 aimed at choosing which strategies will best fulfill the vision and goals.



# Transportation + Parking

## Vision

Downtown Fort Collins is easily, comfortably, and safely accessed and navigated by multiple modes of transportation. Pedestrian mobility is improved and continues to be a strong emphasis. The transit network, including stops, has grown significantly, and there are low-stress, safe, comfortable options for biking. Vehicular accessibility is maintained, and parking for cars and bicycles is adequate and available. Overall, the transportation system supports the sustainability and social, economic, and environmental vibrancy of downtown.



**Goals** (in ranked order): In phase 1, five emerging goals were identified for Transportation + Parking. The visioning survey for phase 2 asked respondents to rank the goals in the order of their importance.

- 1 Continue to improve conditions for walking and biking
- 2 Create better connections for all modes of travel throughout the downtown area
- 3 Develop strategies to ensure adequate parking downtown
- 4 Examine opportunities to improve convenience of MAX, buses and other transit service
- 5 Investigate innovative ways to reduce parking demand

**Strategies** (How can we achieve these goals?): A number of potential strategies to achieve the Transportation + Parking goals were developed in phase 2 of the plan, and will be explored further in phase 3.

- Create a **low-stress bicycle network** throughout the downtown area by implementing recommendations from the Bicycle Master Plan (2014). 1 2
- Improve **key intersections and add missing sidewalks** for the safety and comfort of bicyclists and pedestrians. 1 2
- Investigate **opportunities to create more car-free areas** on a temporary or permanent basis. 1 5
- Add **more transit service**, including new routes and expanded service frequency/hours on existing routes. Improve circulation and access for buses at the Downtown Transit Center. 2 4
- Implement **car share and bike share programs**. 2 3 5
- Explore **opportunities for a downtown circulator** to connect MAX, parking garages, and key activity centers. 2 4 5
- Consider a range of options for **on-street paid parking**, while encouraging longer-term users to utilize parking garages. Add more bike parking at strategic locations. 3 (See next page)
- Examine **options for communicating real-time travel information**, such as where parking is currently available, time until the next bus or MAX service, etc. 3 4 5
- Look for **opportunities to create park-n-rides outside of downtown** and provide supporting transit service into the downtown area. 3 5

**What's Next?** Phase 3 is underway! All of the strategies developed in phase 2 are being further analyzed and refined. Keep an eye out for outreach events in early 2016 aimed at choosing which strategies will best fulfill the vision and goals.

## Phase 2 outreach – Which bikeways are most appropriate for downtown Fort Collins?



Protected bike lane - planters  
307

Buffered bike lane  
171

Shared use path  
106



Bike lane with green paint  
263

Two-way protected bike lane  
163

Conventional bike lane  
94



Protected bike lane - delineators  
181

Neighborhood greenway  
127

Raised protected bike lane  
92

Attendees at the Downtown Plan Visioning Event and participants in the online survey were asked to select bikeways that would be appropriate in the downtown area. The most frequently selected options were bike lanes protected with planters, bike lanes with green paint, and bike lanes protected with delineators. Note: Respondents could select up to three options; there were 543 individual respondents.



# Downtown Parking Community Dialogue


The Downtown Parking Community Dialogue is a separate but integrally related public outreach project that is fully coordinated and aligned with the Downtown Plan. It is a continued dialogue that builds on the policies of the *Parking Plan: Downtown and Surrounding Neighborhoods*. Parking access and turn-over in downtown has been identified as an issue for the Market + Economy and Transportation + Parking topic areas. The following information has been used for discussions regarding choices and strategies with the public and downtown stakeholders. The Downtown Parking Community Dialogue is anticipated to bring recommendations to the Parking Advisory Board, the Planning and Zoning Board, and City Council in Spring 2016.


### Key Issues:


Throughout multiple stakeholder conversations and planning efforts, the following key issues were identified:


- ➡ Perceived lack of adequate parking turnover and accessibility.
- ➡ Concern about potential neighborhood impacts due to the increased pace of development.
- ➡ Need for better communication about parking locations and availability.
- ➡ Desire to move away from a punitive, enforcement-driven funding model.


### Objectives:

- 

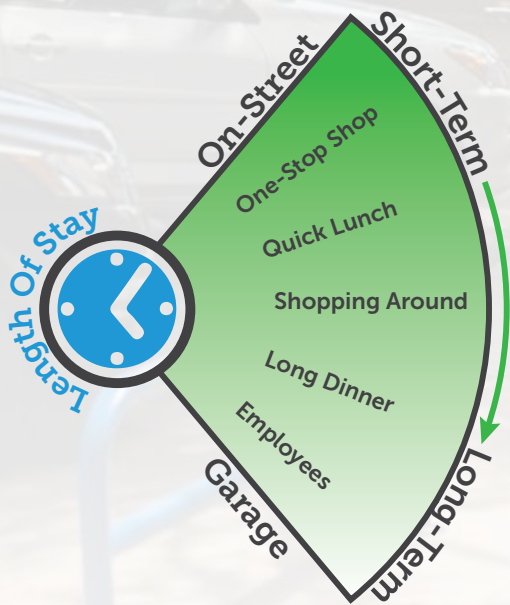
Increase the availability, ease of access to and turnover of on-street parking.
- 

Encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation to reduce parking demand.
- 

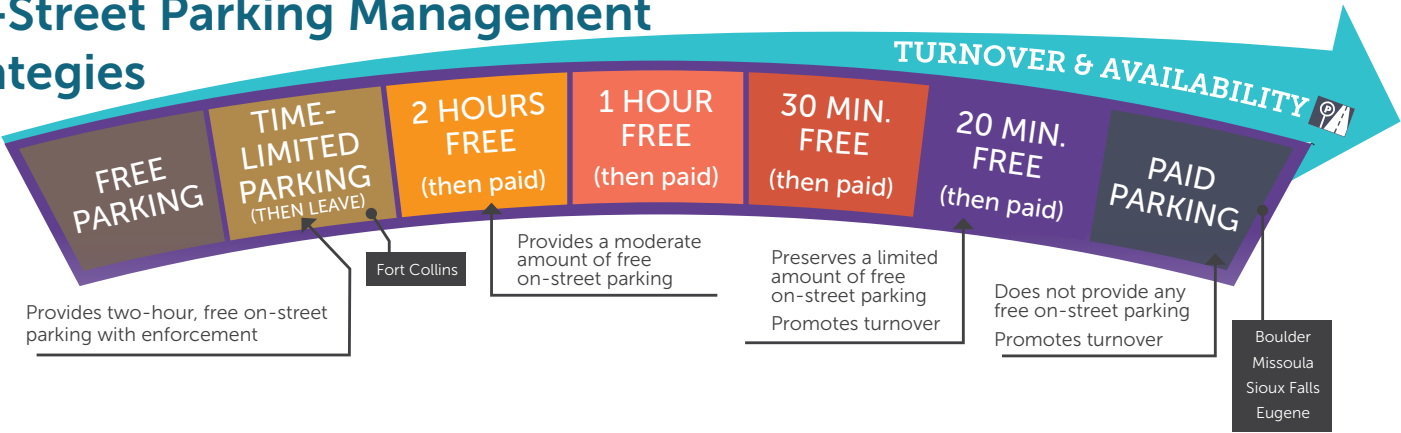
Develop a parking management system that is supportive of businesses, neighborhoods, and visitors.
- 

Identify a sustainable funding source for future access and transportation infrastructure investment.
- 

Provide and communicate a variety of options for parking and for traveling to and around Downtown.



## On-Street Parking Management Strategies





## Garage Parking Management Strategies





The “spectrum of options” for parking management (above) shows different management methods that can be combined to create a balanced parking plan. Research was done on peer cities to examine the pros and cons of different management methods.


### Additional Strategies to be Considered with On-Street & Garage Parking:


- Expand Enforcement** 


  - To evenings and weekends
- Manage Employee Parking** 


  - Options / incentives to move employees off-street.
- Residential Parking Permit Program** 

  - Reduce spillover impact on neighborhoods.
- Enhanced Communication, Education and Wayfinding** 

  - Help customers find parking quickly and easily.
- Alternative Funding Options** 

  - Parking district
  - Impact fee
- Transportation Circulation Options** 

  - Circulator shuttle
  - Bike share
- Increase Supply** 

  - Parking garages
  - Surface lots
- Park & Ride** 

  - MAX



# Urban Design

## Vision

Downtown Fort Collins embraces its rich heritage of design by preserving existing historic structures and creating new buildings that merit designation as future landmarks. A variety of distinct character districts are recognizable within the downtown, each evoking a unique sense of place. Streets, sidewalks and common public spaces are attractive and inspire feelings of comfort. Transition sequences between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as between different character districts, are seamless. Downtown gateways provide an inviting sense of arrival.



### Phase 2 outreach – Which housing types would be most appropriate in the downtown area?



Brownstone units

292

Stacked units

197

Four-plexes

114



Loft units

227

Row houses

183

Townhouses

73



Attached single-family units

209

Apartments

137

Attached single units

60

Respondents to the Online Visioning Survey and attendees at the Downtown Plan Visioning Event were asked to select types of housing that would be appropriate in the downtown area. The most frequently selected options were brownstone units, loft units, and attached single-family units. Note: Respondents could select up to three options; there were 544 individual respondents.

**Goals** (in ranked order): In phase 1, five emerging goals were identified for Urban Design. The visioning survey for phase 2 asked respondents to rank the goals in the order of their importance.

- 1 Preserve design elements that contribute to the character and authenticity of downtown
- 2 Investigate the potential for new or expanded facilities for outdoor markets, performances, and other community gatherings
- 3 Enhance the gateways into downtown
- 4 Implement design guidelines and/or policies to provide a smooth transition from downtown edges into surrounding neighborhoods
- 5 Promote integration of diverse architectural styles while maintaining compatibility

**Strategies** (How can we achieve these goals?): A number of potential strategies to achieve the Urban Design goals were developed in phase 2 of the plan, and will be explored further in phase 3.

- Develop design guidelines like the Old Town and River District guidelines for the other Downtown Character Districts. 1 4 5
- Adopt form-based Land Use Code elements for each character district that set standards for building height, massing, streetscape, and courtyard design while retaining creative options for building style, materials, and details. 1 4 5 (See next page)
- Create more pedestrian spaces throughout the downtown area; combine wide sidewalks and comfortable pedestrian experiences with plazas, pedestrian streets, and other spaces. 1 2
- Redevelop the Streetcar Barn into a community gathering space, community marketplace, museum, or other public-oriented use. 2
- Improve signage in the downtown area to facilitate wayfinding to destinations, bike and vehicle parking, and transportation options. 3
- Add landscaping, art, signage, and buildings at key gateway points to welcome residents and visitors to the downtown area. 3 4
- Clarify compatibility requirements for new development at the edges of the downtown area. 3 4 5
- Encourage increased density in key areas downtown (for example, the Mason corridor) to increase the supply of housing and commercial space in the downtown area. 5

**What's Next?** Phase 3 is underway! All of the strategies developed in phase 2 are being further analyzed and refined. Keep an eye out for outreach events in early 2016 aimed at choosing which strategies will best fulfill the vision and goals.



# Building Height, Mass and Scale in the Downtown

Downtown is seeing significant development activity throughout its boundaries. As infill and density increases, the question arises: *How can new, larger buildings not only be compatible with the existing context, but become valuable assets?*

In phase 1 & 2 of the Downtown Plan community members expressed concern about future development’s impact on the downtown, especially on historic resources. The development community also expressed the need to clarify the Code requirements regarding what is plausible to build.

Look for outreach in early 2016 specifically tailored to building and site design. Now is the time to revisit the conversation about urban form and compatibility in the downtown.

To the right: Maximum current building height allowance in the downtown area, as well as Code sections that relate to development in different districts.

This graphic was used at the Character District Design Charrette



## Existing Code Requirements by District

**Historic District:**  
Maximum height is 3 stories, with a 4th allowed if stepped back to a 35 degree angle from the top of the 3rd story. \*

**Mason North, Civic Center, and Canyon Avenue:**  
Maximum height is carefully stated based on extensive public discussion among strongly competing interests during the Downtown Strategic Plan (2006).

Stated height limits vary block-by-block. Limits are stated in both stories and feet with explanation of the intent, rather than simply stating exact numerical limits. Buildings over 3 stories must step down to a 1 or 2 story base portion along streets. \*

**Campus North:**  
Maximum height is 5 stories. \*

**River District:**  
Maximum height is 5 stories. Buildings must be stepped down to 3 stories abutting streets and 1 story abutting the river. \*

**Entryway Corridor:**  
Maximum height is 3 stories.

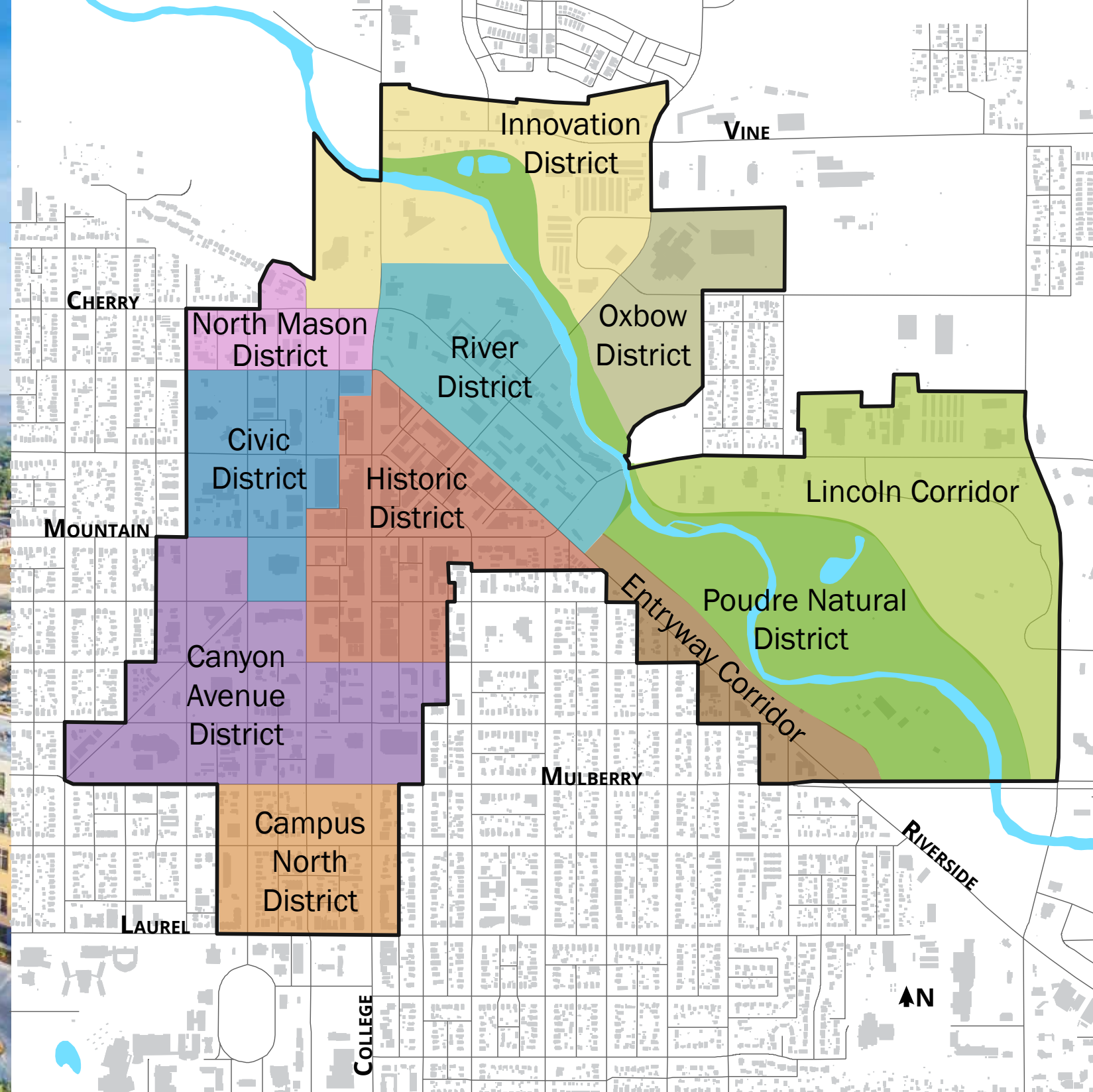
\* All zoning height limits work in conjunction with regulations for compatibility. If historic buildings are adjacent, those existing buildings and the pattern of development are a major consideration in shaping new buildings, and can require lower heights than the stated limits. This issue would benefit from clarification in zoning district standards compatibility.





## What Will Downtown Look Like in the Future?

The following sections illustrate potential changes and improvements in each of the downtown Character Districts. Walking tours, a design charrette and a drop-in workshop were held to begin incorporating the vision for each topic area into the various Character Districts. Ideas and comments from residents, working group members, and other downtown stakeholders were summarized in a series of illustrations representing the key opportunities that emerged for each District. Notes and maps from the design charrette and drop-in workshop are available on the Downtown Plan website at [fcgov.com/downtown](http://fcgov.com/downtown).



## Downtown Character Districts

The Downtown Plan area encompasses much more than the historic core of downtown Fort Collins. The character of downtown is varied and complex – for example, the part of downtown directly north of Colorado State University does not have the same form or function as the civic district or Lincoln corridor areas. To incorporate this complexity and better plan for the entire downtown, eleven Character Districts were identified based on buildings, streets and land uses.





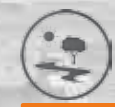
← N View looking southeast



Redesign Vine Drive as a "green street," incorporating innovative stormwater management techniques and enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



Build on the success of existing innovative businesses and include residential uses to support live/ work possibilities.



Capitalize on sports elements of kayaking, running, and biking.



Create an "energy gateway" to downtown, including information on renewable energy.



Showcase innovation and sustainability through site and green building design, district energy use, and innovative agricultural concepts on naturally constrained property (e.g., agriculture production within the floodplain).



Enhance landscaping along College Avenue.

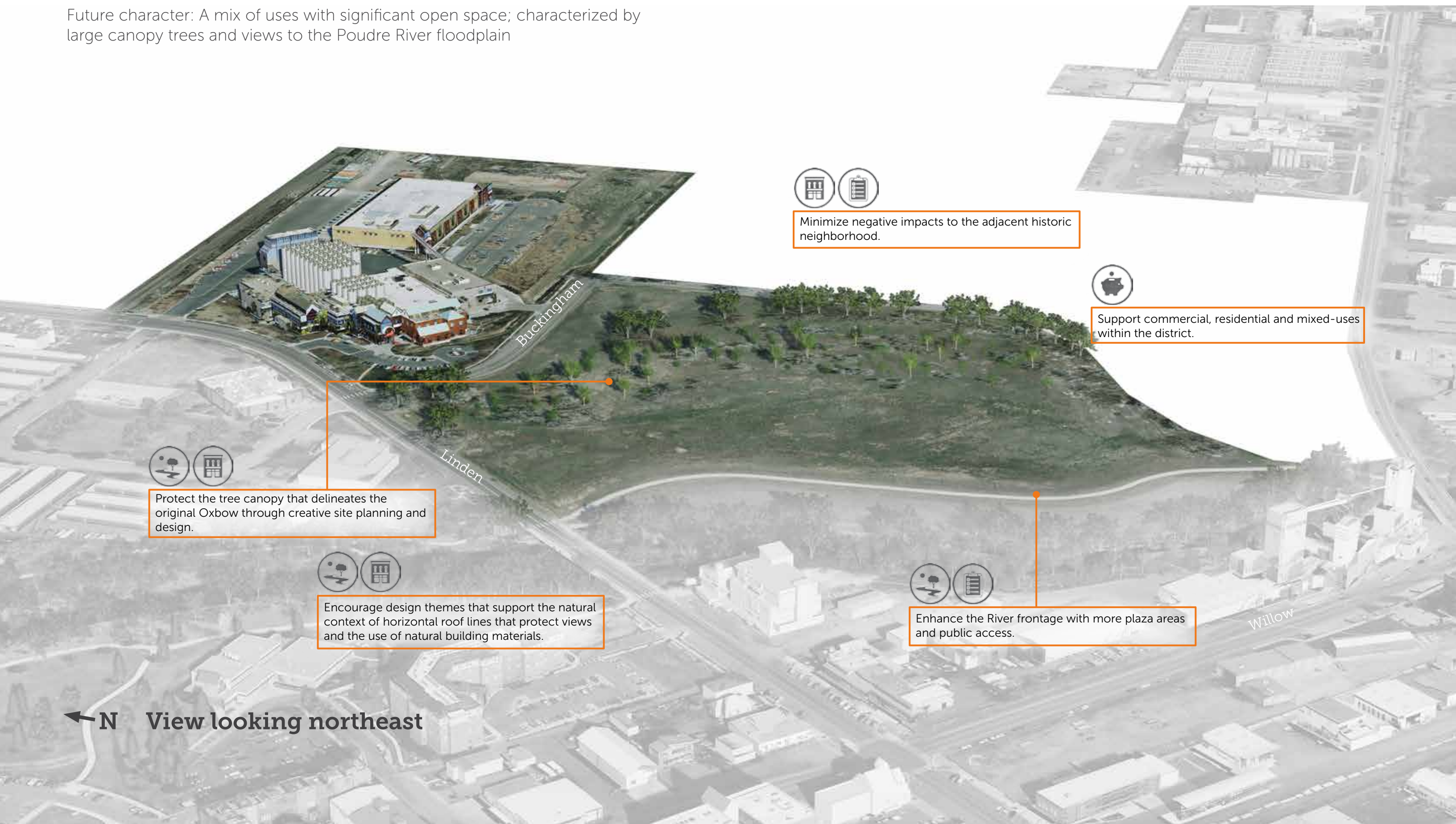
# Innovation District

Future character: A mix of uses supporting partnerships in innovation with a sense of place, grounded in the Poudre River floodplain



# Oxbow District

Future character: A mix of uses with significant open space; characterized by large canopy trees and views to the Poudre River floodplain



Minimize negative impacts to the adjacent historic neighborhood.



Support commercial, residential and mixed-uses within the district.



Protect the tree canopy that delineates the original Oxbow through creative site planning and design.



Encourage design themes that support the natural context of horizontal roof lines that protect views and the use of natural building materials.



Enhance the River frontage with more plaza areas and public access.

← N View looking northeast



# Poudre Natural District

Future character: Poudre River open space emphasizing habitat, water quality and river access



Create a pedestrian bridge crossing of the Poudre River east of College Avenue.



Provide spur trail connections between the Poudre River Trail and key destinations.



Develop the trail system on the southwest side of the Poudre River.



Continue vegetation and habitat enhancement along the River corridor.



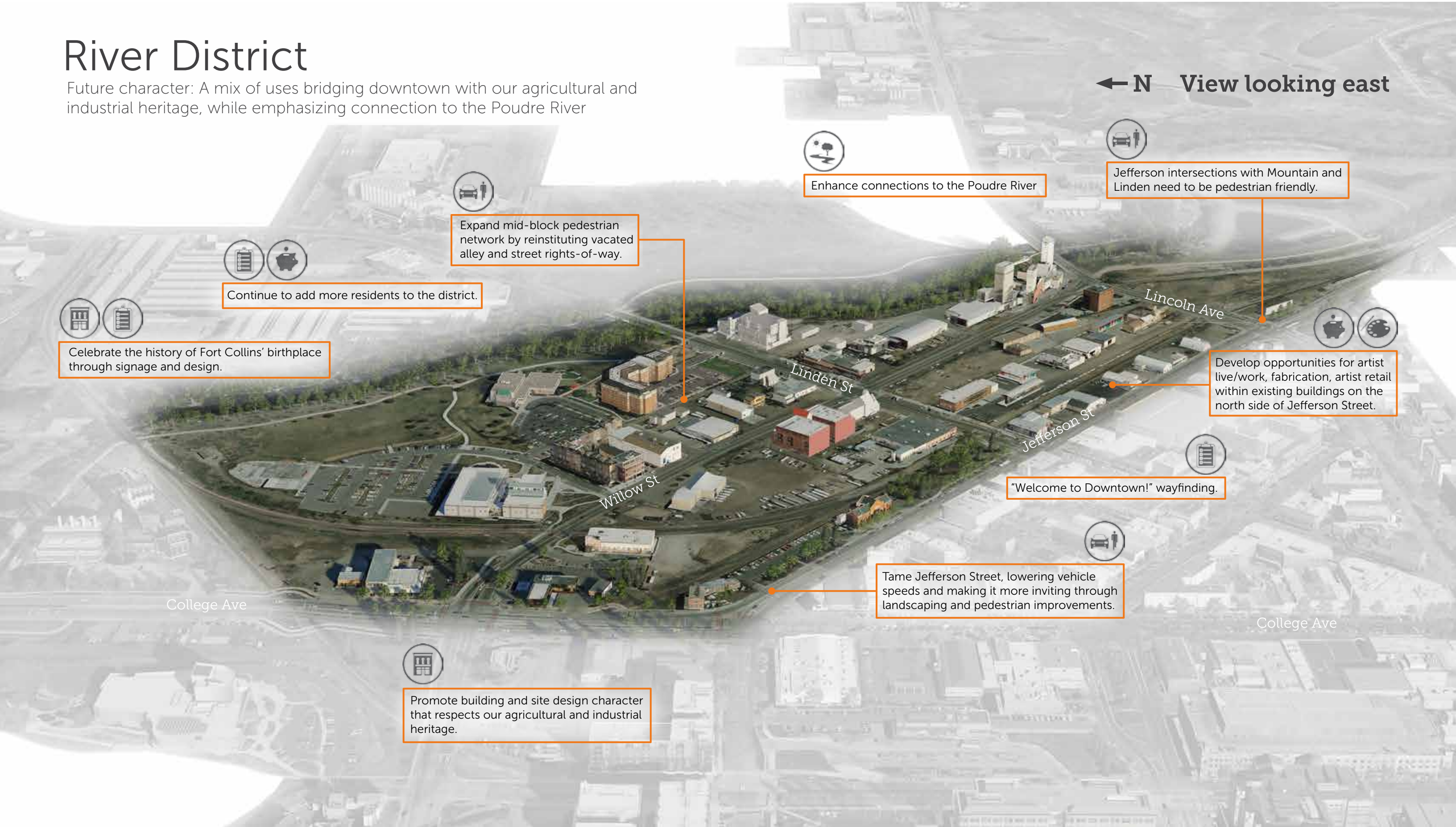
Take advantage of educational opportunities afforded by the Poudre River, Sanitary Sewer treatment facility and solar garden.

↑ N View looking north



# River District

Future character: A mix of uses bridging downtown with our agricultural and industrial heritage, while emphasizing connection to the Poudre River



← N View looking east

Continue to add more residents to the district.

Celebrate the history of Fort Collins' birthplace through signage and design.

Expand mid-block pedestrian network by reinstituting vacated alley and street rights-of-way.

Enhance connections to the Poudre River

Jefferson intersections with Mountain and Linden need to be pedestrian friendly.

Develop opportunities for artist live/work, fabrication, artist retail within existing buildings on the north side of Jefferson Street.

"Welcome to Downtown!" wayfinding.

Tame Jefferson Street, lowering vehicle speeds and making it more inviting through landscaping and pedestrian improvements.

Promote building and site design character that respects our agricultural and industrial heritage.



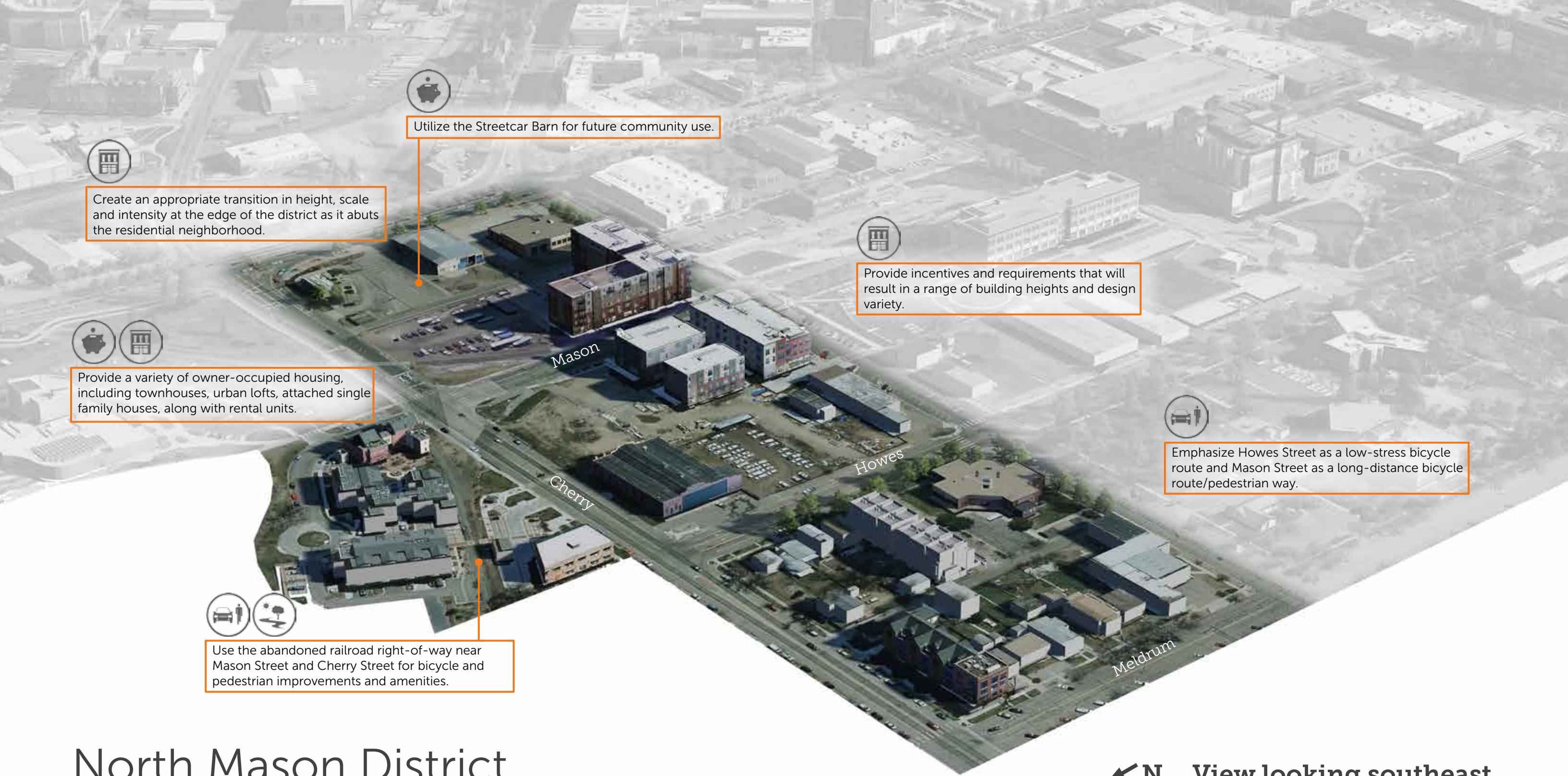
# Lincoln Corridor

Future character: An active, vibrant destination and connection that celebrates the area’s industrial heritage as a model for sustainability



➔ N View looking southwest



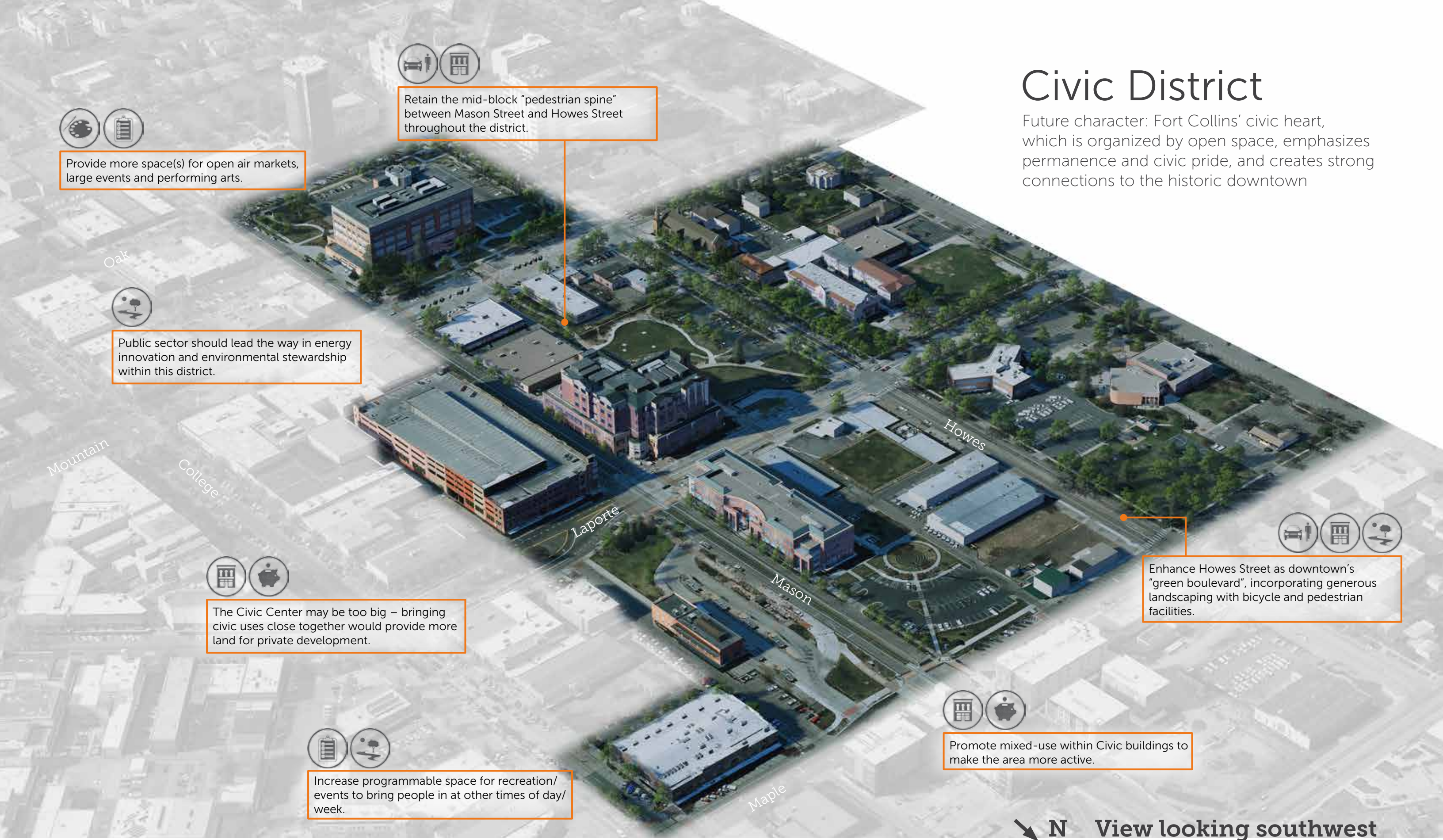


# North Mason District

Future character: A mix of uses emphasizing residential character and compatibility with the adjacent neighborhoods

↖ N View looking southeast





# Civic District

Future character: Fort Collins’ civic heart, which is organized by open space, emphasizes permanence and civic pride, and creates strong connections to the historic downtown



Provide more space(s) for open air markets, large events and performing arts.



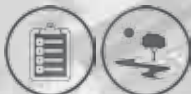
Retain the mid-block “pedestrian spine” between Mason Street and Howes Street throughout the district.



Public sector should lead the way in energy innovation and environmental stewardship within this district.



The Civic Center may be too big – bringing civic uses close together would provide more land for private development.



Increase programable space for recreation/ events to bring people in at other times of day/ week.



Enhance Howes Street as downtown’s “green boulevard”, incorporating generous landscaping with bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



Promote mixed-use within Civic buildings to make the area more active.

**N View looking southwest**



# Canyon Avenue District

Future character: Commercial office/residential uses that provide a sense of permanence, with a mid-century and park-like character

← N View looking northeast



Reimagine Canyon Avenue for other purposes, e.g., festival street (farmer's market, food trucks, art), downtown circulator street, a hybrid street (circulator by day/festival street at night), or multi-modal street.



Create gateway improvements, including buildings, public art, landscaping, and pedestrian improvements along Mulberry Street, with particular focus on the College, Mason, and Canyon Avenue intersections.



Provide better signage and wayfinding within the District to modify circulation and reduce congestion on College Avenue.



Use building setbacks and stepbacks to change the perception of density and reduce impacts of taller buildings to maintain the established character of Downtown.



Retain the large canopy trees and green setbacks along streets. Incorporate pocket parks and small natural spaces.



Provide opportunities for better parking management, through car and bicycle share programs and electric vehicle charging stations in strategic locations, a district parking structure, and shared parking between residential and office users.



Retain the opportunity to protect views and solar access by using building setbacks for patios, green roofs and rooftop decks.



Vary massing from building to building to avoid monotony found in some other communities, e.g., Denver's LoDo and Boulder's Canyon Blvd. Add building height and density, but "soften" through design.



# Historic District

Future character: The heart of historic downtown with a mix of uses emphasizing community gathering, authenticity and historic integrity

↖ N View looking northeast



Improve signs that promote easier wayfinding to destinations, parking and transportation options.



Continue to support patio culture, but manage encroachments along sidewalks – plantings, bikes/ bike racks, sandwich boards – so that pedestrian movements are not restricted.



Keep the area “historically authentic” with new development compatible with the historic character.



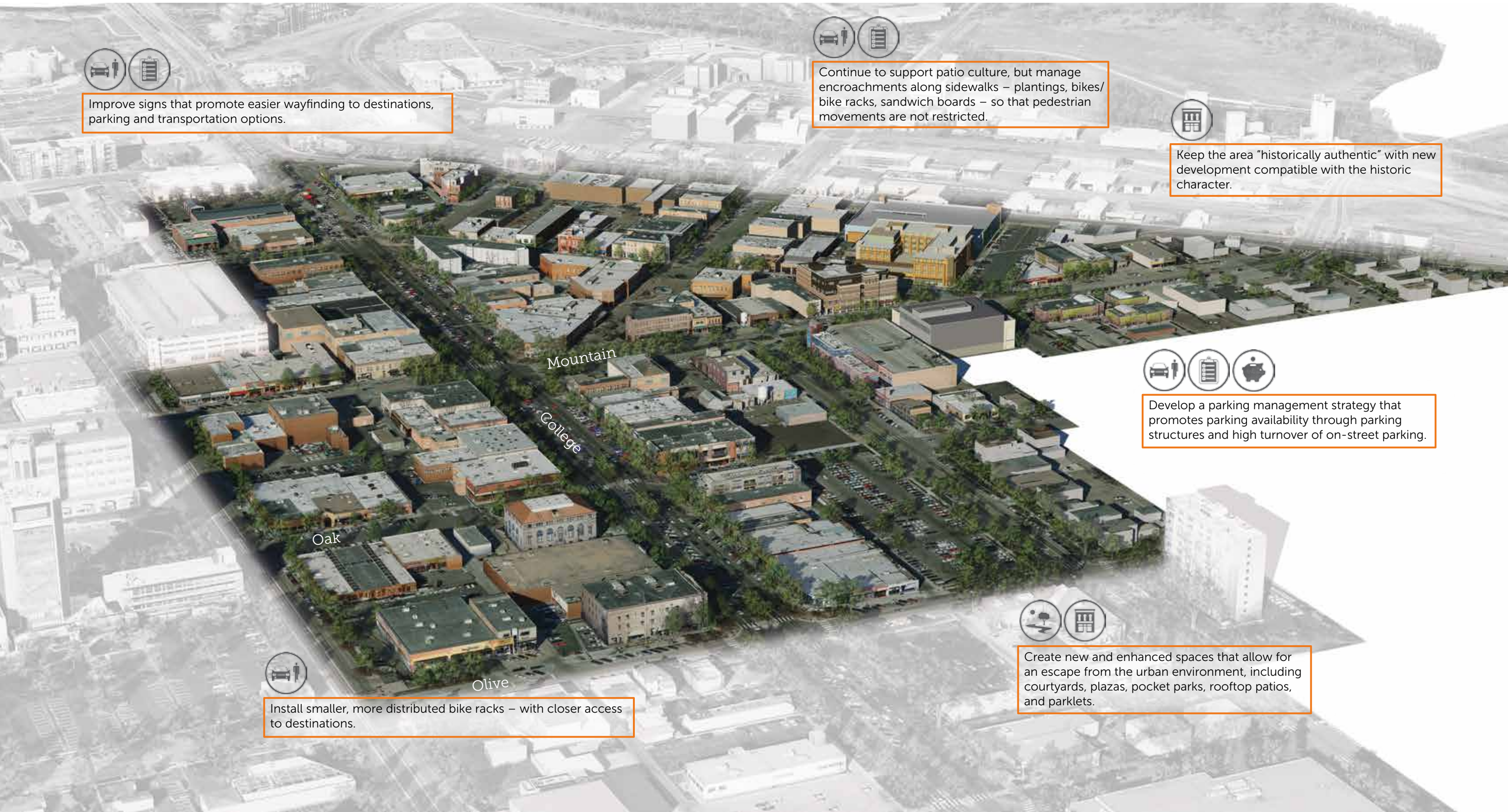
Develop a parking management strategy that promotes parking availability through parking structures and high turnover of on-street parking.



Create new and enhanced spaces that allow for an escape from the urban environment, including courtyards, plazas, pocket parks, rooftop patios, and parklets.



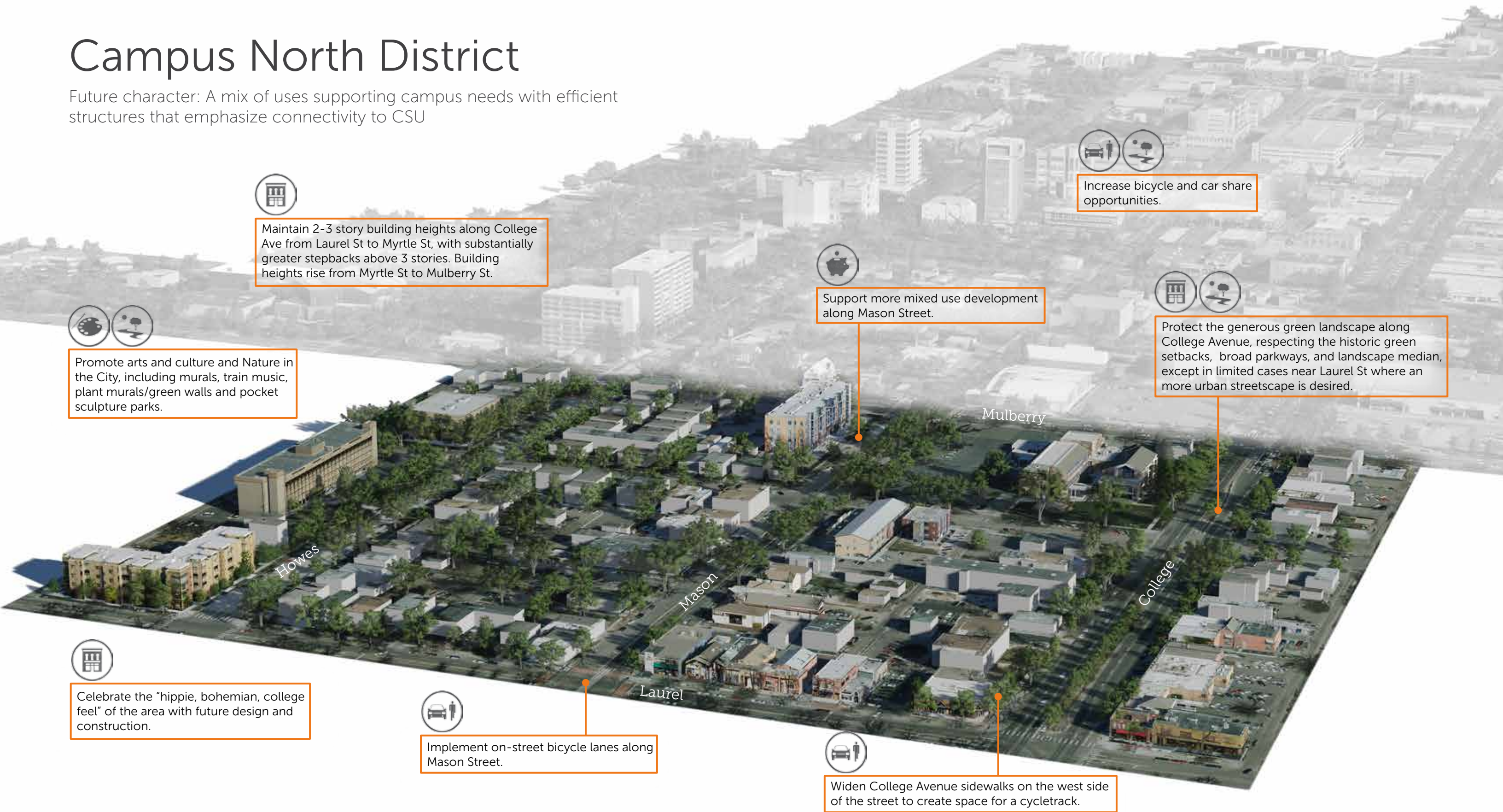
Install smaller, more distributed bike racks – with closer access to destinations.





# Campus North District

Future character: A mix of uses supporting campus needs with efficient structures that emphasize connectivity to CSU



Maintain 2-3 story building heights along College Ave from Laurel St to Myrtle St, with substantially greater setbacks above 3 stories. Building heights rise from Myrtle St to Mulberry St.



Increase bicycle and car share opportunities.



Promote arts and culture and Nature in the City, including murals, train music, plant murals/green walls and pocket sculpture parks.



Support more mixed use development along Mason Street.



Protect the generous green landscape along College Avenue, respecting the historic green setbacks, broad parkways, and landscape median, except in limited cases near Laurel St where an more urban streetscape is desired.



Celebrate the “hippie, bohemian, college feel” of the area with future design and construction.



Implement on-street bicycle lanes along Mason Street.



Widen College Avenue sidewalks on the west side of the street to create space for a cycletrack.

 **N** View looking northwest



# Entryway Corridor

Future character: A scenic residential and commercial movement corridor that references the area’s railroad heritage

➔ N View looking northwest



Within strategic locations, remove access points and construct intersection neckdowns at Riverside that will free up space for landscaping and new sidewalks.



Rezone existing residential properties west of Riverside to promote a more residential character.



Widen/redesign sidewalks on the southwest side of Riverside as redevelopment occurs.



Maximize tree planting and landscaping along the northeast side of Riverside to create an inviting feeling of entry into Downtown.



Create a gateway feature through landscape, art, signs, and buildings at the Mulberry/Riverside intersection.





[fcgov.com/downtown](https://fcgov.com/downtown)

