

# MIDTOWN PLAN

AN URBAN DESIGN VISION FOR A REVITALIZED CORRIDOR



URBAN

TRANSIT-  
ORIENTED

VIBRANT



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Project lead:**

Winter & Company  
1265 Yellow Pine Ave.  
Boulder, CO 80304  
[www.winterandcompany.net](http://www.winterandcompany.net)

**Sub-consultants:**

Alta Planning & Design  
Britina Design Group  
Centro, Inc.  
Felsburg, Holt & Ullevig  
Shears Adkins Rockmore

**CITY COUNCIL**

Karen Weitkunat, Mayor  
Gerry Horak, Mayor Pro Tem, District 6  
Bob Overbeck, District 1  
Lisa Poppaw, District 2  
Gino Campana, District 3  
Wade Troxell, District 4  
Russ Cunniff, District 5

**CITY BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**

Art in Public Places Board  
Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Commission on Disability  
Economic Advisory Commission  
Natural Resources Advisory Board  
Parks and Recreation Board  
Planning and Zoning Board  
Transportation Board

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Darin Atteberry, City Manager  
Bruce Hendee, Sustainability Services  
Megan Bolin, Economic Health  
Aaron Iverson, FC Moves  
Seth Lorson, Planning Services  
Emma McArdle, Transfort  
Timothy Wilder, Planning Services

**MIDTOWN STAKEHOLDERS**

South Fort Collins Business Association  
Fort Collins Auto Dealers Association  
Midtown businesses, employers, employees and residents



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# INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

Midtown is a key portion of the College Avenue commercial corridor, spanning slightly over three miles from Prospect Road on the north to Fairway Lane on the south. A significant portion of College Avenue, the Mason Corridor and new MAX Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line has been a priority area for the City, as it has recently been the focus of community attention and investment and is collectively defined as the “**community spine**” in *City Plan (2011)*.



Existing Frontage Road



Existing College Avenue Corridor (View from Frontage Road)

**Policy LIV 5.2** of *City Plan* provides the foundation for continued focus in Midtown stating:

*The ‘community spine’ shall be considered the highest priority area for public investment in streetscape and urban design improvements and other infrastructure upgrades to support infill and redevelopment and to promote the corridor’s transition to a series of transit-supportive, mixed-use activity centers over time” (City Plan, pg. 52).*





Midtown Redevelopment Study was a market study for the area.



MCC Existing Conditions Survey was conducted by the URA.

## PREVIOUS PLANS

In addition to *City Plan*, other City projects that influence Midtown are:

- ***Transit Oriented Development Overlay Zoning Regulations*** which include:
  - Density bonuses for incorporating affordable housing and/or structured parking
  - Site and building design standards
- ***Midtown Redevelopment Study (2010)***, a market study that determined Midtown has:
  - Over 600,000 square feet of vacant retail space
  - Capacity for 1,500-3,000 new housing units
  - Capacity for 200,000 square feet of new office space
- ***Existing Conditions Survey and Urban Renewal Plan (2011)***
  - Determined blight conditions exist throughout the corridor
  - Established the ability for the Urban Renewal Authority to use tax increment financing (TIF) to leverage private investment.

While these initiatives have helped establish the foundation for Midtown's future, they lack a **cohesive design vision** to guide public and private investment within the corridor. Subsequently, City Council initiated the development of this Midtown Plan.



## PROJECT AREA BOUNDARY

The Project Area Boundary, shown to the right, extends along College Avenue from Prospect Road on the north to Fairway Lane on the south. The project area encompasses the MAX Bus Rapid Transit corridor's southern terminus station, South Transit Center, as well as 7 other stations to the north: Harmony, Troutman, Horsetooth, Swallow, Drake, Spring Creek and Prospect. The boundary extends east of College to include Foothills Mall and everything between JFK Parkway and College Avenue.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Midtown Plan are:

- Complement current and forthcoming investment by **articulating a vision** for the area.
- **Assure multi-modal connectivity and improved circulation** throughout Midtown and **promote optimum use of MAX** Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.
- **Craft a parking strategy** that supports increased densities.
- **Improve wayfinding and sense of identity.**
- Identify opportunities to **further enhance streetscapes.**
- Provide a **rich collection of outdoor places** that enhance the experience of Midtown.
- **Articulate design objectives** through varied development prototype case studies.
- **Guide the design of future redevelopment** to reinforce the vision for the area.
- Provide **recommendations for financing and implementing** project visions.







Community members offered input on many design concepts for the corridor including the idea to identify three designated “character areas” with themes that would convey a distinct identity and help guide development



Community members presented their group’s ideas for Midtown.



Community workshop, November 2012

Intro-4

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

Information and guidance for this Plan was collected through various means of public outreach. A **community workshop** was held on November 14, 2012 that included approximately 70 attendees of property owners, business owners, residents adjacent to the corridor and other interested citizens. The workshop was an intensive, hands-on experience where citizens were able to work as city planners and design their own visions for Midtown.



A “game piece” activity took place where residents cut out various conceptual land use typologies and placed them on the maps to envision what redevelopment scenarios could look like.

The team also conducted a **work session with City Council** on January 8, 2013 to obtain their feedback regarding the Plan’s progress, specifically regarding key emerging concepts that will shape the Plan. Key topics included character areas, circulation, design, parks, plazas and open space, gateways, wayfinding and signage.

Other meetings with community organizations, such as the **South Fort Collins Business Association (SFCBA)**, and **City Boards and Commissions** were also held on a regular basis. Focus groups also met to differentiate and understand the viewpoints of property and business owners, developers, and neighbors. Additional input was obtained using an **online questionnaire**.

Midtown Plan



## USING THE PLAN

This Plan will serve as a policy guide for the City and private investors as they adopt new regulations and incentive programs and make investments in the area. It also may be used by property owners who seek to coordinate their improvement projects with those of their neighbors. The following chapters describe in detail the objectives of the Plan. Chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 1 - General Framework Concepts
- Chapter 2 - Mobility and Access
- Chapter 3 - Streetscapes, Signage and Wayfinding
- Chapter 4 - Parks and Open Space
- Chapter 5 - Development Prototypes
- Chapter 6 - Design Guidelines
- Chapter 7 - Implementation



Workshop participants introduced an idea to encourage development of “pocket communities.”



# SUMMARY POINTS

## PLAN INTRODUCTION

- Midtown’s boundaries encompass a significant portion of the “**community spine**”, as identified in *City Plan*, which is given the **highest priority for public investment**.
- A **cohesive design vision** is needed to guide public and private investment.
- **MAX bus rapid transit** line opening in 2014 **will catalyze and transform the corridor**.



# 1 - GENERAL FRAMEWORK CONCEPTS

Today, Midtown is an active place, with a wide range of commercial activities and a limited amount of residential and institutional uses. While it is a vital part of the city, it **lacks a distinct identity**, and is dominated by automobiles and an eclectic mix of buildings.

This chapter describes the overall **framework for achieving the vision** for Midtown Fort Collins. It builds on initial concepts that were set forth in the *Midtown Redevelopment Study*, providing refinements to some of those ideas and adding others expressed in community meetings and workshops.



Most buildings are set back from College Avenue with parking in front, which caters to the automobile instead of the pedestrian.



While Midtown is a vital part of the city, it lacks a distinct identity.



Bicycle and pedestrian connections are missing in many places, which challenges non-motorized access to Midtown.





Safe, attractive pedestrian connections are vital to the success of Midtown as a neighborhood in its own right.



Inviting streetscapes with active ground floor uses will help enliven the area.



Outdoor cafe seating is a must for the temperate Colorado climate.

## THE VISION FOR MIDTOWN

The vision for Midtown is that it will be a **vital district**, with a **mix of uses and activities** that serve a broad spectrum of the community. It will have a **distinct identity** that distinguishes it from other parts of the city, and will serve as a **destination** in its own right.

Streets will be **inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists**, with attractive street edges, and active urban plazas and spaces. Signature features, including **public art and civic facilities**, will be located strategically throughout the area and serve as identifiers for smaller sub-areas within Midtown and invite year-round use.

Midtown will become an **urban district of choice** for many residents and an important **economic generator** for the city. It also should serve abutting residential neighborhoods and be **conveniently accessible** from them with the improvements of existing and addition of new streets throughout Midtown.

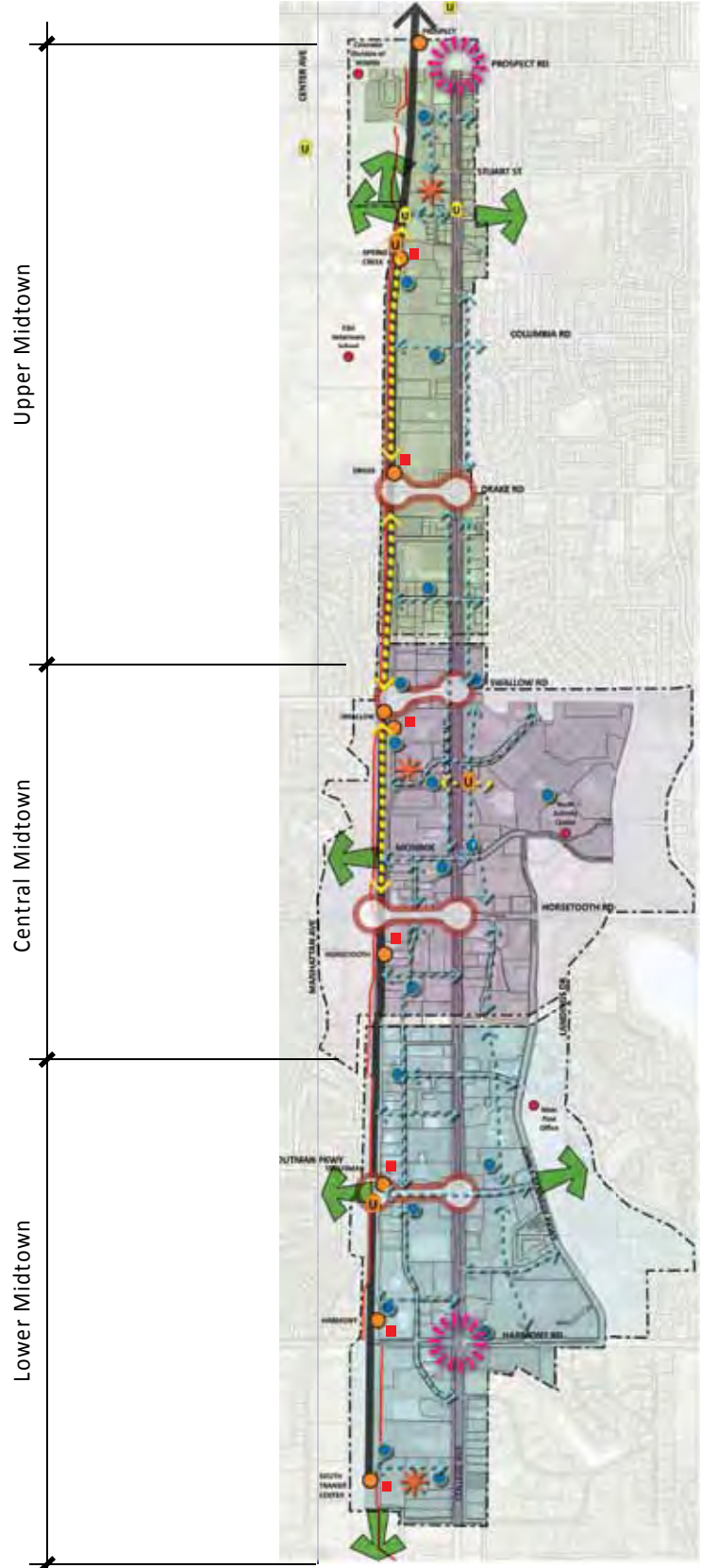
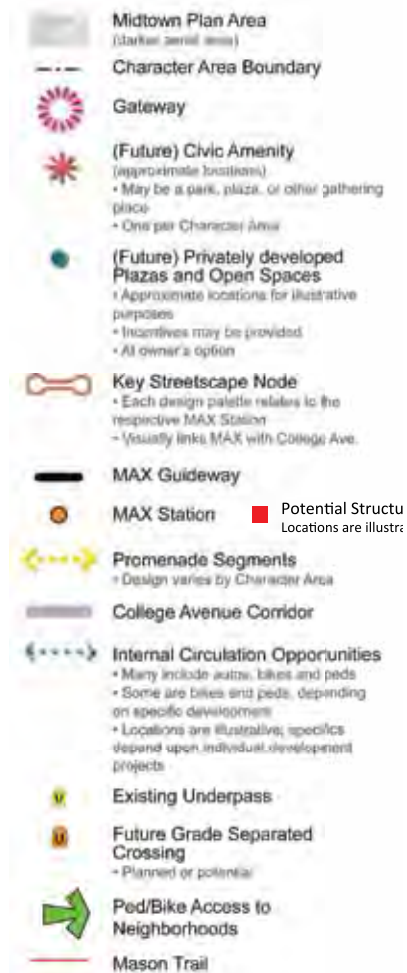
The **MAX line** will become a central spine in Midtown, just as College Avenue is. New development will be of **high quality, sustainable urban form** that supports a **pedestrian environment** and fronts onto MAX through four-sided block development. Key intersections will connect pedestrian, bike and auto traffic, from College Avenue to MAX with **distinctive, identifiable streetscapes, signage and wayfinding**.

**College Avenue** will continue to be a major north-south regional connection, but new development will be more urban in nature and **buildings will address College with parking in back**, rather than the reverse that exists today.

The *Framework Map* on page 1-3 graphically explains the improvements to be made for achieving this bold vision. This map should serve as a reference for the rest of the chapter.



## FRAMEWORK MAP



\*See Appendix for expanded 11x17 fold-out of Framework Map.





The private and public realm should use sensitive landscaping and materials and evoke a sense of “sustainable living”.



Currently, most trips are made by car in Midtown because the infrastructure and lack of urban form promote it.

## OBJECTIVES FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION

This vision for Midtown is further expanded in the following objectives:

- *A Sustainable District*
- *A Vibrant Mix of Uses*
- *Distinctive Character Areas*
- *Excellence in Design*
- *Active Parks and Open Space*
- *Interconnected Multi-Modal Circulation*
- *Inviting Streetscapes*

A discussion of each objective follows.

### A Sustainable District

Overall, Midtown should develop as a sustainable district culturally, economically and environmentally. This means providing a framework for livability that supports **living, working and recreation** in a way that contributes to a **strong economy** and that makes the best use of **natural resources**.

The environment should be celebrated and site and building design should evoke a sense of environmental awareness. New buildings should be energy efficient and take advantage of solar access, and the potential development of thermal districts should be considered. They should use sustainable, local materials where possible to reinforce a sense of locality. Urban form should minimize automobile trips and encourage more walking and biking and less driving, and site design should utilize environmentally friendly measures such as low impact development techniques.



## A Vibrant Mix of Uses

Midtown should include a **rich mix of uses**, and at **higher densities** than exist today. Commercial businesses will continue to be an important part of the formula, and more housing should be introduced, as well as civic and institutional uses. Housing, in the form of apartments and townhouses, should be developed to take advantage of the MAX transit system and help create more ridership for the MAX service, and to make more efficient use of land that is close to the city center. Some of this housing would be developed as upper levels of mixed use buildings that face onto College Avenue, while others would orient to cross streets, Mason Street, and to the MAX line. Housing should address a **diversity of markets**, including students, young professionals, families and seniors.

Currently, the surrounding land use densities are below nationally accepted thresholds for adequate support of high frequency transit. Within walking distance of MAX stations, there is an overall density of about 3 dwelling units per acre and there are approximately 8 employees per acre. Studies conducted by organizations such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) estimate that 15 dwelling units per acre, or 25 employees per acre, or a combination of dwelling units and employees is the minimum density needed to support high frequency transit such as MAX.

Within the range of commercial uses, a rich diversity of retail, entertainment, dining, and service should be considered. Professional offices, research and development, and incubator spaces should also be in the mix. Automobile dealerships also make up an important part of the Midtown economy. When considered all together, the mix of uses in Midtown should serve the region as well as nearby neighborhoods.

In essence, while **more urban, mixed-use development** is to be promoted as a key part of reinvestment in Midtown, there should continue to be room for many other enterprises, albeit in forms that are more consistent with the image and form for the design character of the area.

### Current Uses

While Midtown already includes a relatively wide range of uses, auto-oriented commercial businesses predominate today. Most of these exist as individual, free-standing big boxes, or sets of small strip centers. Some clusters of professional offices also occur and the Foothills Mall stands out as a distinct concentration of commercial activity. Residential use occurs in limited amounts.

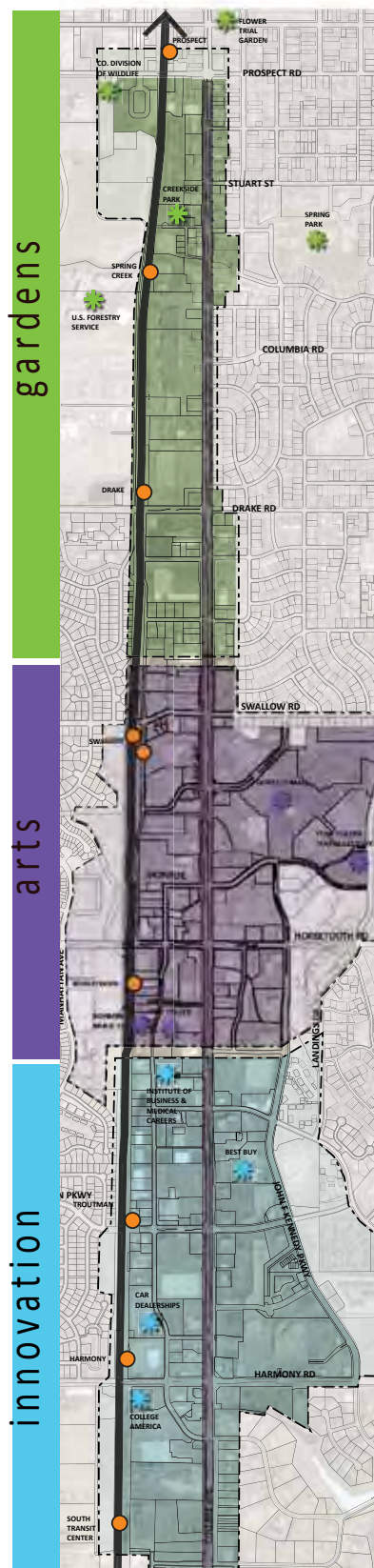


Groceries serve local neighborhoods and the city at large.



Auto dealers contribute to the economy in Midtown.





## Distinctive Character Areas

While Midtown is considered to be one long corridor, it has differences, in terms of use and character. The scale of the site and buildings of Foothills Mall cause it to stand out, for example, while the mid to south segment is well known for its automobile dealerships. At present, however, these sub-areas are not well defined and lack distinctive identities.

In order to enrich the cultural fabric of the district and help users conceptualize the area in manageable pieces, Midtown should be perceived as a **series of sub-areas**, each with a **distinct identity**. Three Character Areas are identified, each with its own suggested “theme.”

Dividing the district into three thematic segments helps to break down the length of the corridor and provide the opportunity to refine sub-district identity. These themes should be expressed in streetscape elements in the public realm, as well as private sector areas.

Each theme should reflect some of the inherent features of these sub-areas, but it is important to understand that they are not literal, in terms of the uses they imply. They serve as a basis for imagery that can occur in wayfinding systems, and in promoting development and events in the sub-areas as well as in advertising.

These should be defined, in part, by the concentrations of certain uses that may distinguish one area from another, as well as the general development patterns that are envisioned. Proximity to abutting neighborhoods, and especially the relationship to nearby MAX stations should also influence the perception of these sub-areas. Finally, certain landscape and architectural design themes may define each individual sub-area. Possible character area themes could be:

- **Upper Midtown - Gardens Theme**
- **Central Midtown - Arts and Entertainment Theme**
- **Lower Midtown - Innovation Theme**



## UPPER MIDTOWN - GARDENS

This area covers the northernmost portion of Midtown. A garden theme for this sub-district was derived from the close proximity to Colorado State University's demonstration gardens to the northeast of Midtown. Additionally, the Spring Creek Trail bisects the area, connecting nearby Spring Park, Creekside Park, and the Gardens on Spring Creek. **Creekside Park** should be the anchoring public feature and enhanced to serve this purpose.

New plazas and gardens should be designed to reflect a "floral" or "natural" theme that reinforces the connection to the university and its agrarian heritage. Developments that incorporate community gardens also should be encouraged.



Upper Midtown = Prospect Rd. to just north of Swallow Rd.

### 1. General Framework Concepts



Spring Park offers a wonderful natural amenity and should be celebrated and used to connect to the regional trail system.



Landscapes in Upper Midtown should be more "natural" rather than manicured.





Public art already appears in Midtown, and it should continue to be promoted throughout the area, and especially in Central Midtown.



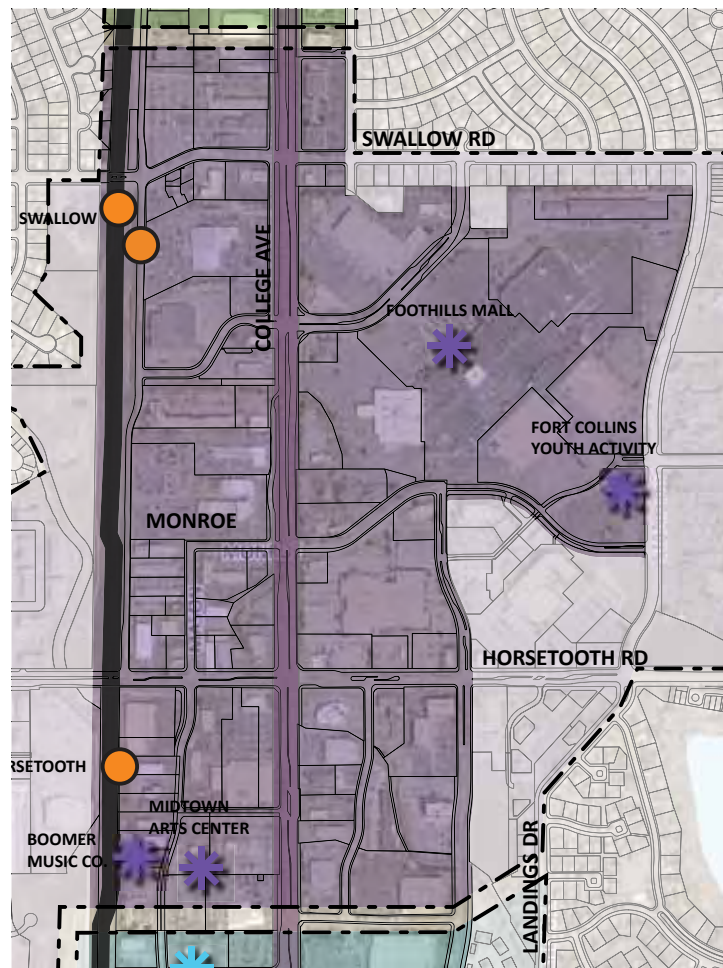
Interactive games, like life-size chess pieces, can serve as artwork and usable “furniture”. The area could also be programmed for frequent events that encourage activity, such as a sidewalk chalk festival.



Iconic sculptures in plazas can bring identity to Central Midtown and celebrate “the arts”.

## CENTRAL MIDTOWN - ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Central Midtown lies in the middle of the corridor, between Swallow Road and Bockman Drive. An **enhanced Foothills Mall** will be an anchoring component, framed with other improved blocks on both the east and west sides of College Avenue. Arts and Entertainment should be a theme, in terms of use and design. **Public art**, in outdoor plazas and courtyards, as well as at key intersections would highlight this theme. A **major urban plaza** should be located in this area to serve as a focal point for events and activities, as well as for informal year-round enjoyment.

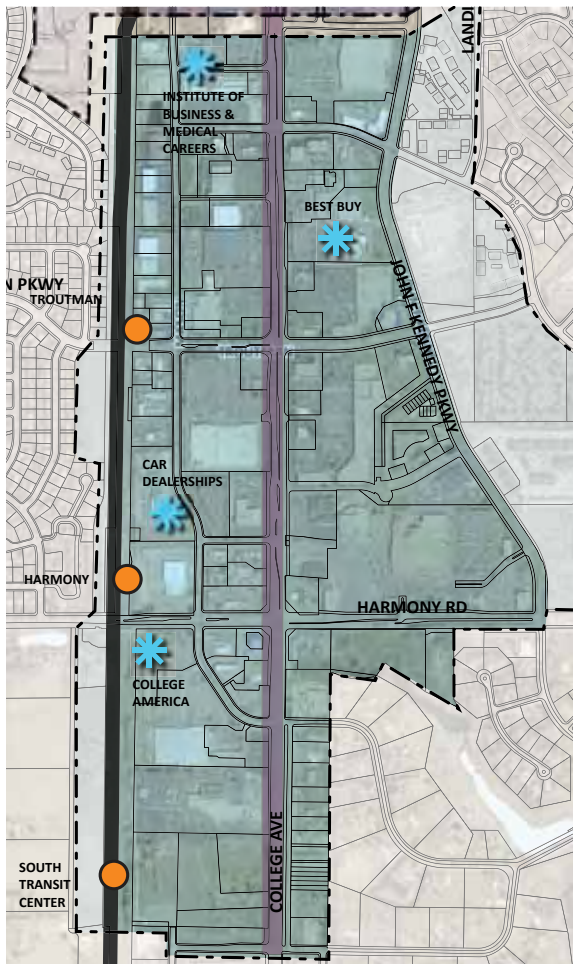


Central Midtown = north of Swallow Rd. to Bockman Drive.



## LOWER MIDTOWN - INNOVATION AS A THEME

The lower, or southern portion of Midtown, between Bockman Drive and Fairway Lane is already an energetic place with a variety of big box retail, professional office clusters and smaller commercial buildings which serve regional customers. Some of these buildings are well suited for research and development, or as incubator spaces for emerging new businesses, as there are several technology businesses and research and development firms nearby. For this reason, an emphasis on technology could give an identity to this portion of the corridor. **Designs that convey innovation** in building systems and materials should be encouraged. A **new public amenity** should be considered for this area to provide a focal point. One opportunity to consider is the land adjacent to the MAX station at the South College Transit Center.



Lower Midtown = Bockman Drive to Fairway Lane



Buildings may have a more “tectonic” feel to them in Lower Midtown.



Buildings with “flex” space allow the use to change over time, while continuously activating the area with daytime workers.



## Current Design

At present, the quality of design in Midtown is mixed. Some buildings and landscapes convey a sense of permanence, and with a high quality of design that speaks of today. Other designs are dated, or are generic in character, with no distinct association with Midtown. While some recent improvements signal an interest in “raising the bar,” the overall character is nondescript.



New buildings should convey a sense of permanence with its materials palette and form.

## Excellence in Design

Midtown should be known for excellence in design. This in turn will convey a sense of a **high quality of life**, and in the goods, services and activities that occur there. Improvements in Midtown, including buildings, landscapes, and site design should be of high quality. A wide variety of designs that **express creativity** should be welcomed.

Buildings should use materials that are durable and well detailed. Masonry, in the form of stone, brick and high quality architectural metals, should be encouraged and detailed to provide a human scale and convey a **sense of permanence**. Buildings should be **“urban”** in nature, with active street edges and a generous amount of transparency at the ground level to invite passersby and promote shopper viewing.

Landscapes should include a palette that is rich, distinctive and coordinated. High quality plants and materials should be used and creativity in landscape is also encouraged to contribute to a sense of identity. In the public realm, some landscape materials should be used consistently throughout Midtown, while others should vary, to distinguish each character area. Private realm landscapes should focus on enhancing the pedestrian experience. Plazas and courtyards should offer shady places for people to gather and a place to rest and experience the natural environment, while also serving abutting uses.

Site design should reinforce the urban fabric, taking into consideration pedestrians, visual interest, and high quality resident experiences. Each site should consider its surroundings and respond appropriately to the context around it. Buildings should face onto major streets and entrances should be accented and easily accessible. Parking should be masked by buildings or landscape and located mostly internal to the blocks. Connections should be provided through large blocks to allow for easier pedestrian access and circulation.



## Active Parks and Open Space

As shown on the Framework Plan (see page 1-3), a key concept is to establish **three large civic spaces** (orange asterisks) - one in each character area. Although locations are diagrammatic and could change, the following are envisioned:

- Creekside Park could become the main civic focus in Upper Midtown, enhanced with specialized programming, such as summer concerts, to draw visitors;
- A new, large civic plaza could be built south of the Swallow MAX Station to connect to and draw from Foothills Mall in Central Midtown; and
- Lower Midtown could be enhanced by a large civic space near the South Transit Center to provide a strong public-amenity anchor for the corridor.

A series of publicly accessible, smaller outdoor spaces are also envisioned, distributed throughout Midtown and depicted as blue dots on the Framework Map. Many of these would be provided as part of privately-developed projects, perhaps with special incentives. These would serve individual properties as outdoor use areas, such as for dining and outdoor displays, as well as sitting areas and passive parks. These plazas and open spaces should be linked together, whenever feasible, by sidewalks, internal paths and walkways.



Plazas and courtyards allow for areas of “discovery” and respite.



Outdoor seating in a warm, sunny place will draw people in year-round.



## Existing Conditions

Land development patterns in Midtown have been strongly influenced by auto access and parking. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems are fragmented. However, the new MAX system will alter this dynamic, creating opportunities for redevelopment to become more pedestrian-oriented and inviting to bicyclists.



Pedestrian infrastructure in Midtown exists, but is not clearly delineated from auto traffic, thus making it feel uncomfortable.



Existing intersections are very long and hard for the elderly and people with disabilities to cross in the given amount of time.

## Interconnected Multi-modal Circulation

**Multi-modal circulation** is a central component of the City's comprehensive plan, where all conventional *and* "alternative" modes are accommodated in a safe and attractive environment. Pedestrians and bicyclists should feel comfortable moving around Midtown and the infrastructure should support them. Another major aspect is **promoting the use of MAX** by allowing better circulation and visibility to stations.

Access and circulation should be supported *into* Midtown from adjacent neighborhoods, as well as *through* it. Internal circulation options should be improved to relieve traffic volumes on College Avenue and to invite use by pedestrians and bicyclists. In some places, these may be public streets (such as a portion of Mason Street that already exists). In other places, they may be private street-like drives, which would be accomplished with cross-property easements or other right-of-way agreements among property owners. And in other locations, they may simply be enhanced lanes that serve individual parking lots or mid-block pedestrian passages. In all cases, **continuity of circulation** should be the focus.

This network will evolve incrementally, as properties redevelop, or as property owners make improvements to parking and internal circulation systems. The concept is illustrated diagrammatically on the Framework Map (page 1-3).



## NORTH-SOUTH INTERNAL CIRCULATION

To the extent feasible, internal streets or street-like drives should be developed that run parallel to College Avenue, but provide access between properties at a slower, calmer pace than on College and that is inviting to business and residential uses.

On the east side of College, this may be a combination of some short internal streets which connect to a series of internal street-like drives within abutting parking lots.

## EAST-WEST INTERNAL CIRCULATION

A similar concept should be pursued for internal east-west connections. In some cases, this can be achieved by improving existing streets or private drives to accommodate autos, pedestrians and bicyclists. In other places, new drives would be constructed, as properties redevelop.

In still other locations, where auto access may not be feasible or desired, these east-west routes may simply be enhanced walkways, and may include cycle tracks as well. Many of these would connect to access points for MAX stations and would also connect the series of privately developed plazas and courtyards that would emerge along the corridor as properties redevelop. In a few places, these east-west connections would cross College Avenue, often at (improved) signalized intersections or potentially at an underpass.



The frontage road, if designed with proper connections, can help facilitate north-south movement along the corridor.



In some locations, providing a multimodal street is not feasible or desirable, in which case a multi-use path could work instead.



Internal circulators need not be auto-oriented. Where possible, allow for pedestrian and bike connections.





Allowing for multiple modes of travel will activate the promenade and MAX line.



Special paving in areas of the promenade would make it stand out as a unique place.

## A GRAND PROMENADE

Finally, a key circulation concept is to develop a “grand promenade” along the western edge of the Midtown area, abutting the MAX line. This would be constructed to accommodate bikes and pedestrians, with the anticipation that in the future many properties would orient to the transit line. Some courtyards and gardens would open onto the promenade, often in association with multi-family apartments and townhouses. Businesses could also take advantage of a second access point by providing an entrance fronting the promenade and capturing additional business from pedestrian-traffic.

From Spring Creek Station south to Horsetooth Station, the promenade is envisioned as an elaborate space, with high quality materials and a double row of trees as a buffer between McClelland Street/MAX line and the pedestrian/bike realm. South of Horsetooth Station, the promenade concept would transition over to Mason Street, using existing sidewalks, but with consideration of enhancing the streetscape to make it a more inviting environment for pedestrians.



The long-term vision for the promenade includes an extra-wide multi-use path with new land uses fronting onto it and the MAX line.



## Inviting Streetscapes

At present, the quality of the streetscape is marginal and inconsistent. Intersection designs and wayfinding information do not exist. A single enhanced “gateway” to Midtown exists at the intersection of College Avenue and Harmony Road as well as enhanced landscaping. However, while the intersection is highlighted, nothing suggests that this is an entry point into Midtown. A de facto gateway exists at the northern boundary of Midtown, at the intersection of College Avenue and Prospect, but no design elements identify it as such. Elsewhere within Midtown, several key intersections exist where travelers would benefit from information that would identify Midtown in general or, at a minimum, the individual Character Areas within it.

Conventionally, gateways and key intersections are considered to be single points that travelers *pass through*. However, in the case of Midtown, and with the advent of the MAX system, this concept should be adapted to include major east-west street intersections at College Avenue *and* at the associated MAX stations. This concept is illustrated with a “dumbbell” symbol on the Framework Map (page 1-3). These intersection designs should key off of the design themes for the individual MAX stations and **express the themes** established for the respective Character Areas. They also should include essential wayfinding information, tailored to the context and the different modes of travel.

New streetscape and wayfinding designs should relate to those recently established at the Harmony Road/College Avenue intersection but they also should be **distinctly “Midtown.”** That is, they may use some of the same materials, but reinterpret them to identify the Midtown area. This should include a **“kit of parts,”** such as benches, waste receptacles and planters that may be combined to create a grouping to define a small park or an expanded sidewalk at a street crossing. Other, more substantial streetscape elements should be used to **give identity to the district** as a whole.



Existing “gateway” is not currently understood as such.



New planters on Harmony Road.



Streetscapes should be inviting and made to last.



# SUMMARY POINTS

## FRAMEWORK CONCEPTS

- Midtown will be a vital corridor with a mix of uses and activities that serve a broad spectrum of the community. It will have a distinct identity that distinguishes it from other parts of the city and should be a destination in its own right.
- Streets will be inviting to all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Public art and civic facilities will be located throughout the area and serve as identifiers for the sub-areas.
- Midtown will be an urban corridor.
- Midtown will be an economic generator for the city.
- Midtown's amenities and services will serve abutting residential neighborhoods and be conveniently accessible from them.



# 2 - MOBILITY AND ACCESS

As the MAX system is implemented, ***higher intensity, mixed use redevelopment*** will be focused throughout Midtown. This Plan provides guidance for “setting the stage” for this type of redevelopment to occur. The area demands better circulation and a more fine-grained network that is inviting to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Also, because transit is the stimulus to such development, it is imperative that mindful connections are made to both existing and planned transit services. And inherently, with higher intensities comes the demand for more parking. Creative, urban, and context-sensitive approaches to parking must be established in order to support these desired uses and intensities.

This primary objectives of this chapter are:

- Where feasible, work within the existing curb-to-curb dimensions to provide realistic and quickly implementable solutions for **improved circulation** in the project area.
- Create a safe and attractive **multi-modal environment** to encourage walking and biking to the area.
- Support the planned uses within Midtown by offering more urban and transit-oriented **parking solutions**.



Improving upon existing Midtown alternative mode circulation will be key to the long-term success of the neighborhood and surrounding areas.



Existing frontage roads provide opportunities for pedestrian and bike improvements without inflicting major change to the nature of College Avenue throughout the corridor.



## IMPROVED CIRCULATION

Improving existing circulation patterns within Midtown will help lead to its success as a vibrant, transit-served, multi-modal and mixed use district. Major concepts for improving circulation in the project area include:

- **Transform College Avenue into a multi-modal corridor** that is inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists, while still functioning as a major vehicular arterial for Fort Collins and the region. New buildings will frame the street rather than being set back from it and parking will be moved internal to the blocks. Frontage roads will be maintained, but improved to help facilitate multi-modal circulation within Midtown. Access along College Avenue should be further studied to determine if consolidation would be beneficial in terms of safety and mobility.
- **Improve access to MAX** throughout Midtown. A key focus of this Plan is to enhance the experience of MAX to boost ridership and encourage riders to live, work and play in Midtown. Vehicular, pedestrian and bike access to MAX stations is a main priority of this Plan and the improved circulation concepts. Crossing College Avenue from the east, in order to get to MAX, is an existing obstacle that will need to be addressed. Priority crossing locations are pointed out in the Multi-Modal Map on page 2-14.
- **Implement a “pedestrian promenade”** along the east side of the MAX line and encourage new uses to front onto it to help activate and protect the area. There are also opportunities for existing buildings to be retrofitted to “open up” onto MAX, by creating double entry buildings. At the very least, it is encouraged that existing buildings spruce up their facades to give visual appeal to the area and for pedestrians using the promenade. The main section of the promenade is envisioned between Spring Creek Station and Horsetooth Station with a double tree row landscaped buffer next to MAX with a wide multi-use path adjacent to it and buildings fronting onto it. The concept of the promenade should extend the entire length of the plan area, although it may take different forms based on the availability of space and context of the area.



- **Improve existing and implement new east-west connections** to facilitate movement from existing neighborhoods east and west of College into Midtown and to and from the MAX stations and other transit stops. Many bike paths exist on east-west streets, but are dropped as they approach College Avenue, because bicycle travel is currently prohibited on College. With the transformation of College into a multi-modal environment, these east-west connections will become more natural and should be enhanced.

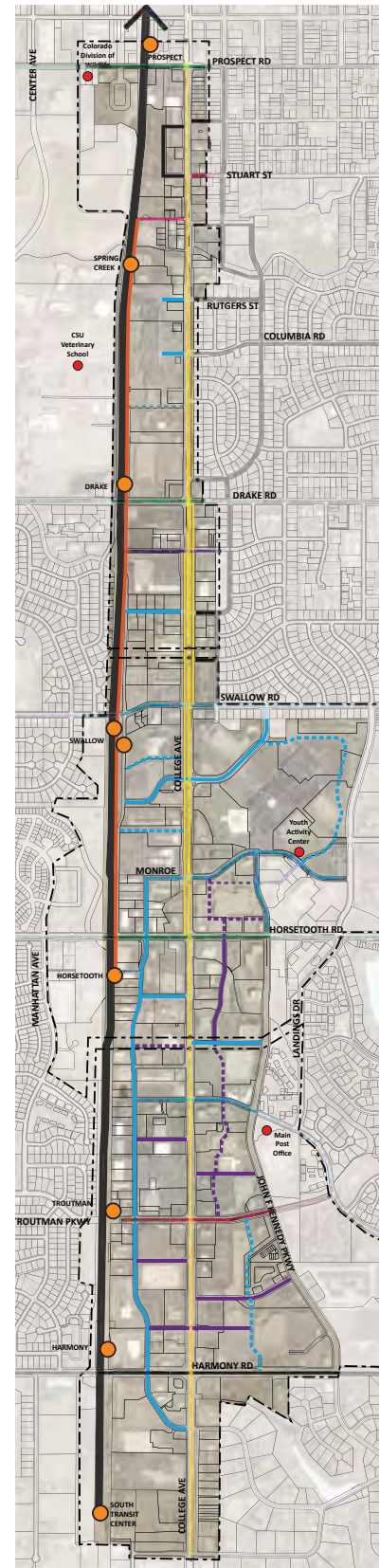
The map to the right shows where proposed improvements will take place throughout Midtown and the following pages describe them in more detail. Graphic cross sections of each condition and a larger version of the Circulation Map are also available in the Appendix.

#### Legend

- 6-Lane Arterial (College Ave.)
- 4-Lane Arterial
- 2-Lane Arterial
- 2-Lane Parkway
- 2-Lane Collector (no bike lanes)
- 2-Lane Collector (w/ bike lanes)
- Pedestrian Promenade
- Existing Streets (no change)
- MAX Guideway
- MAX Station

\*Solid lines represent existing streets and dashed lines represent proposed new streets.

\*See Appendix for expanded 11x17 fold-out of Circulation Map and graphic street cross-sections.



## 2. Mobility and Access



## Quick Wins:

Working within existing curb-to-curb dimensions will save the City time and money and allow work to begin immediately, mainly with restriping, raising planted medians and adding streetscape elements. Outside of the curbs, ideal public realm scenarios are envisioned (i.e. wide, detached sidewalks), which sometimes suggests acquiring additional ROW. It is important to note that all dimensions are suggestions and could be modified in different scenarios to work within existing conditions until redevelopment occurs.

## Proposed Complete Street Sections (CSS)

This section of Chapter 3 presents various cross-sections for each of the roadway types in the study area. The tables and cross-section descriptions on the following pages correlate with the *Circulation Map* on page 2-3. There are four main concepts for street improvements in the study area:

1. Work within **existing curb to curb** dimensions to **include comfortable bike lanes and on-street parking** (where land use warrants), in addition to travel lanes. In this ideal condition, the public realm outside of the curbs would include a **generous tree row** (either in a landscaped lawn or tree grates) adjacent to the curb and **sidewalks** adjacent to the buildings. Currently, many sidewalks are attached to the curb, which is unsafe and unpleasant for pedestrians. The new public realm could be phased as new development occurs and existing significant trees should be saved, where possible. Also note that the proposed dimensions are “ideal” scenarios and could be manipulated, within reason, to accommodate the same vision in a narrower condition. For example, if an existing street’s curb-to-curb dimension is 52’ wide and the ideal condition is 54’, bike lanes could be 7’ wide instead of 8’. Another condition may warrant the need for bicycles, but not necessarily on-street parking, or even parking on just one side of the street to make the vision work, and this is completely acceptable.



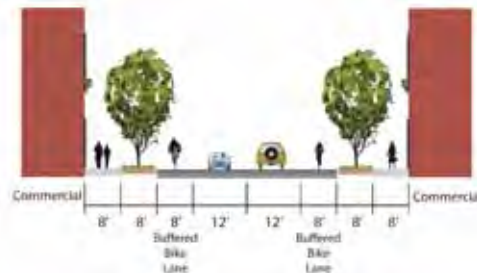


- When it is not feasible to add bike lanes *and* on-street parking within the existing curb-to-curb dimension, then exploring a “**cycle track**” or protected bike lane, adjacent to the sidewalk is ideal. This will depend on building placement and ROW/property lines and would require cooperation on, at minimum, a block scale (as opposed to individual lots), as it is necessary to have a continuous, fluid pathway for bicyclists to travel. This option may be more appealing, as many novice bicyclists feel safer in an off-street condition, which could potentially raise the number of people that choose to travel the neighborhood via bicycles.



When the curb-to-curb dimension doesn't allow on-street bike lanes, explore implementation of “cycle tracks” instead.

- The current layout of Midtown, as discussed previously, is of suburban nature with large setbacks and parking lots between the major streets and the businesses. In order to facilitate better connectivity and circulation throughout Midtown, a short-term option could be to **convert existing travel lanes within parking lots into “street-like private drives”**. This street section would allow two **travel lanes and bike lanes** (or sharrows) in between the curbs and **tree rows and sidewalks** adjacent to new and existing buildings. Again, the dimensions could be adjusted to fit unique scenarios.



There are street sections proposed that would provide private, street-like drives for properties with large parking areas. These would improve cross-property connections.



## College Avenue

STREET SECTION	PROP. CSS	PROP. CTC	ELEMENTS INSIDE CURBS	ELEMENTS OUTSIDE CURBS	PROJECT AREA STREETS	EXIST. ROW	EXIST. CTC
A	140'	90'	* 6 travel lanes * Center Turn Ln.	* Landscaped Buffer * Cycle Track * Sidewalk	(North of Rutgers, South of Horsetooth)	100' - 120' 100' - 120'	83' - 90' 86' - 90'
B	150' or 160'	120'	* 6 travel lanes * Center Turn Ln. * SB Rt. Turn Ln. * Landscaped Buffer (east) * 2 Frontage Road Lanes (east)	* Landscaped Buffer * Cycle Track * Sidewalk	Rutgers to Thunderbird	130'	130' (incl. east frontage rd. and cont. SB rt. turn ln.)
C	205'	180'	* 6 travel lanes * Center Turn Ln. * Landscaped Buffer (east & west side) * 4 Frontage Road Lanes (2 ea. side) * On-Street Pkg. (west side only) * Sharrows or Ded. Bike Lane in lieu of Pkg.	* Tree Row * Sidewalk	Thunderbird to Swallow	180'	180' (incl. east and west frontage rds.)
D	225'	150'	* 6 travel lanes * Center Turn Ln. * Landscaped Buffer (west side) * 2 Frontage Road Lanes (west side) * On-Street Pkg. (west side only) * Sharrows or Ded. Bike Lane in lieu of Pkg.	* Tree Row (west) * Landscaped Buffer (east) * Sidewalks * Cycle Track (east)	Swallow to Horsetooth	120' - 170'	150' (incl. west frontage rd.)

Cross-sections A through D describe the various cross-sections for College Avenue. The current curb-to-curb (CTC) width and laneage configuration of College itself has not been altered in any of these cross-sections, with the understanding that the current College Avenue Boulevard Study will conduct a more thorough review and offer recommendations for that portion of the road. The focus of this street section analysis examines the configuration of the corridor from back of the curbs on each side, including frontage roads where they exist. As shown in the table above, where College Avenue includes frontage roads (B, C & D), the existing rights-of-way (ROW) often lies at the back-of-curb of the frontage road, indicating that existing sidewalks are on private property. It will be up to the City to acquire additional ROW or simply require an easement of private property to institute public realm improvements.



## CROSS-SECTION A

Cross-section A exists north of Rutgers and south of Horsetooth. Current curb to curb dimensions would be kept in these locations, but ROW would be added on either side to accommodate a cycle track and wider sidewalk. Although additional ROW is needed to accommodate the alternative mode improvements, most buildings are set back far enough to allow them to stay. If a building encroaches into the proposed ROW, the decision could be made to modify the dimensions to make it work within existing conditions or be removed.

## CROSS-SECTION B

Cross-section B exists from Rutgers to Thunderbird. An existing frontage road occurs on the east side of the street with mostly residential uses along it and will not change. The west side of the street is commercially focused, but lacks pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Two options are provided for the west side and each option proposes to take over the continuous south-bound right turn lane in order to expand the pedestrian realm.

## A Vision for College Avenue:

These complete street sections (CSS) recommend enhancements for pedestrians and bicyclists along College while working generally within the framework of existing street widths. The community may wish to consider a “bolder” vision that would transform College into a “Grand Boulevard” which would require further discussion/action.



One option for the frontage road includes two travel lanes and on-street parking. Bikes would share the street with cars in this scenario.





An enhanced Frontage Road can provide on-street parking, protected bike lanes or sharrows. These are several design alternatives to be considered.

## CROSS-SECTION C

Cross-section C exists from Thunderbird to Swallow where frontage roads exist on both sides of College. The existing curb to curb dimension (from back of frontage curb to back of frontage curb) is the same as the ROW, meaning that sidewalks are currently on private property. On the east side, multiple office buildings are located 10' from the curb and for that reason, the east side will remain as is. The west side is more flexible and two options for that condition exist: one that has on-street parking with a 12' sidewalk, and another with no parking with a 16' sidewalk. In each condition bikes would share the roadway with autos.

## CROSS-SECTION D

Cross-section D exists from Swallow to Horsetooth and includes the Foothills Mall area. The same two options as section C are proposed for the west side while the east side recommends an expanded ROW that includes a generous landscaped buffer, a cycle track, and a large sidewalk adjacent to new buildings.



A landscaped buffer separates the cycle track, and a small landscaped amenity zone separates pedestrian traffic from bicyclists.



## 4-Lane Arterials

STREET SECTION	PROP. CSS	PROP. CTC	ELEMENTS INSIDE CURBS	ELEMENTS OUTSIDE CURBS	PROJECT AREA STREETS	EXIST. ROW	EXIST. CTC
E	117'	67'	* 4 Travel Lanes * 19' Center Turn Lane/Raised Landscaped Median	* 8' Landscaped Buffer * 8' Cycle Track * 9' Sidewalk	Prospect Horsetooth (east of College)	60' & 90' 100'	50' 67'
F	117'	78'	* 4 Travel Lanes * 14' Center Turn Lane/Raised Landscaped Median * 8' Buffered Bike Lanes	* 10' Landscaped Buffer * 10' Sidewalk	Drake Horsetooth	80' & 100' 100'	78' 78'

Cross-sections E and F show two options for 4-Lane Arterials. 4-Lane Arterials in the project area are: Prospect, Drake, Horsetooth and Harmony. Harmony is not listed because it has already been the subject of an extensive “Enhanced Travel Corridor Alternatives Analysis” and improvements are already being implemented throughout the corridor. These arterials’ main function is to move high volumes of traffic over medium and long distances. These street sections aim to maintain this functionality, while ensuring that pedestrians and cyclists can use the road without feeling overwhelmed.

### CROSS-SECTION E

Cross-section E is a traditional 4-Lane arterial with a center turn lane and median. In some locations throughout Midtown, existing curb-to-curb dimensions are constrained, such as at Prospect and Horsetooth (south of College). Here it may not be feasible to include an on-street bike lane, but a “cycle track” could justifiably fit within the existing ROW. Some dimensions may need to be narrowed on a case-by-case basis to make it work.

### CROSS-SECTION F

Cross-section F is a similar cross-section, but with on-street bike lanes. The narrower median would sacrifice some greenspace in the middle of the road (there would be no median adjacent to any left turn lane and in the case of back-to-back left turns there would be no median at all in the road), but the wider sidewalk would improve pedestrian mobility, and encourage multi-modal access to the area while working within existing dimensions.



## 2-Lane Arterials

STREET SECTION	PROP. CSS	PROP. CTC	ELEMENTS INSIDE CURBS	ELEMENTS OUTSIDE CURBS	PROJECT AREA STREETS	EXIST. ROW	EXIST. CTC
G	84'	54'	* 2 Travel Lanes * 8' Buffered Bike Lanes * On-Street Parking	* 5' Tree Row * 10' Sidewalk	Mason Columbia W. Harvard Swallow Foothills Monroe (E. of College) Boardwalk New Streets	60' 70' 50' 80' 60' & 100' 80' 65' N/A	40' 56' 40' 60' 40' & 60' 60' 48' N/A
H	84'	64'	* 2 Travel Lanes * 14' Turn Lane/Landscaped Median * 6' Bike Lanes * On-Street Pkg.	* 5' Tree Row * 5' Sidewalk	@ intersections		

Cross-sections G through I show options for 2-Lane Arterials. These roadways connect commercial parcels and residential neighborhoods to the arterial road system, and balance the mobility needs of the vehicles traveling on them with access needs to the properties that abut them. Many existing streets don't accommodate for bicycles, parking or both. While provisions for bicycles is an important concept in redeveloping the area with a multi-modal system, on-street parking is a function of need and could come later as areas redevelop. The table above lists recommendations, but each street section should be selected based on the future land use vision for the parcels along each roadway.

### CROSS-SECTIONS G AND H

Cross-sections G and H describe the configuration of a 2-Lane Arterial roadway with parking on both sides of the street. G shows the typical condition (i.e., between intersections), where no center turn lane would be provided, and H shows conditions at those intersections where a left turn lane is needed.

### CROSS-SECTION I

Cross-section I shows the configuration of a 2-Lane Arterial roadway with on-street parking in a reduced or constrained ROW. This is the condition described as a "street-like private drive".



## 2-Lane Parkways

STREET SECTION	PROP. CSS	PROP. CTC	ELEMENTS INSIDE CURBS	ELEMENTS OUTSIDE CURBS	PROJECT AREA STREETS	EXIST. ROW	EXIST. CTC
J	100'	70'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 2 Travel Lanes</li> <li>* 14' - 16' Turn Lane/ Landscaped Median</li> <li>* Buffered Bike Lane or Cycle Track</li> <li>* On-Street Pkg.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7' Tree Row</li> <li>* 7' Sidewalk</li> </ul>	Troutman	100'	70' - 80'

Cross-section J is a one-time occurrence along Troutman Parkway. It builds off the existing Troutman cross-section between Mason and College, with the landscaped median, and extends it to JFK, but removes one travel lane in each direction and adds a protected bike lane and on-street parking. An alternative option would be to move the parking adjacent to traffic and create a cycle track adjacent to the sidewalk for an even more protected option.

### CROSS-SECTION J

Cross-sections J is a “road diet” for Troutman Parkway, which varies in width from 70 to 80 feet curb to curb. The section is a 70-foot curb to curb width; for wider sections, the travel lanes would be widened to 12 feet and the median widened as needed so that the curb lines do not have to be adjusted. An alternate street section includes a cycle track inside the on-street parking area for a safer, more leisurely bike-friendly option.



A “cycle track” option exists for cross-section J, or Troutman Parkway, which creates a designated area for bikes that is protected by parked cars.



## 2-Lane Collectors (no bike lanes)

STREET SEC- TION		PROP. CTC	ELEMENTS INSIDE CURBS	ELEMENTS OUTSIDE CURBS	PROJECT AREA STREETS	EXIST. ROW	EXIST. CTC
K	80'	54'	* 2 Travel Lanes * 14' Turn Lane/Land- scaped Median * On-Street Pkg.	* 7' Tree Row * 6' Sidewalk	Thunderbird and at intersec- tions as needed	60'	50'
L	66'	40'	* 2 Travel Lanes * On-Street Pkg.	* 7' Tree Row * 6' Sidewalk	Mitchell Dr. Creger Dr. Kensington	54' 30' 54'	34' 38' 34'

Cross-sections K and L are 2-Lane Collector roadways that mainly serve to improve connectivity east and west of College Avenue, but that are not significant bike connections, and therefore are the only cross-sections without on-street bike lanes.

### CROSS-SECTIONS K AND L

Cross-section K and L are 2-Lane Collectors with on-street parking and no bike lanes. These sections are intended for smaller, existing streets that do not necessarily provide excellent bike conditions and do not warrant a dedicated bike lane. Sharrows could be incorporated, if desired. Section K would work within Thunderbird's existing 50' CTC by narrowing the median/turn lane by 2 feet and making the parking lanes 8 feet each. Section L could be implemented elsewhere as needed, but then transition to section K at intersections if a left turn lane is needed. In all cases, pedestrians are accommodated in 6-foot sidewalks that are separated from the road by 7-foot tree lawns.



This street is similar to cross-section L with two travel lanes, on-street parking, a tree row and sidewalk.



## 2-Lane Collectors (w/ bike lanes)

STREET SECTION	PROP. CSS	PROP. CTC	ELEMENTS INSIDE CURBS	ELEMENTS OUTSIDE CURBS	PROJECT AREA STREETS	EXIST. ROW	EXIST. CTC
M	65'	45'	* 2 Travel Lanes * 7' Bike Lanes * On-Street Pkg. (one side only)	* 5' Tree Row * 5' Sidewalk	Stuart (E. of College)	60'	44'
N	70'	45'	* 2 Travel Lanes * 7' Bike Lanes * On-Street Pkg. (one side only)	* 5' Tree Row * 10' Sidewalk	Johnson Dr.	26'	32'

Cross-sections M and N are 2-Lane Collectors with bike lanes in both directions and on-street parking on only one side of the street.

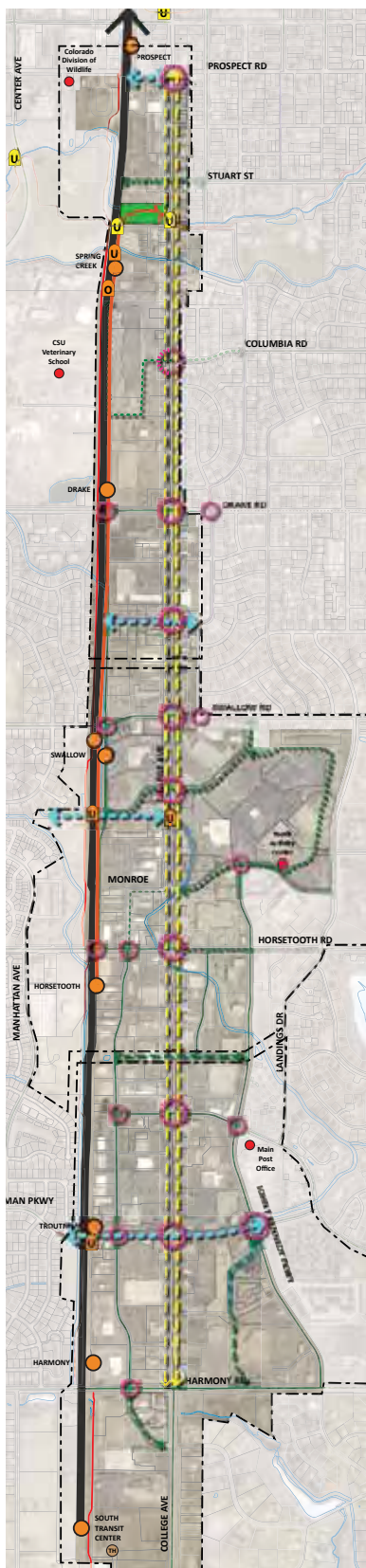
### CROSS-SECTION M

Cross-section M extends the bike lanes and one-sided on-street parking that exist east of Remington on Stuart Street to College Avenue, instead of cutting them off at Remington. This section widens the bike lanes and parking lanes by one foot over the current striping to the east, the space for which is obtained by narrowing the travel lanes 11 feet (versus 12.5 feet in the section to the east).

### CROSS-SECTIONS N

Cross-section N is for Johnson Drive. Johnson currently functions as a local access street but in the future will serve as a connector to the MAX station. The current curb-to-curb width is 32 feet and includes parking on both sides of the street, which is likely to be too narrow for the projected increase in street activity once the area redevelops. The proposed 45-foot curb-to-curb section would remove parking from the park side of the street but add bike lanes in both directions to enhance the multi-modal connection to the MAX station, and additional ROW width has been provided to better accommodate pedestrians on one side of the street.





## A MULTI-MODAL ENVIRONMENT

The City of Fort Collins is actively pursuing a more multi-modal environment. The Complete Streets policy ensures that new streets include bike lanes and adequate sidewalks. As shown in the previous street sections, this Plan intends to transform new *as well as* existing streets into a safe and attractive multi-modal environment with minimal up front effort.

As noted in the Existing Conditions Report (see Appendix), at first glance, Midtown seems to have a good bicycle network. However, upon closer examination there are many gaps that exist. The map to the left indicates where important multi-modal infrastructure is needed to better connect Midtown with surrounding neighborhoods and the new MAX system. With nearly 10% of all journey-to-work trips being generated by non-motorized transportation in Fort Collins, a safe, continuous and comfortable multi-modal system will be an essential component in the future success of Midtown. In addition to journey-to-work trips, it is a goal of this Plan to incentivize leisurely alternative modes transportation, and therefore important to offer a system that provides a high level of service for all ages and abilities to move throughout Midtown in a safe and efficient manner.

### Legend

- Midtown Plan Area (darker aerial area)
- Character Area Boundary
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Bike Route
- Existing Multi-Use Path (MUP)
- Existing Underpass
- Proposed Short-Term Bike Lane
- Proposed Long-Term Bike Lane
- Proposed Shared Facility (Sharrows along Frontage Rd.) or Cycle Track
- Proposed Cycle Track
- Proposed Pedestrian Promenade
- Proposed Intersection Improvement
- Future Grade Separated Crossing
- Points of Interest
- MAX Guideway
- MAX Station
- Trailhead

Major concepts for improving multi-modal circulation in the project area include:

- **Pedestrian Promenade**
- **Continuous, designated bike facilities**
- **Improve intersections**
- **Under/Overpasses**
- **Locating bike parking**
- **Connecting to transit**

\*See Appendix for expanded 11x17 fold-out of Multi-Modal Map.



## Multi-Modal Improvements

### PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE

The Promenade is envisioned as a **grand public space** which is inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists. Creating a pleasant public realm adjacent to the MAX line will also **encourage existing and new development to front onto MAX** instead of turning its back on it, as would currently be the case. The ideal cross-section includes a double-tree landscaped row adjacent to MAX with a wide multi-use path adjacent to new buildings. While this is the ideal scenario, in some locations with limited ROW, like south of Horsetooth, it may be feasible to implement a narrower version to provide continuity. However, the multi-use path should be at least 10' in width to accommodate pedestrians *and* bicyclists.

### CONTINUOUS, DESIGNATED BIKE FACILITIES

Where gaps exist in the current system and where existing curb-to-curb (CTC) and right-of-way (ROW) dimension is available, the concept for Midtown is to provide continuous designated on-street bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, or cycle tracks.

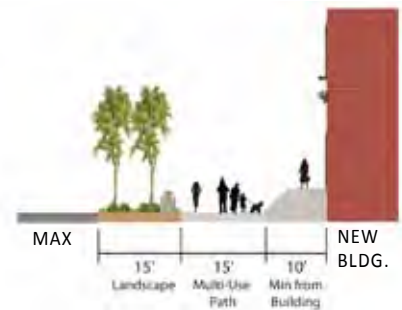
Where land uses and available ROW's do not allow for these improvements, a combination of other facility types such as shared lane markings and bicycle route wayfinding signs can be used to provide a continuous system.



Conventional bike lanes are striped to provide a designated area for bicycles.



Buffered bike lanes provide a buffer (indicated by striping or different paving material) between vehicles and bicycles.



The ideal cross-section includes a 15' landscaped area with a double row of trees adjacent to MAX and a 15' multi-use path for bicyclists and pedestrians adjacent to new buildings.



The promenade is envisioned as a tool to help spur economic development along MAX, as well as provide a pleasant pedestrian route.



The promenade could be designed to be more passive, and have seating and parks/plazas along it.





Green paint to mark intersection crossings is an easy way to implement a pedestrian and bike-first environment.



Proper signage makes auto traffic aware that they are to share the street with bicyclists.



Bike boxes increase visibility of bicyclists at signalized intersections.

## IMPROVED INTERSECTIONS

Intersections are another important piece of the pedestrian and bicycle network that are critical to providing continuity and safety within a system, and if not designed properly, can act as an obstacle. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be clearly marked and carried not only up to the intersection, but *through* it.

Intersections designed or retrofitted with bicycle facilities should reduce conflicts between vehicles and bicyclists by increasing the level of visibility, predictability and awareness with other road users. Concepts being explored that provide safer intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists include elements such as signage, pavement markings, medians, signal detection, green paint and potentially innovative features such as “bike boxes” or two-stage turn boxes. Implementing any combination of these measures will increase safety, reduce risk of crashes and increase alternative mode trips within Midtown.

## BIKE SHARE PROGRAM

Fort Collins was among 43 communities in 27 states awarded free technical assistance by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to explore the possibility of establishing or expanding a local Bike Share program. Bike Share is a service



Two-stage turn Queue Boxes improve bicyclists' ability to safely and comfortably make left turns.



where bicycles are readily available for shared use, usually in multiple, popular locations around a city. The EPA's assistance was in the form of public workshops conducted by EPA staff and consultants to solicit input and demonstrate the potential of Bike Share to create additional commuting options. As a follow up to the public workshops and site visit, a memorandum was developed with proposed strategies to guide implementation or expansion of Bike Share in Fort Collins. One of the proposed next steps was to establish a Bike Share task force to continue planning the next phase of Bike Share in Fort Collins. Midtown could greatly benefit from a local Bike Share program, and this effort should be supported.

### UNDERPASSES/OVERPASSES

Currently, the Spring Creek Trail provides the only grade separated crossing of College Avenue and the railroad tracks in Midtown. The underpass at Troutman is nearing completion and will provide another needed connection to Midtown from the west residential neighborhoods. An overpass that will connect the Mason Trail to the Whole Foods parking lot is now in design and will contribute to the overall connectivity from the west. Currently, a separate planning effort for Foothills Mall is evaluating the feasibility of creating a connection underneath College Avenue from the mall to McClelland. In general, the current development pattern and existing infrastructure limits the opportunities for more grade separated connections to Midtown. As new redevelopment occurs, especially at challenged locations for bicycle/pedestrian crossings (like College Avenue and the railroad), grade separated connections should be explored that would improve north-south and east-west connectivity to local neighborhoods, businesses and transit.



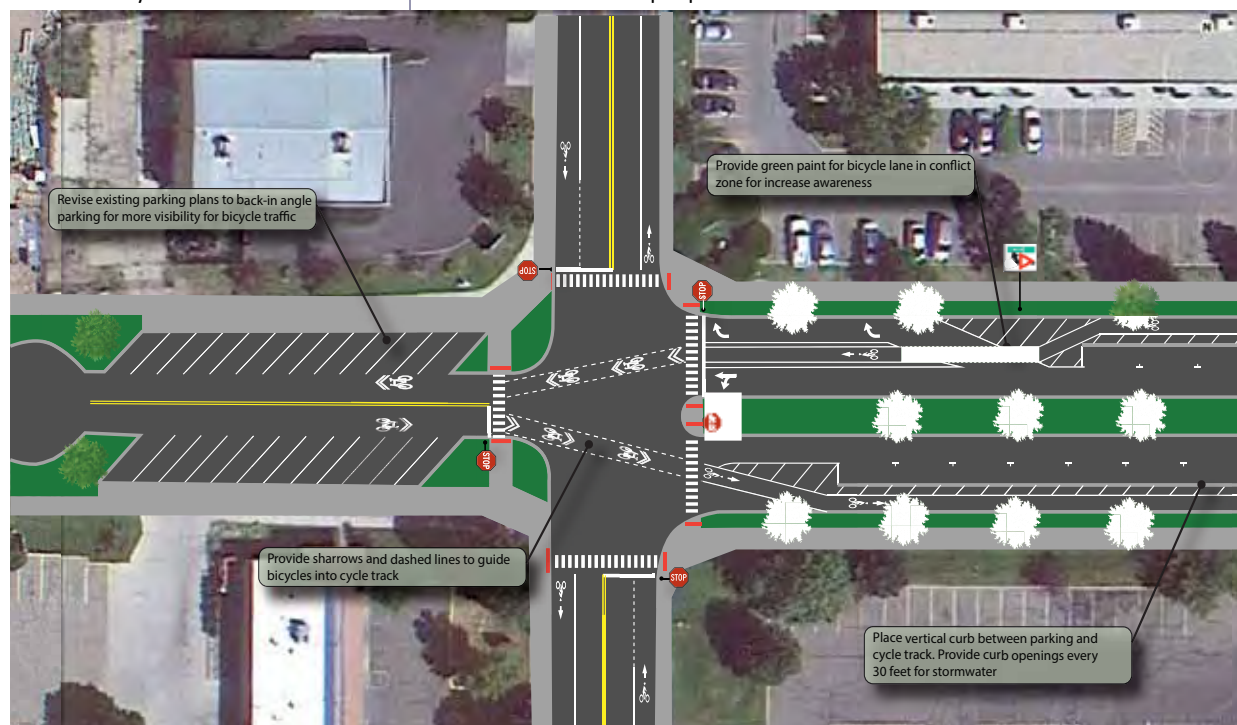
Underpasses and Overpasses provide a safe alternative to at-grade crossings and can add to sense of place.



As individual properties, businesses or blocks redevelop and the minimum number of bike racks do not meet the demand, a BID could supply individuals, businesses or blocks with bike racks or look at sites for bike parking corrals.

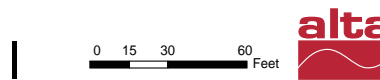


This drawing shows how all of the above-mentioned elements work together. The example intersection of Troutman Parkway and Mason Street is used for demonstration purposes.



Midtown Fort Collins Urban Design Study: Troutman Parkway and Mason Street Intersection

Date: March 2013  
Source: Data obtained from Google Earth  
Author: AP, Alta Planning + Design



## LOCATING BIKE PARKING

The City's development code for bicycle parking provides a good starting point and should be used as the initial guide for providing the minimum number of enclosed and fixed bike racks as redevelopment occurs.

The location of bike parking will depend on how long the users will be parking. Short-term (less than two hours) bike parking should be located within 50 feet of the main entrance, whereas long-term parking (several hours or more) can be located within 500 feet of the destination. Different land uses within Midtown will demand more bicycle parking than others.

A Business Improvement District (BID) could be set up to meet this type of demand. As individual properties, businesses or blocks redevelop, and the minimum number of bike racks do not meet the demand, the BID could supply bike racks or bike corrals.



## CONNECTING TO TRANSIT

Enhancing the performance of transit service is a primary objective of this Plan. Currently, Transfort Route 1 operates along College Avenue throughout the study area. FLEX, the regional route between Fort Collins and Longmont, also operates on College Avenue throughout the study area. MAX will replace these two routes as the primary north/south connection through Midtown. Other routes making east/west connections are also important to the overall transportation system and demand seamless connections to each other. MAX will serve eight stops within Midtown:

- **Prospect**
- **Spring Creek (near Whole Foods)**
- **Drake**
- **Swallow (north and south-bound stations)**
- **Horsetooth**
- **Troutman**
- **Harmony**
- **South Transit Center**

Providing convenient access to bus stops located throughout Midtown is important, as is making the stops attractive and inviting to users. Transfort will modify its fixed route system with the advent of MAX, rearranging some service to focus on the new South Transit Center, to be located south of Harmony Road at the terminus of the MAX guideway and routes will be realigned to provide for transfers to and from the MAX service specifically at the major east-west arterial streets.

Existing bus stop designs, especially along primary east-west streets (Prospect, Drake, Swallow, Horsetooth, Troutman and Harmony) - refer to “dumbbells” on Framework Map - should be elevated to meet the quality of bus stops along the MAX corridor and should fit within the recommended streetscape palette for Midtown (see chapter 4). This will help to visually reinforce the sense of connection with the pedestrian and bicycle systems.



Some existing bus stops provide shelter, and some include only a bench. New bus stops should provide a sense of identity for Midtown by matching the streetscape palette proposed (see Chapter 4).



Rendering of the planned Horsetooth Station



Rendering of the planned Drake Station





In order for Midtown to transform into an urban, mixed-use place, it needs creative parking strategies that support it.



Replace a “sea of parking” with a “sea of people” instead!

## PARKING STRATEGIES

In general, the study area was developed in the mid-1960’s through the early 1990’s, with the typical building parcel consisting of a large surface lot located adjacent to College Avenue, and the building property set back a generous distance from the street. This layout is typical of the large-lot suburban design philosophy of that era, which geared itself toward a vehicle-first access plan and site layout. Furthermore, the parcels on each block were developed independently and little accommodation was made for sharing parking spaces between land uses that generate peak demands at different times, such as a retail facility and a movie theatre. As such, the parking supply throughout the area tends to provide a higher number of off-street spaces than peak demand for that parcel typically requires. In addition, the uses and intensities now present generate a different, and typically lower demand compared to when the sites were first developed.

The vision of Midtown is to become a transit-oriented, vibrant, mixed-use, walkable district in the coming years, and as such, it begs for a more comprehensive parking approach that is up-to-date with current trends. In order to be successful, the strategy must address both the need for public parking to support MAX, and the fact that ideal densities will require adequate private parking supply.

### Immediate Opportunities

Given the more-than-adequate parking availability that exists today, there would appear to be an opportunity to increase building densities on each block *without* increasing the corresponding parking supply. The City’s parking code provides for both maximum parking supply and the ability to use spaces as shared parking for non-residential development. Therefore, there may be opportunities to incrementally “build up” without costing the developer more money by requiring additional parking spaces.



## TOD Research

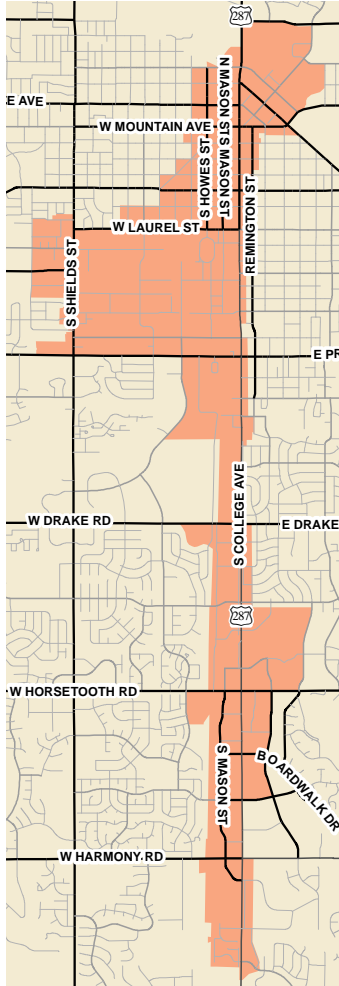
Research indicates that transit-oriented development (TOD) results in lower vehicle ownership than traditional development. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 128 reported that TOD households own on average 0.9 vehicles compared to 1.6 vehicles for comparable households not living in TODs, while “Developing TOD Parking Strategies” (Boroski, Rosales, Arrington, APA Transportation Planning, March 2005), reported that TODs have an average of 1.66 people and 1.26 vehicles per household, compared to 2.4 people and 1.64 vehicles per household for all households located in the same census tract. From this data, TODs offer the potential to reduce parking per household by 20 to 40 percent. For commercial land uses, a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) study indicated a range of parking reductions from 12 to 60 percent for TODs. Commercial demand is more complex than residential parking, however, and there are no clear conclusions regarding how much parking can be reduced overall for TODs, and parking needs should still be estimated on a site-by-site basis. The city of Portland, Oregon is a model city for instituting TOD policies. Table X below shows how Portland has adjusted their standard parking ratios in TOD areas versus non-TOD areas.

*City of Portland, Oregon TOD and Non-TOD Parking Ratios*

Land Use	Non-TOD	TOD
Office	4.1/KSF <sup>1</sup>	3.4/KSF
Retail/Commercial	6.2/KSF	5.1/KSF
Multi-Family 1 bedroom	1.25/unit	1.0/unit
Multi-Family 2 bedroom	1.5/unit	1.0/unit
Multi-Family 3 bedroom	1.75/unit	1.0/unit

1. KSF = 1,000 SF





The TOD Overlay Zone encompasses all of Midtown



Parking Plan Fort Collins offers strategies that could be replicated in Midtown.

## Continue Current City Policies

### TOD OVERLAY DISTRICT

The entire study area falls within the City's Transit Oriented Development Overlay District, and as such, multi-family residential developments are not subject to the City's minimum parking requirements. Thus, the potential exists for parcels along the corridor to be redeveloped from, say 50,000 SF of commercial, to, say, 50,000 SF of commercial with 100 multi-family units above it, and still use the current parking supply on the site.

### PARKING PLAN FORT COLLINS

The Parking Plan, although not inclusive of the Midtown study area, was adopted in January 2013 and offers a progressive approach to parking management in Downtown Fort Collins. The Parking Plan acknowledges that a comprehensive parking strategy is good for economic development and supports area businesses and protects surrounding neighborhoods. Midtown should follow guidelines set forth in the Parking Plan and pursue similar measures. Key concepts from the Preferred Alternative are:

- **On-Street Parking Management** - shift employees away from high demand on-street parking, implement residential permit program to mitigate spillover, provide pay-by-cell program, and eventually shift to on-street pay parking.
- **Public Parking Infrastructure** - establish public-private partnerships to distribute public parking where needed, promote conversion of surface to structured parking over time, include electrical vehicle charging stations in public parking.
- **Parking for New Development** - leverage private investment through public-private partnerships, implement a parking impact fee for new development correlated to new parking amount and level of parking demand management, encourage shared parking, and require new development to provide information about changes in parking impacts.



## KEEP PARKING SUBORDINATE

Keep parking subordinate to the street character along College Avenue and east-west streets. One goal in the redevelopment of Midtown is to transition away from the large surface parking areas that abut College Avenue and create a more urban environment along the corridor. As such, developers should be encouraged to locate structures along the College Avenue frontage and construct parking areas behind the building, so that they are shielded from the street.

## USE STRUCTURED PARKING AS AN INCENTIVE FOR INCREASED DENSITY

The City should continue allowing developers to increase the land use density on their parcel within the TOD Overlay in exchange for building a parking structure that provides parking for either the entire block or a larger portion of it. Currently, 3.10.5 (F) (c) of the Land Use Code allows 3 additional stories above the four-story maximum, provided the project is mixed-use, has at least 10% of the units designated as “affordable”, and locates the parking spaces in a structure.

## MAINTAIN MAXIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Maintaining maximum parking ratios rather than minimum requirements for commercial development allows developers the flexibility of reducing parking as they see fit, and lowering parking supplies will further encourage customers and employees to access the area by means other than single occupant vehicles. However, while developers should be allowed the flexibility of reducing supply, they should still demonstrate that their site can accommodate anticipated parking without causing significant spillover into adjacent properties. This demonstration could be accomplished by conducting a transportation impact study (TIS), as is required by the new Parking Plan, and/or using the City’s new parking demand model to validate the results.



Keep parking subordinate to the street character along College Avenue



Incentivizing structured parking as a means of adding density is a great way to entice developers and ensure the desired dense, urban form is created.





Zipcar is a popular car sharing program which is currently in place at Colorado State University. The car share service could expand into Midtown if demand is there.



Transfort offers an employee-based program, Passfort, which allows employers to purchase yearly passes at a bulk rate of \$50 per pass.

## Recommended New Strategies

### IMPLEMENT A PARKING DISTRICT

First and foremost, the City should support parking demand management by establishing a parking management district to provide management and oversight. The City could finance and build a couple parking structures in key, centralized locations throughout Midtown with funds from development in-lieu fees, development or parking impact fees, parking receipts and enforcement revenue. The City could then operate and maintain the structures, which takes the burden off of developers to provide off-street parking. This may be desirable in order to spur development as part of an initial catalyst project for the area, giving the developer more land to redevelop and at the same time not being responsible for the cost of structured parking.

### ACQUIRE SITES FOR FUTURE PUBLIC PARKING

Another strategy to consider is the use of public funding to acquire and hold a site/sites within Midtown, on which a public parking structure could ultimately be built. The Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority is a potential entity that could partner with the City for this type of action. Opportunities to partner with the private sector for shared structural facilities should also be considered.

Parking structures should ideally be located within 1/4 mile of a MAX transit station. The Framework Map (Appendix, pg. A-1) shows conceptual locations for future structures to consider.



# SUMMARY POINTS

## MOBILITY & ACCESS

- **Improved Circulation:**
  - **College Avenue** to be more bike/pedestrian-friendly by improving frontage roads, adding wide sidewalks, and encouraging buildings to frame the street.
  - Improve access to **MAX**
  - Improve existing **Mason Street** to become more of a quaint “main street”.
  - Implement a **pedestrian promenade** along the east side of MAX guideway and encourage new uses to front onto it.
  - Improve existing and implement new **east-west connections**.
- **Complete Streets:**
  - Work within existing curb-to-curb dimensions. Outside of curbs, ideal public realm scenarios are envisioned, e.g. **wide detached sidewalks**, which sometimes suggest acquiring additional ROW.
  - When it’s not feasible to add bike lanes and on-street parking within existing curb-to-curb dimensions, explore a **cycle track** adjacent to the sidewalk.
  - **Improve frontage roads** to be more bike-friendly - when frontage roads end, continue bike circulation through wide, multi-use paths or cycle tracks along College Avenue, similar to the mall’s current redevelopment plans.



- **Multi-modal Environment:**
  - **Pedestrian promenade** - ideal cross section allows for 15' multi-use path with 15' landscaping and 10' buffer between path and building. Where ideal cross section doesn't fit, it may be more feasible to narrow the cross section, but should not be less than 10' for the path. Core distance is from Spring Creek Overpass to Horsetooth MAX station.
  - **Continuous, designated bike facilities:** where gaps in current system and sufficient ROW is available, provide on-street bike lanes/buffered bike lanes/cycle tracks. Where ROW is not sufficient, use shared lane markings or bike route markers.
  - **Improved intersections:** safety improvements such as signage, pavement markings, medians, signal detection, green paint, and "bike boxes" or two-stage turn boxes.
  - **Underpasses/Overpasses:** explore GSC as redevelopment occurs at challenging intersections, e.g. College Avenue and the Railroad.
  - **Locating bike parking:** use existing code for minimum biking spaces. Locate short-term bike parking 50' from main entrance and long-term within 500' of the destination. Explore using the BID to provide bike racks to meet excess demand.
- **Parking Strategies:**
  - Implement strategies of **Downtown Parking Plan**
    1. **On-street parking** management
    2. **Public parking** infrastructure
    3. Parking for **new development**
  - **Keep parking subordinate:** encourage developments to locate parking behind structures that frame street.
  - Use **structured parking** as incentive for increased density.
  - **Maintain maximum parking requirements for commercial development:** developers should still demonstrate their site can accommodate anticipated parking without causing significant spillover into adjacent properties.

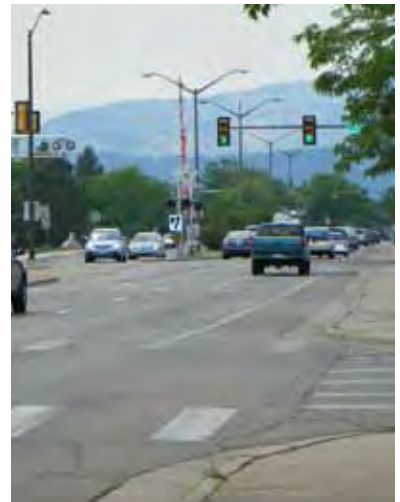


# 3 - STREETSAPES, SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

One of the most important ways to establish and promote a neighborhood's "brand" is through physical improvements to the public environment. Midtown currently lacks a sense of identity. This Plan seeks to transform how Midtown is viewed: from a neighborhood that College Avenue bypasses, into a neighborhood that College Avenue arrives at. Celebrating a sense of arrival and playing up unique themes in the neighborhood will elevate the level of presence Midtown has in Fort Collins. Elements such as streetscapes, signage and wayfinding have a tremendous impact on the overall character of a district and are simple, but very effective tools, that can be used very early in the implementation process due to their relative cost and ability to be relocated, if needed.

The primary objectives of this chapter are:

- Establish a **sense of identity**, that is iconic and memorable, for Midtown by celebrating unique characteristics and themes for each Character Area.
- Establish a **sophisticated urban design palette** of durable, energy efficient and environmentally conscious materials that build off of and reinforce the already established streetscape palette at Harmony Road and College Avenue.
- Identify **specific locations** of various streetscape elements and list the types of **improvements per street type and public space type**.



The existing streetscapes in the Midtown district offer few amenities for pedestrians and very little civic directional/informational signage.





## A SENSE OF IDENTITY

### Upper Midtown - Gardens

Upper Midtown, from Prospect Road to just north of Swallow Road, is suggested to have a “gardens” theme. The theme is branded by a leaf pattern (seen to the right). Parks like Creekside Park and Spring Park are wonderful amenities that should be highlighted as major destinations for this area. Also, the CSU flower trial garden is a fantastic natural amenity. Departments such as the Colorado Division of Wildlife and U.S. Forestry Service also add to the natural, garden theme.



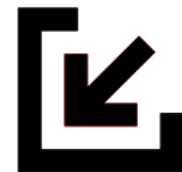
### Central Midtown - Arts

Central Midtown, from just north of Swallow Road to Bockman Drive, is suggested to have an “arts” theme. The theme for Central Midtown is branded by the curly-cue pattern to the right. This theme was derived from the high activity of entertainment and arts that this area has to offer. The Foothills Mall is and will continue to be a major draw for the area and one that Central Midtown should also capitalize on. Central Midtown should use this theme to encourage more arts-like activities and amenities for the area.



### Lower Midtown - Innovation

Lower Midtown, from Bockman Drive to Fairway Lane, is suggested to have a “innovation” theme. This theme is branded by the icon of an arrow. The theme for Lower Midtown was derived both from the services that are currently offered here, and also because this area is seen as a potential breeding ground for high-tech companies and start-ups that might want to locate adjacent to the MAX line. Existing buildings in this location, and adjacent to MAX, are ripe for this type of redevelopment.



\*Note that these are suggested icons and themes based on discussion and feedback with the community. Further design detail may warrant a different icon or theme, or variation of the ones suggested here.



# A SOPHISTICATED URBAN DESIGN PALETTE

Midtown currently has a wide range of streetscape, signage, and wayfinding elements which appear to have been installed incrementally and without an over-arching vision for the Midtown district “brand”. As the major arterial within the district, College Avenue has the greatest number of signs - most of which are large and internally illuminated – geared toward catching the eye of passing automobiles.

The large number of existing retail signs creates a difficult situation in regard to announcing the unique brand of Midtown. Set in context with the currently large, loud and varied palette of signs, the new Midtown urban design improvements will need to be able to set themselves apart from the existing cacophony of retail-oriented signage that dominates the visual landscape.

The proposed urban design palette is presented as a “kit of parts”. Refer to page 4-12 for specific locations for each element. The following elements are described in detail on the following pages:

## STREETSCAPES

- Benches
- Planters
- Trash Receptacles
- Bike Racks
- Landscape & Lighting

## SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

- Gateway Art Poles
- Sub-Area Identification & Business Signs
- Directional/Informational Pole Signs
- MAX Directional Signs
- Pedestrian-Scaled Signs



Landscapes could be displayed in a combination of new punched steel and the existing concrete planters that are on Harmony Rd.

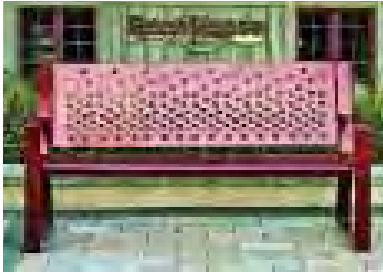
## Existing Signage and Wayfinding Improvements within Midtown

At the intersection of College Avenue and Harmony Road, there are existing gateway improvements that help set the tone and character for the Midtown district. The Harmony Road gateway elements also help establish a palette and overall direction for the colors, materials and character of Midtown’s signage and wayfinding “kit of parts”, and were our starting point for the recommended signage/wayfinding and urban design elements. The proposed urban design palette references the new Harmony Road improvements in color (dark bronze) and materiality (powder-coated steel and concrete). Masonry, wood and punched steel are new materials that will be unique to Midtown.



The Harmony Road gateway improvements set the tone and character for the Midtown streetscape furnishings palette.





Customized, punched steel streetscape furnishings allow each Midtown character area to be unique and recognizable, while still reinforcing a unified palette for the overall district.

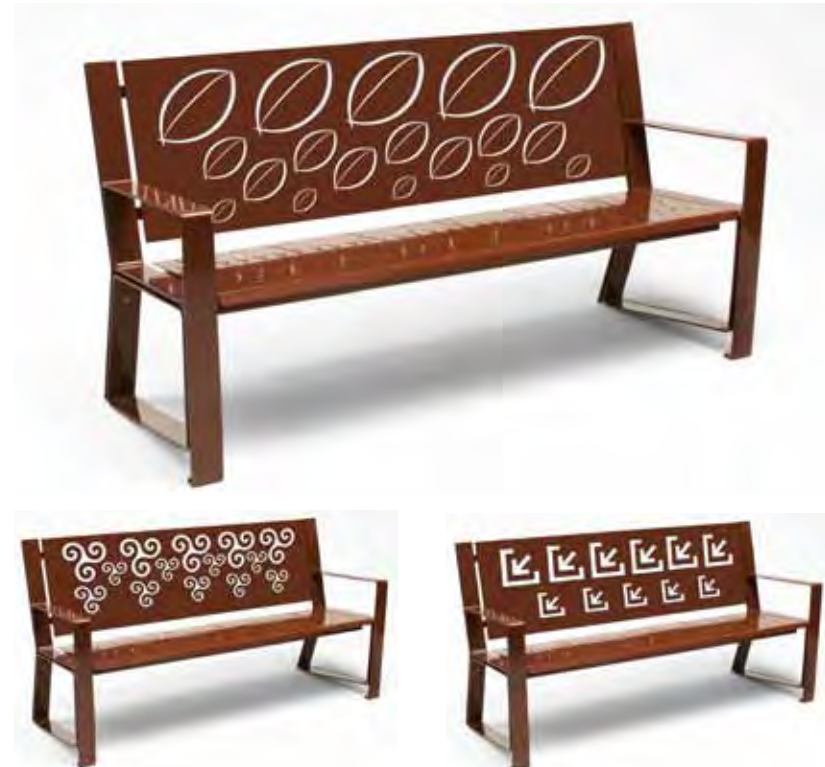


## Streetscapes

In order to create a unified palette for Midtown, all benches, trash receptacles, planters and bike racks are of the same material (recycled steel), color (powder-coated to match the Harmony Road dark bronze) and style (simple, modern and artistic). To accent each sub-area, a custom pattern is designed to be punched into the steel for benches, trash receptacles and planters.

### BENCHES

Benches are an important element of a streetscape and contribution to the public realm. They offer respite for people as they tire from walking, they provide a relaxing place to people-watch, and a place to gather. Benches should be inviting to passersby. The benches in Midtown will be a rather standard public bench made of recycled steel. The “punched” graphic in the steel will change as one moves throughout the Midtown area and represent each sub-area: Upper, Central and Lower Midtown.



Benches are designed with punched steel graphics that are representative of the sub area they would occupy.



## TRASH RECEPTACLES AND PLANTERS

Trash receptacles and planters will also include a unique punched steel graphic depending on the location in the neighborhood.



Planters could be designed with punched steel graphics that are representative of the sub area they would occupy.

## BIKE RACKS

Bike racks could be used as public art pieces as well as for functionality. Ideally, bike racks in each sub area would be made into the shape of each iconic graphic: gardens (the leaf), arts (curly cues) or technology (arrow). These iconic bike racks would be most important to be placed at highly trafficked areas. A more standard bike rack is shown to the right that could be used in other, not so highly trafficked areas.



An example of a bike rack that also substitutes as public art.



In less highly trafficked areas, a more traditional bike rack could be used.



Punched steel is already used in downtown Fort Collins.



## LANDSCAPING

In keeping with the *2012 Green Streets Initiative*, the proposed landscape improvements within Midtown will have a rich and varied palette of **low-water, native shrubs and perennials**. Within the **medians**, there will be 80-100% plant coverage, accented with bark mulch, large boulders and quarry-cut stone. A mixture of river cobble and gravel will be used to create visual interest that mimics a flowing, streambed-like aesthetic. Canopy and ornamental trees will be intermixed informally within the median shrub beds.

**Landscape buffers** adjacent to sidewalks will also have a more dense planting of drip-irrigated shrub beds, replacing the typical turf with flowing beds of grasses and perennials grouped informally, and accented with landscape boulders and large shrubs, in addition to trees. Along College Avenue, the majority of the landscape buffer (over 60%) will be planted in accordance with the *2012 Green Streets Initiative* median landscape standards, while the remaining 40% can be used for smaller locations of irrigated turf, which allow for pedestrian movements while also highlighting the texture of the ornamental shrub beds.

The **Promenade** area landscaping will also reflect the dense, richly-textured standard of the College Avenue landscape buffers, but with a consistent grid of formally-spaced street trees, ideally planted in a double-row.

Along the smaller, more **internal streets** with on-street parking, a greater percentage of the landscape buffer will be tree lawn and formal placement of evenly-spaced street trees, allowing for easy egress from cars, and providing consistent shaded areas for pedestrian movement. For these parallel-parking streets, **ornamental shrub beds will be located at street corners** or as part of larger shrub/tree filtration beds, which are set back 12" from the curb to allow for pedestrians to exit their cars.



Where right-of-way width permits, **stormwater filtration beds**, which are planted landscape buffers that protect pedestrians from traffic while also helping to filter pollutants from stormwater, are envisioned. Typically 6-8 feet in width, these landscaped buffers are defined by a concrete edge that allows water from the sidewalk and roadway/parking to flow into the planted areas and slowly filter into the soil to be cleansed before going into the stormwater system.

In addition to their stormwater filtration properties, the planted beds also utilize native plants to reduce the amount of irrigation needed to keep them healthy and vibrant. A drip system will be installed and used for several years to establish the plants, and then will be turned off to only be used to extreme drought conditions.

### STREET LIGHTING

Pedestrian street lights in Midtown will follow the standard light fixture currently used at the Harmony Road and College Avenue intersection and near the Downtown Transit Center along Mason Street. These light fixtures will be evenly spaced along new and existing streets and along the Promenade. These lights will also be used mid-block along College Avenue, but should be mixed with higher level lighting at major intersections.

Other lighting will occur in conjunction with the poles and signs described in the next part of this chapter. However, the signage and pole lighting is only for aesthetic purposes, whereas street lighting should serve to function as both safety and aesthetic purposes.



Stormwater filtration beds help filter pollutants from stormwater.



Use the same lighting fixtures that exist on Harmony Road and the Downtown Transit Center.





Gateway art poles are located at key locations along College Avenue to establish a sense of arrival for each sub-area.

## Signage & Wayfinding

The following pages illustrate a “kit of parts” for Midtown’s suggested signage and wayfinding elements. Each element is briefly described with an associated rendered elevation and perspective relative to locations throughout Midtown where each would occur. The color icons by each elevation is color-coded to reference the map on page 4-12.

### MEDIAN GATEWAY ART POLES

Large gateway art poles in the median of College Avenue use color, lighting and punched steel graphics to illustrate the overall brand of Midtown, as well as where you are in the district. Designed to reflect the linear nature of the Midtown corridor, the large poles use back-lit punched steel graphics to represent the three character areas within the district). A custom art piece at the top of the gateway pole reinforces the theme of the character area, and changes as you move from one character area to the next.



Gateway art poles are to be located in newly landscaped medians of College Avenue.



## SUB-AREA IDENTIFICATION & BUSINESS SIGNAGE

The sub-area identification signage reinforces the character and hierarchy of the larger gateway signs. Drawing from the character-area specific punched steel backlit graphic and custom art topper, the sub-area signage takes this form and uses it to create an illuminated horizontal accent band that reflects the individual character areas.

Located primarily in mid-block locations along College Avenue, the sub-area business signs display descriptive and directional information about both civic and retail establishments within the district.



Sub-area business signage displays descriptive and directional information about both civic and retail establishments.



Sub-area business signage between College Ave. and Frontage Rd.



Sub-area identification signage reinforces the character sub-areas throughout Midtown.



### DIRECTIONAL/INFORMATIONAL POLE SIGNAGE

The directional/informational pole signs are meant to provide both pedestrians and autos with information regarding the important locations throughout the district, and how to access them. Although primarily designed within the scale of typical civic street signs, they are able to be customized through additional round “button” graphics for the MAX stations and mobile-information points.



Directional/Informational pole signs are meant to provide both pedestrians and autos with information.

### MAX DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

In order to effectively advertise and direct pedestrians, autos and bicyclists to the new MAX stations, a MAX-specific pole sign has been developed. Utilizing the round MAX “button” that is used as an add-on to the Directional/Informational Pole signs, the MAX-specific signs take the round button and use an arrow to indicate the relative direction of the MAX station from roadways, sidewalks and plazas.



## PEDESTRIAN INFORMATIONAL

Smaller, pedestrian-level signs are intended to be installed in plazas, public transportation stops, and other areas where pedestrians dominate the mobility landscape. Intended to provide information that pedestrians can access during a moment of repose or rest, these signs are more directional – using a list of destinations and arrows pointing toward them to help pedestrians understand what is available within Mid-town, and how to get there on foot.

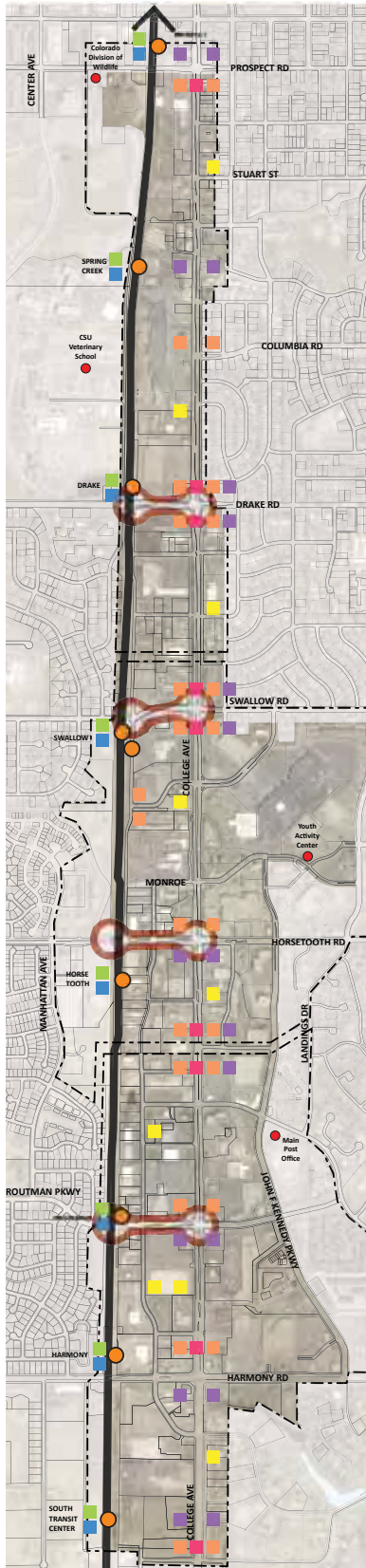
## MOBILE ENABLED INFORMATIONAL

The mobile-enabled signs are similar to the Pedestrian Informational signs in design and scale, but offer a way for pedestrians to gather richer information regarding specific information and locations for retail shops, restaurants, cultural facilities and other district destinations by providing a “you are here” orientation map. Applications to amenities such as MAX may also be linked to from the signs to provide up-to-date transit information.



Pedestrian-oriented signs will be installed where pedestrians dominate the mobility landscape, such as along the Promenade.





## LOCATING STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Correctly locating streetscape elements will be important for getting the most out of their branding capabilities. College Avenue and the Promenade will be two major north-south corridors that link the character areas together and will be important for providing signage and establishing the brand for Midtown and directing people to and from MAX stations. Key streetscape nodes, indicated on the map to the right with “dumbbells”, illustrate where key east-west streetscape concepts would be highlighted. These east-west connections will seamlessly link College Avenue to the MAX corridor. The design theme for these connections should key off of design themes from MAX stations while also representing design themes from the respective Character Areas in Midtown. The map graphic to the right illustrates with colored icons where certain streetscape elements, as described on previous pages, would occur throughout Midtown.

### Streetscape Elements Table

The table on the next page identifies streetscape improvement elements per street type and public space type in more detail.

#### Legend

- Gateway Monumentation
- Sub-Area Identification
- Directional
- MAX Directional
- Pedestrian Informational
- Mobile-Enabled Informational
- ⌬ Key Streetscape Node





	BENCH	PLANTER	TRASH	BIKE RACK	GATEWAY	SUB-AREA	DIRECTIONAL	MAX	PEDESTRIAN	MOBILE	LIGHTING	LANDSCAPE
COLLEGE AVENUE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4-LANE ARTERIAL (MAJOR E/W CROSS STREETS)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2-LANE ARTERIAL (MASON, ETC.)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
2-LANE PARKWAY (TROUTMAN)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
2-LANE COLLECTOR	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X
PROMENADE	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
TRANSIT STOPS	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X
POCKET PARK/PLAZA	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
MID-BLOCK CONNX.	X	X	X				X	X			X	X



# SUMMARY POINTS

## STREETSCAPES, SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

- **Establish a sense of identity** for the 3 Character Areas:
  - Upper Midtown = Gardens
  - Central Midtown = Arts and Entertainment
  - Lower Midtown = Innovation
- Establish a **sophisticated urban design palette** of durable, energy efficient and environmentally conscious materials.
- Position various streetscape elements in **specific locations** as called out in this Plan.



# 4 - PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Providing a **rich collection of outdoor places** for informal gathering and recreation, as well as planned promotional activities and community events, is a key concept for Midtown. This idea arose as a major theme in community outreach events, in which participants stated that they wanted places where they could participate in events and activities or simply people-watch. It is envisioned that **major open spaces** would be City-driven, or possibly owned and managed by a Business Improvement District or similar entity, or perhaps could even be included in a private development project, with assistance from the City or BID. Major public open spaces would become destinations in their own right and contribute to the identity of each sub-area in Midtown. **Minor open spaces** would be Developer-driven and could be provided in the form of small courtyards, plazas and dining areas, distributed throughout the corridor. While privately owned, these spaces may be accessible to the public and contribute to the quality of life in Midtown.

Key objectives for this chapter are:

- Create three **major public open spaces** in Midtown, one in each Character Area.
- Establish a network of several **minor public open spaces** throughout Midtown as part of private development projects, but which contribute to the larger Parks and Open Space concept for Midtown.
- Illustrate **several concepts** for a proposed major open space, a **civic plaza**, in Midtown.



Most of the commercial areas of Midtown are dominated by surface parking lots and lack places for people.



Spring Park is a nearby major public open space that is linked to Creekside Park via bike and pedestrian trails.





Provide places for outdoor recreation and other activities that can be enjoyed by Midtown residents and visitors alike.



Providing a rich collection of outdoor places for informal gathering and recreation, as well as planned promotional activities and community events.



This canopy serves as pedestrian protection from the elements and as a wayfinding icon and art installation.

## MAJOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Three major public open spaces, one in each Character Area, should be developed in Midtown. One of these, Creekside Park, already exists in Upper Midtown, and could function as the main focal point for the northern portion of Midtown. The others, for Central and Lower Midtown would need to be created and the basic criteria for them are listed below.

In most cases, it is envisioned that the City may need to purchase the land to form the major public open spaces in Central and Lower Midtown. However, as stated before, it could either be purchased, owned and maintained by the City or by a Business Improvement District, which is also common. Another option is to provide incentives for developers in the event that they want to provide a large public open space within a single development. Density bonuses or other forms of incentives could be provided for this to be appealing to a developer.



Major public open spaces can be activated and protected by the occupants of buildings that front onto them.



## Types of Major Open Spaces

### AN URBAN PLAZA

At least one new space should be an “urban plaza,” where public events could occur. These could range from festivals and exhibitions, to a farmer’s market or winter carnival. One major urban plaza should be located in Central Midtown, in the vicinity of the emerging arts and entertainment district.

### AN URBAN PARK

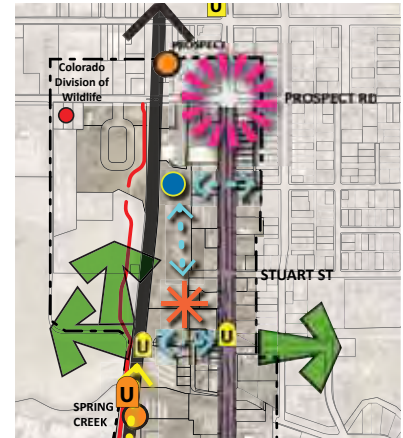
Another public space should be developed in Lower Midtown. This could be a second urban plaza, or a more conventional urban park, if sufficient land becomes available. This park could be located near the South Transit Center and become an extension of and destination of this major transit center with high intensity uses framing the park, like residential units or restaurants.

## Location of Major Open Spaces

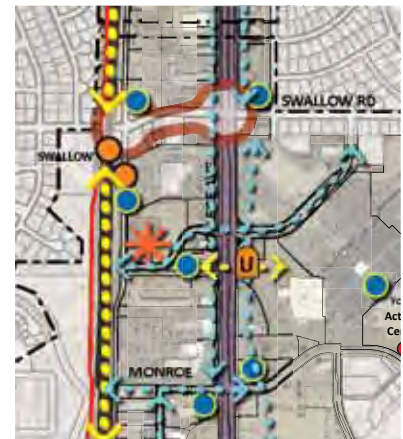
Each major public open space should be located where it will be easily accessible from MAX stations and the nearby network of pedestrian and bicycle routes. Ideally, large public open spaces should be located no more than **1/4 mile** of a MAX station. Some general locations are suggested on the Framework Map (see Chapter 1) and in a series of study sketches in this chapter, but final locations would emerge after more detailed analysis and discussions with property owners, and after the appropriate organizational structure is established to build and maintain the open space.

These large open spaces should be strategically planned to help stimulate redevelopment of other parcels nearby. This will influence final decisions about their specific locations. They should be located near developments that will have active uses that will help to energize them.

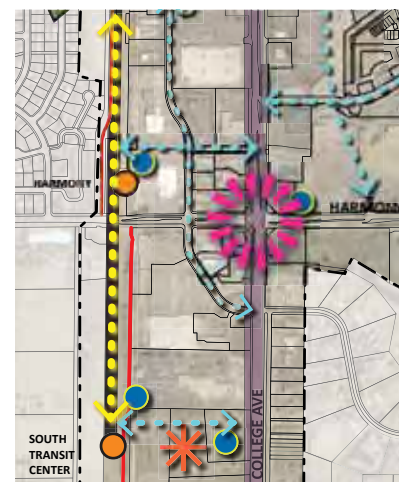
In addition to iconic Character Area public open spaces, there may be some opportunities to develop other smaller parks along the edge of the corridor, west of the Mason Trail. As the density in development occurs along the MAX line, the need for these spaces may increase.



Upper Midtown - Creekside Park



Central Midtown - Urban Plaza



Lower Midtown - Urban Park

*Note: these are general locations and more analysis will be needed before selecting final locations.*





A civic space should have a distinct identity and thus should have some unique elements.



Major public art installations would be one way of providing a distinct identity to a civic space.

## Size of Major Open Spaces

A major **urban plaza** should be at least **one-half acre**, and could be as much as **two acres**. The key is that it be large enough to stage events of a substantial size, and yet still be of a scale that is comfortable for smaller informal groups.

An **urban park** could be larger, in the range of **four acres**, if land is available. This in part would be in response to the increase in residential population that is envisioned for the area.

## Design Character of Major Open Spaces

Each civic space should have a distinct identity and thus should have some unique elements. Major public art installations would be one way of doing so. At the same time, some of the elements of the overall streetscape palette proposed for Midtown should be used, such that each space is understood to be part of the public realm.



Outdoor places should provide places for informal gathering as well as planned, promotional activities and community events.



## MINOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

An essential part of the framework concept for Midtown is to establish a **network of smaller outdoor open spaces** as part of individual private development projects that would contribute to the vitality and appeal of the area. These open spaces would be accessible to the general public and connected to the larger pedestrian/bike and parks and open space networks, but would be managed and maintained by the private owners. They would be linked by a series of streets, paths and sidewalks that would facilitate access. (Note that many developments will also have other outdoor use areas that are private, for exclusive use of residents and other users.) Not every redevelopment project would necessarily provide this type of amenity, but should be encouraged to do so, and incentives could be provided to assist in their development (see Chapter 8).



Minor public open spaces should be accessible to the general public and connected to the larger pedestrian/bike and parks and open space networks.



A signature element, such as this large fountain sculpture, can give distinct identity to a minor open space.



An essential part of the framework concept for Midtown is to establish a network of smaller outdoor places as part of individual private development projects.



Minor public open spaces should contribute to the vitality and appeal of the area.





A small plaza serves abutting uses as well as the public.



Outdoor cafe seating areas can be combined with plaza-like public amenities.



Artwork and lighting make mid-block passages feel more like open space and less like a cut-through.

## Types of Minor Open Spaces

### A PLAZA

Small plazas that also serve the abutting uses is one type of minor public open space. These plazas could serve as an entryway to a higher density residential buildings or as a resting place for a buildings' employees. Places to sit should be provided and it should feel welcome to the general public, with natural amenities such as water features and pleasant landscaping.

### OUTDOOR CAFE SEATING

An outdoor dining area that spills out of a restaurant or cafe could also serve as a minor public open space. This may or may not be in conjunction with a plaza, but would include public amenities as well as private seating for customers.

### MID-BLOCK PASSAGE

Mid-block passages would also be considered a minor open space and should be treated as such, offering public amenities such as places to rest and lighting to keep them safe. These places should act more like a linear plaza than a "cut through" so people activate them.

## Location of Minor Open Spaces

While specific locations for minor open spaces would depend upon the individual redevelopment projects, these are some general principles for their preferred locations:

- Near a MAX station.
- Along a pedestrian and/or bicycle route.
- Positioned to be visible and accessible from a public area.
- Positioned to make use of solar access opportunities.

## Size of Minor Open Spaces

The size of minor open spaces should be less than one-half acre.

## Design Character of Minor Open Spaces

Minor open spaces will be unique to each individual project, but should also try to emulate the design character of the overall district, with similar materials, schemes and artwork.



## CONCEPTS FOR A CIVIC PLAZA

There are several locations where a civic plaza could be successful, in terms of serving Midtown. Three alternative approaches are illustrated on the pages that follow. These concepts are shown in the context of other potential redevelopment that could occur in the area.

These concepts include:

- A major public plaza
- Pedestrian passageways from a nearby MAX station, connecting to the plaza
- A potential civic building
- A parking structure with a wrap of commercial and/or residential uses

Each concept tests a balancing of location considerations. One is more directly linked to the MAX station. The others place a plaza along a primary street edge. **Note that these sketch studies are illustrative only and do not represent formal development proposals. No impact on existing property owners is intended.**



A potential civic building could help to frame the plaza.



Pedestrian passageways from a MAX station should connect into the plaza.

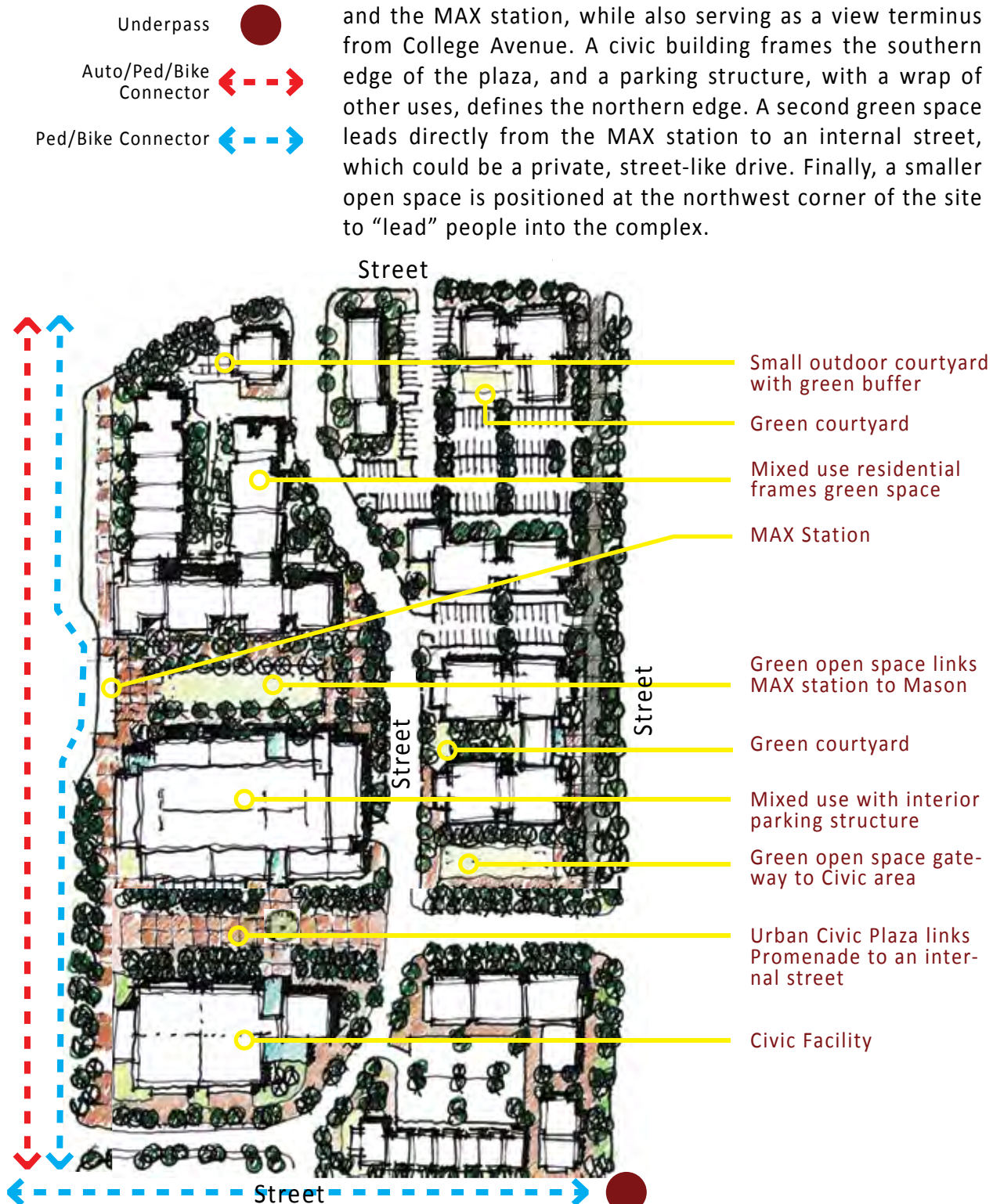


An amenity such as a fountain can draw people in and serve as an iconic meeting place.



## CIVIC PLAZA CONCEPT A

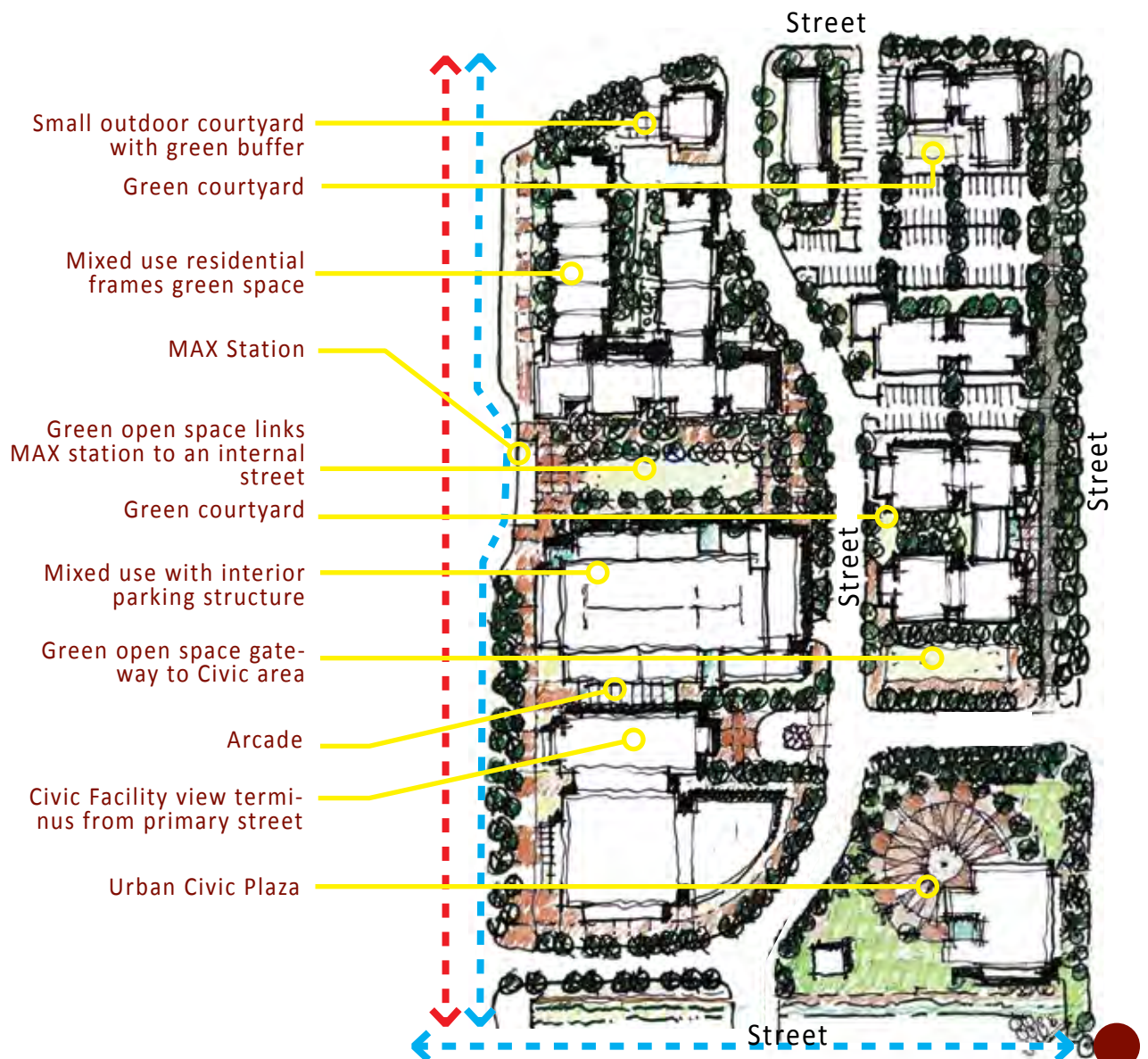
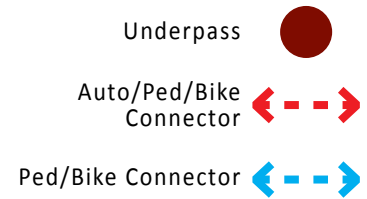
This concept creates a rectangular plaza that extends along an east-west axis. It provides a direct link to the Promenade and the MAX station, while also serving as a view terminus from College Avenue. A civic building frames the southern edge of the plaza, and a parking structure, with a wrap of other uses, defines the northern edge. A second green space leads directly from the MAX station to an internal street, which could be a private, street-like drive. Finally, a smaller open space is positioned at the northwest corner of the site to “lead” people into the complex.





## CIVIC PLAZA CONCEPT B

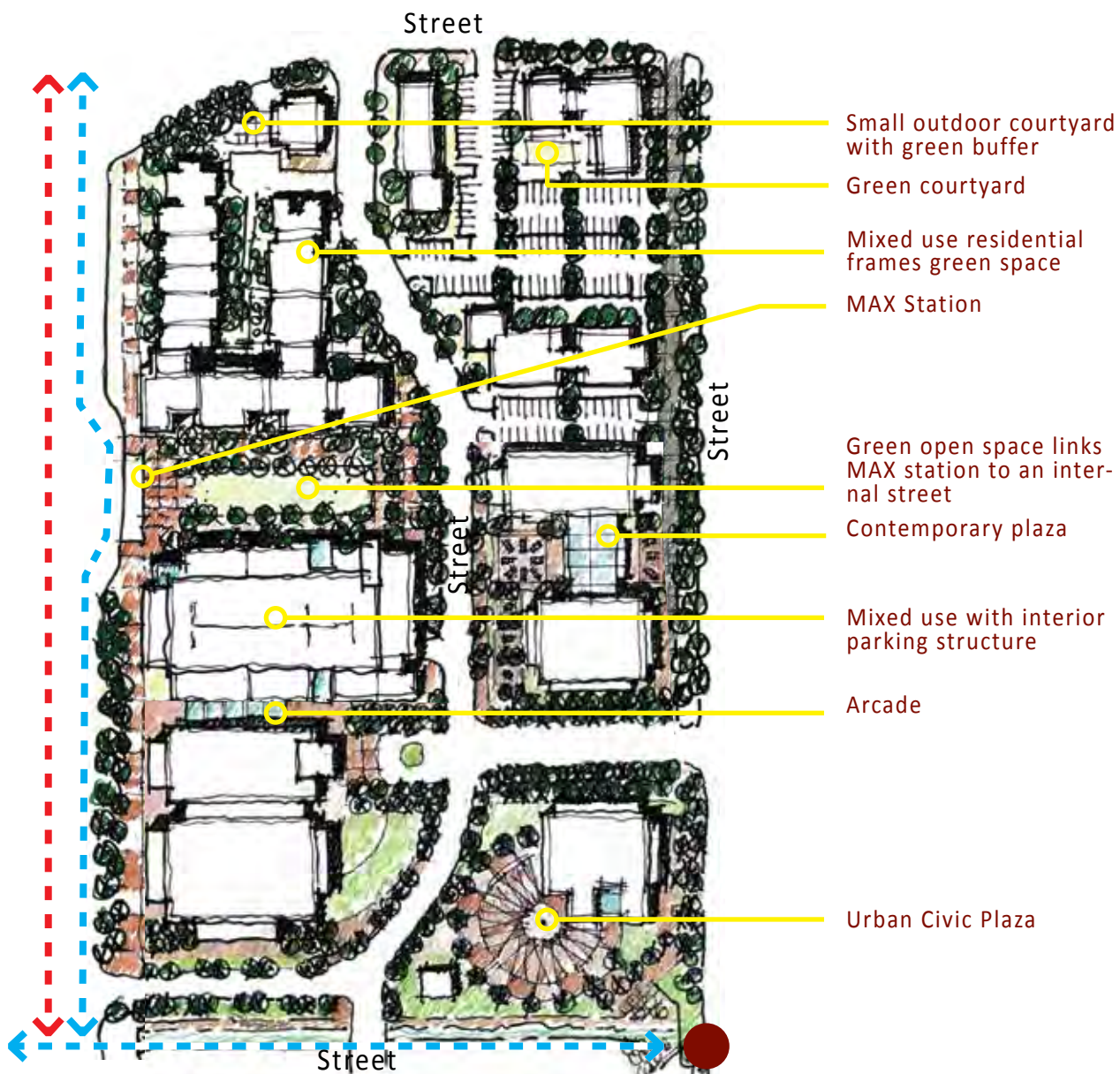
This concept locates the main plaza at the southwest corner of the site. An arcade provides a direct link to the Promenade and the MAX station, while also serving as a view terminus from the street. A civic building also frames the southern edge of the complex, and a parking structure, with a wrap of other uses, lies along the northern edge of the arcade. A second green space leads directly from the MAX station to an internal street, which could be a private, street-like drive. Finally, a smaller open space is positioned at the northwest corner of the project, to “lead” people into the complex.





## CIVIC PLAZA CONCEPT C

This concept also locates the main plaza at the southwest corner of the site, but places a building at the corner to define the block face. A second building anchors the northwest corner of this intersection as well. An arcade provides a direct link to the Promenade and the MAX station. A civic building also frames the southern edge of the complex, and a parking structure, with a wrap of other uses, lies along the northern edge of the arcade. A second green space leads directly from the MAX station to an internal street, which may be a private, street-like drive.





# SUMMARY POINTS

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

- **Provide a rich collection of outdoor places** for informal and formal gathering.
- Each character area should have **one major open space** (traditional park, urban plaza or urban park) that is owned and maintained by the City or a BID.
  - Must be located within 1/4 mile of a MAX station.
  - Should be approximately 1/2 acre to 2 acres, but should not exceed 4 acres.
- **Minor open spaces** that are publicly accessible and connected to the larger pedestrian and bike network are located throughout the neighborhood. These open spaces are developer-driven and privately managed, and include small courtyards, plazas, and dining areas.
  - Less than 1/2 acre in size.



# 5 - DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPES

Chapter 5 illustrates conceptual development prototypes and phasing recommendations for a variety of existing parcel sizes and uses. Note that these scenarios illustrate the redevelopment principles on a variety of lots. They are not formal proposals for any specific properties and their programs are “ideal scenarios” for high density development, although not every property will develop in this manner. For example, most case studies show structured parking, but it should be understood that this scenario would not be realistic for every single block in Midtown.

The primary objectives for this chapter are:

- Use various **case studies** to illustrate a range of redevelopment conditions and opportunities for a wide range of property owners to participate



Current uses and building forms in Midtown cater to the automobile and do not maximize the potential of the land.



As properties redevelop, parking should be moved to the back of buildings and should be masked with landscaping.

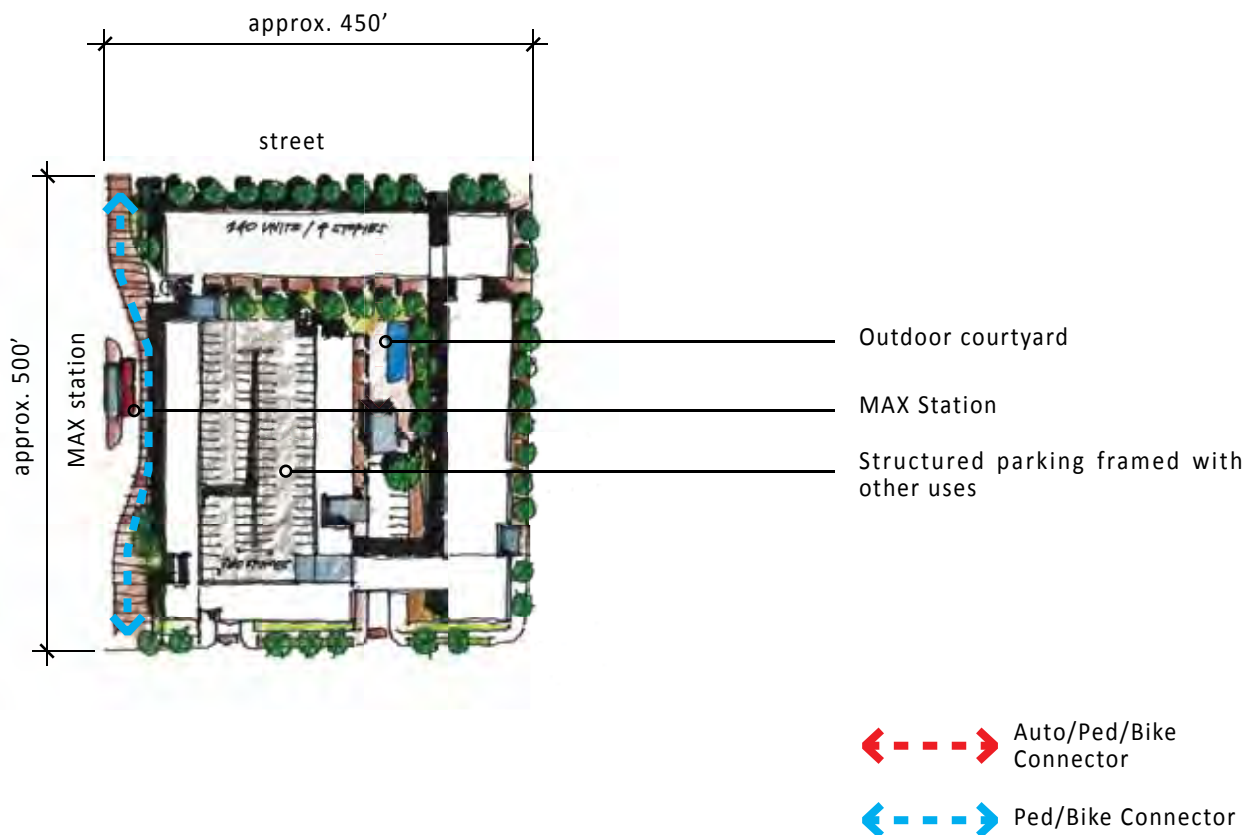




## CASE STUDY 1:

### Small Parcel Development:

This small parcel could be developed under single ownership immediately. The moderate depth of the parcel encourages more compact development, requiring structured parking. An internalized, outdoor courtyard near the promenade enhances walking and biking experiences for residents and transit users.



\*Note that the site plans presented in this section are of approximately the same scale.



### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Buildings address and define streets
- Encourage pedestrians and bicycles
- Provide connection to transit station
- Provide promenade along transit corridor
- Create internal plazas and open space
- Variation in building form
- Internalize and wrap parking
- Minimize curb cuts

### CASE STUDY 1

Property Area:

3.5 AC

Building Program:

Commercial - 25,000 gsf

Residential - 250,000 gsf /  
(240 units)

Building Height:

4 stories

Parking Spaces :

Structured - 360 spaces

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles.*



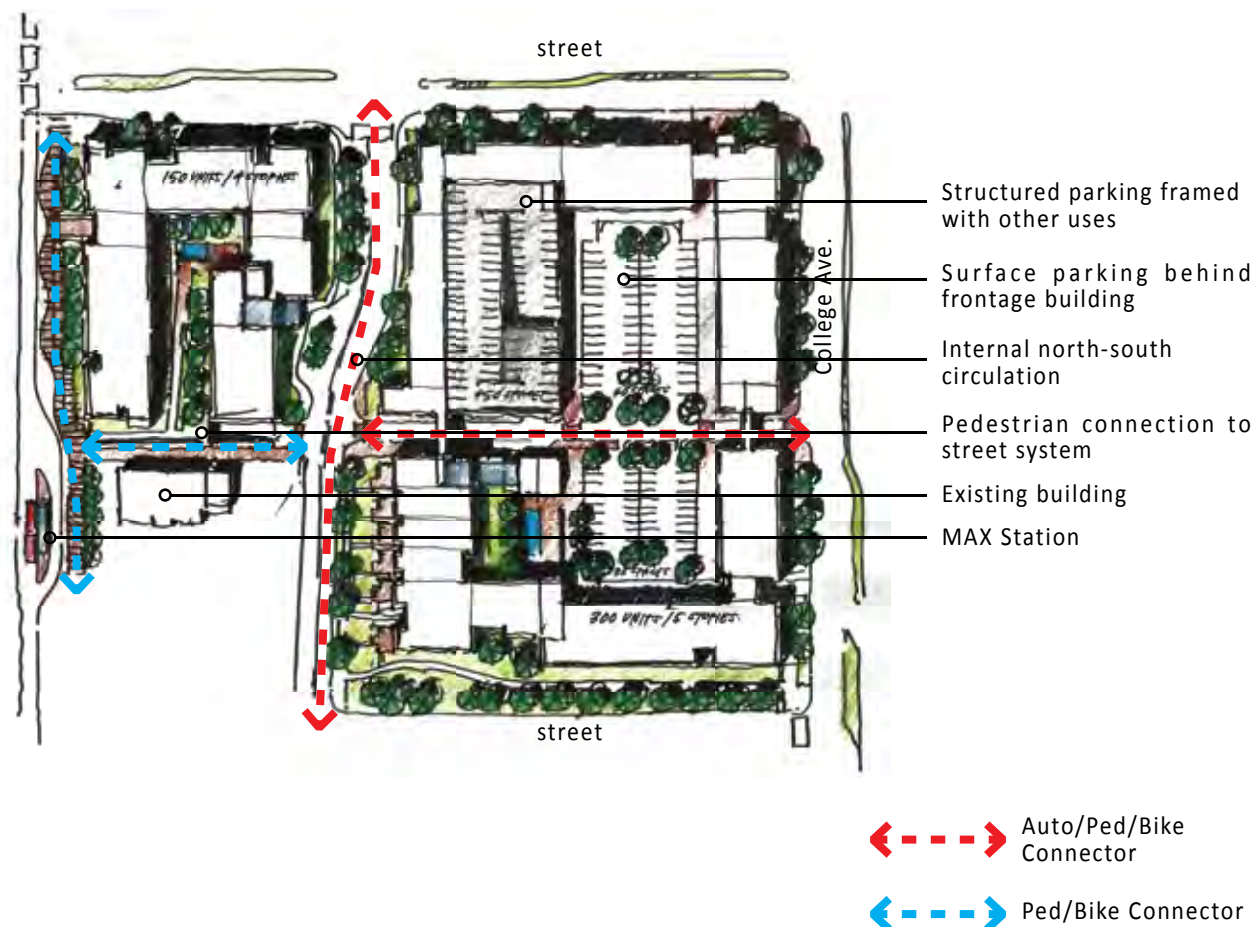




## CASE STUDY 2:

### Medium Parcel Development:

This medium-sized parcel could be developed as two or three individual projects, phased over time or it could be built concurrently. The varying depth of the block allows for an internal north-south connector for automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians. An east-west pedestrian path connects the MAX station and promenade to the street system. An outdoor courtyard rests between the residential wings and opens onto the pedestrian connector.





## KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Buildings address and define streets
- Encourage pedestrians and bicycles
- Provide connections to transit station
- Provide promenade along transit corridor
- Create internal plazas and open space
- Fragment building form
- Provide north-south circulation option mid-block
- Internalize and wrap parking
- Minimize curb cuts

## CASE STUDY 2

Property Area:

7 AC

Building Square Footage:

Retail/Office - 50,000 gsf

Residential - 462,000 gsf /  
(450 units)

Building Height:

4-5 stories

Parking Spaces

Structured - 600 spaces

Surface - 90 spaces

## ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles*



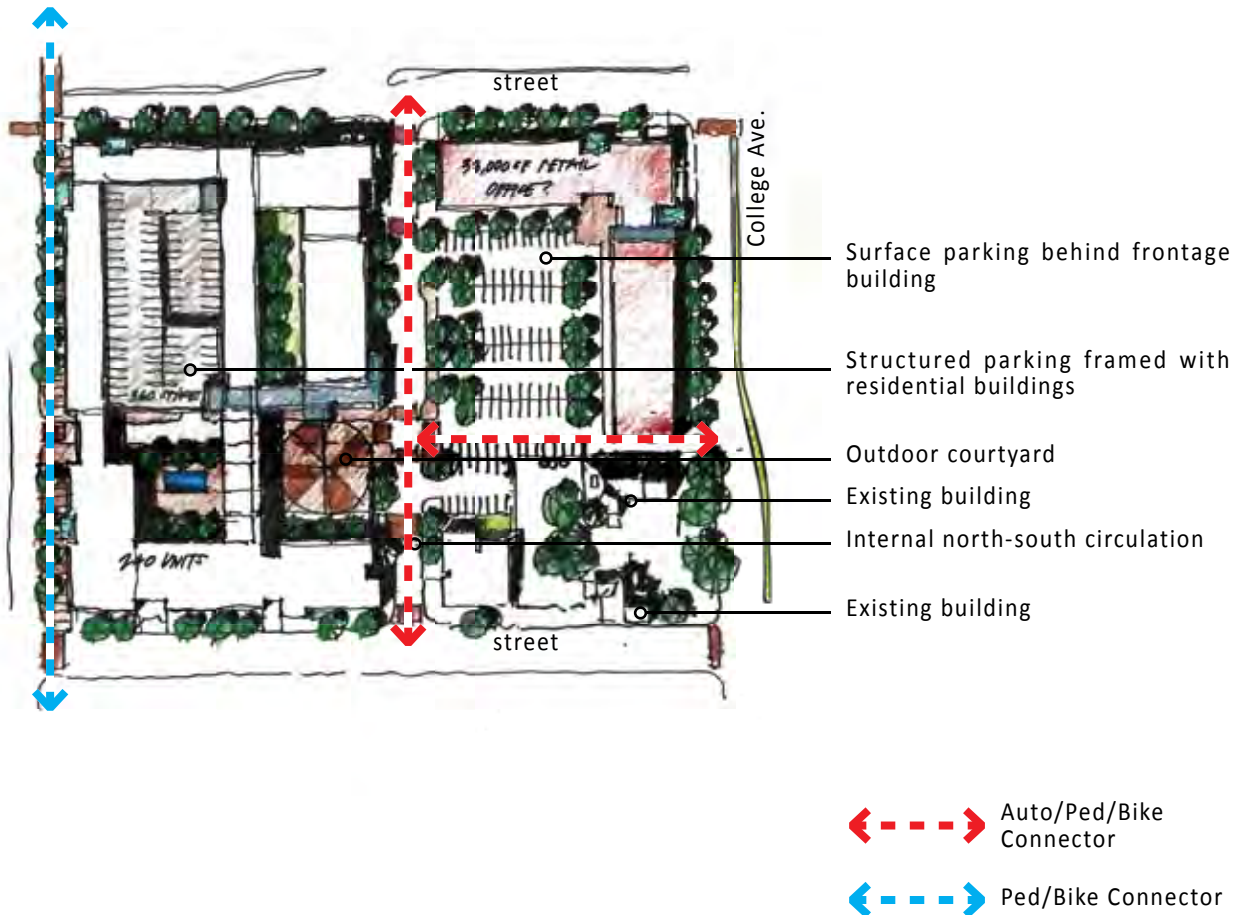




## CASE STUDY 3:

### Medium Parcel Development:

This medium-sized parcel has a deep width between MAX and College Avenue, which allows for a mid-block north-south connector. Structured parking is framed by residential buildings, while surface parking sits behind frontage buildings along College Avenue. A focal point and outdoor plaza in the interior of the block is located at the terminus of an east-west connector.





### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Buildings address and define streets
- Encourage pedestrians and bicycles
- Provide promenade along transit corridor
- Create internal plazas and open spaces
- Provide north-south circulation option mid-block
- Internalize and wrap parking
- Minimize curb cuts

### CASE STUDY 3

Property Area:

6 AC

Building Square Footage:

Retail/Office - 33,000 gsf

Residential - 270,000 gsf /  
(240 units)

Building Height:

4 stories

Parking Spaces

Structured - 360 spaces

Surface - 100 spaces

---

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles*



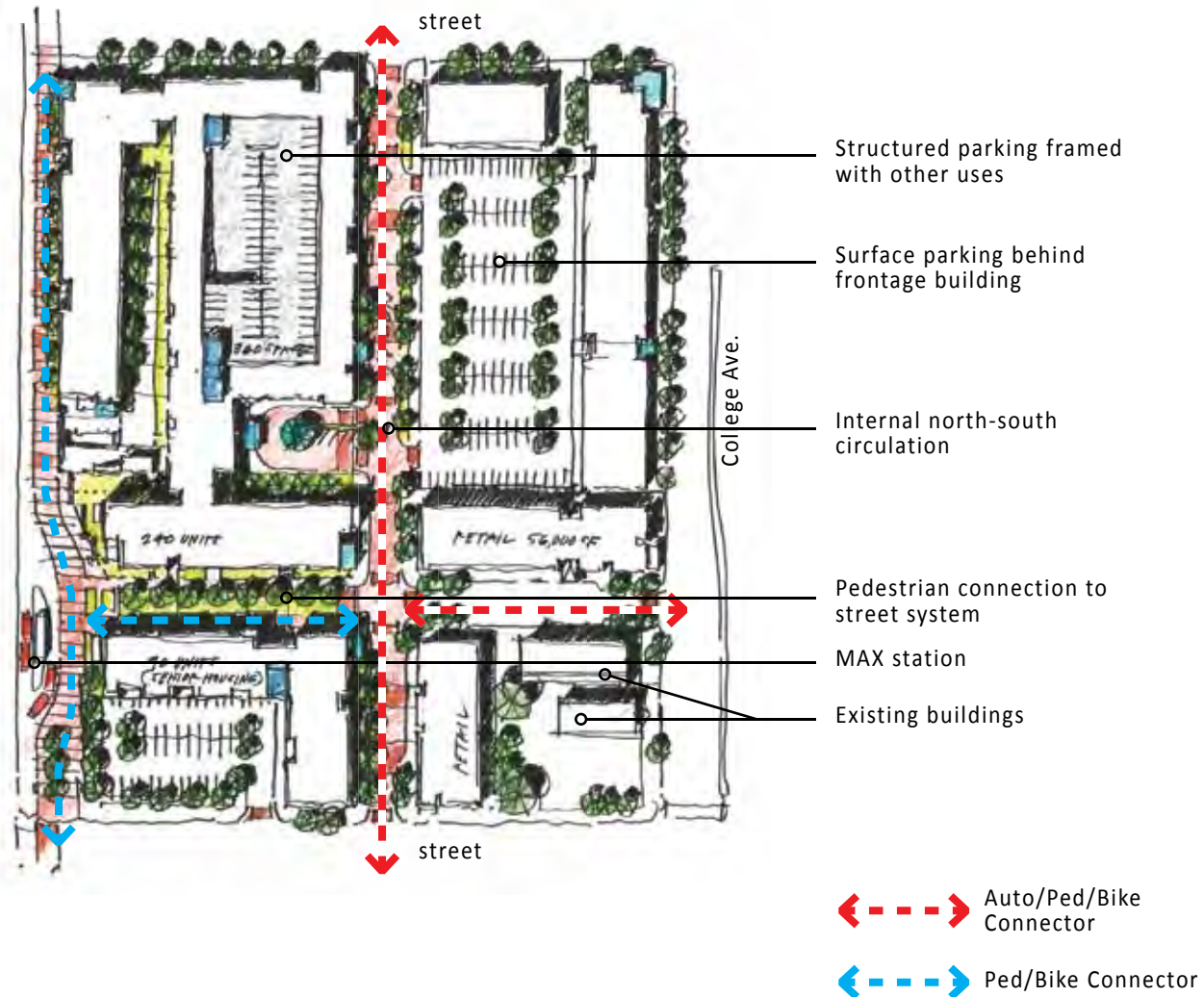




## CASE STUDY 4:

### Large Parcel Development:

This large parcel could be assembled as one project or it could be four individual development projects by different owners. The deep east-west width of the block allows for an internal north-south connector for automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians. An east-west pedestrian path connects the MAX station and promenade to the street system. A privately developed courtyard also lies along the north-south street.





### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Buildings address and define streets
- Encourage pedestrians and bicycles
- Provide connection to transit station
- Provide promenade along transit corridor
- Create plazas and open spaces
- Articulate building forms
- Internalize and wrap parking
- Minimize curb cuts

### CASE STUDY 4

Property Area:

10 AC

Building Square Footage:

Retail/Office - 65,000 gsf

Residential - 350,000 gsf /  
(340 units)

Senior Hsg. - 125,000 gsf /  
(90 units)

Parking Spaces

Structured - 360 spaces

Surface - 200 spaces

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles*



5. Development Prototypes



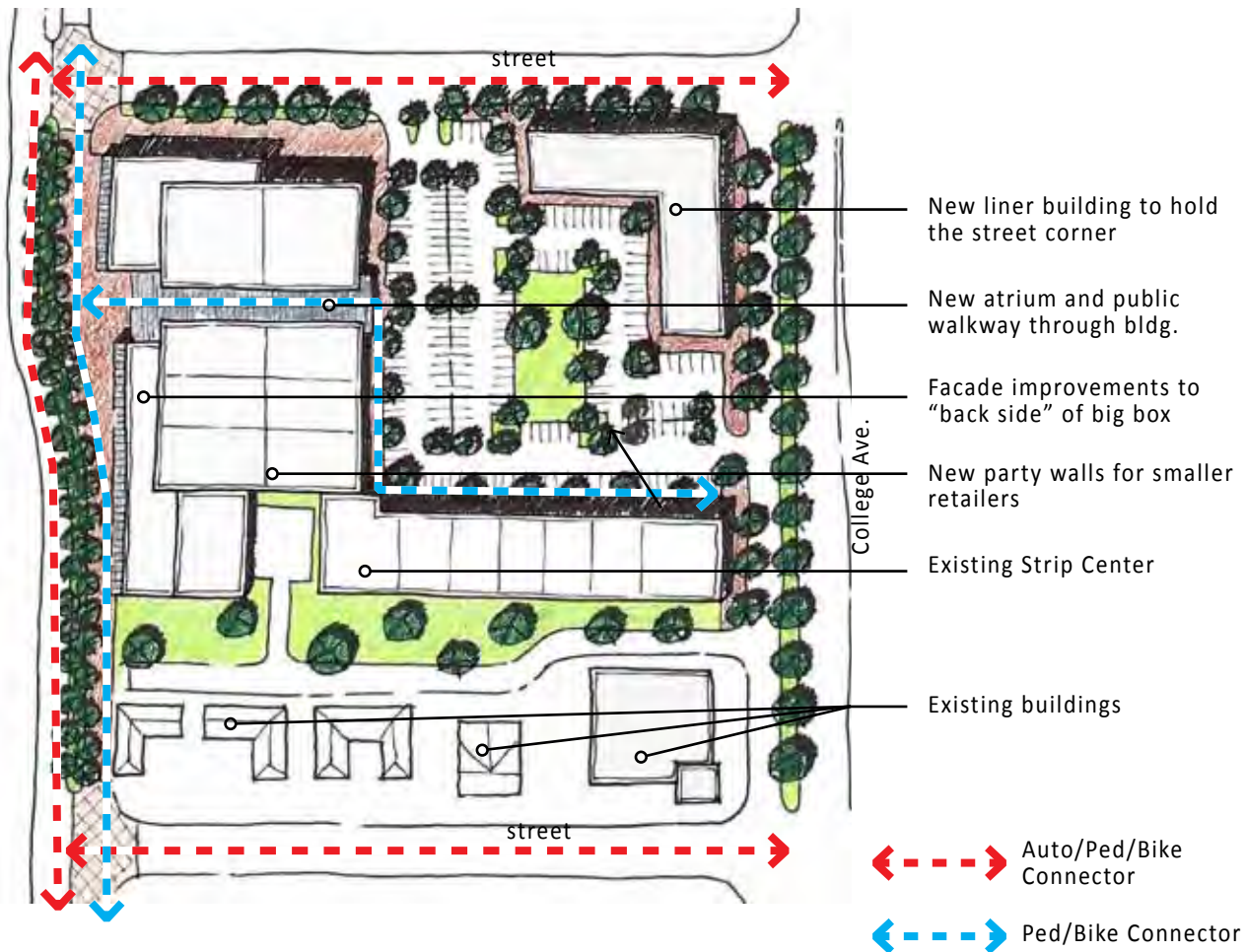




## CASE STUDY 5:

### Big Box Reuse:

This diagram shows how an existing “big box” (perhaps no longer in use) could be adaptively re-used as an interim measure. The site backs onto the BRT route and the primary structure is set back from College with parking in front. In this scenario, the “big box” may be divided into smaller retailers - some that face College and some that face the BRT route and Promenade. This activates both sides of the property, therefore sustaining the building’s short-term use. A new building anchors the northeast corner of College Avenue.





### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Repurpose vacant/shrinking big box stores
- Activate BRT route and Promenade
- Hold corner to provide a more urban edge on College
- Provide for potential mid-block ped/bike crossings
- Create plaza or green space
- Mask parking

### CASE STUDY 5

Property Area:

7 AC

Building Square Footage:

Existing - 100,000 gsf

New - 30,000 gsf

Parking Spaces

Surface - 150 spaces

---

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles*



*Former IGA grocery store in Boulder, CO that was redeveloped to hold smaller retailers and restaurants - shown above are the front and back sides.*



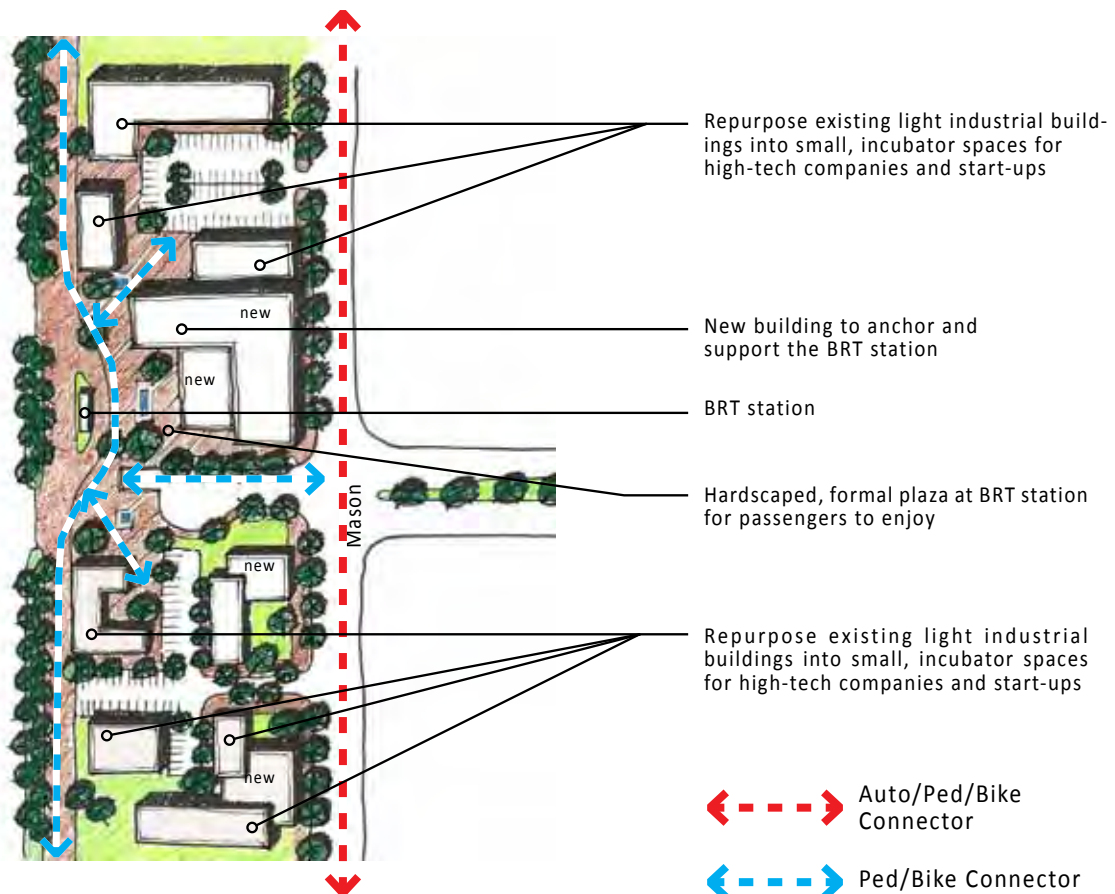


## CASE STUDY 6:

### A “Tech Works” Center:

Some blocks that abut the BRT are relatively narrow, which will influence the size and shape of potential redevelopment projects. Several of these blocks presently have smaller industrial and office buildings, of relatively low intensity, in terms of land development. This scenario tests the ability to adapt some of these buildings to new uses and to insert some new structured that would complement the mix.

This area may have special appeal for startup businesses, research and development firms, and high tech firms that clustered in a “skunkworks.” These businesses would benefit from direct access to the BRT, and would make use of smaller outdoor courtyards and plazas. As redevelopment occurs in steps, buildings could be repurposed into a campus of smaller, incubator spaces, with amenities that would appeal to this creative work group.





### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Repurpose existing buildings with appropriate uses
- Provide a pleasant outdoor space
- Provide connections to transit station
- Provide promenade along transit corridor
- Create plazas and open space
- Mask parking
- Activate Mason Street

### CASE STUDY 6

Property Area:

4.8 AC

Building Square Footage:

Existing - 37,000 gsf

New - 44,000 gsf

Parking Spaces

Surface - 120 spaces

---

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles.*





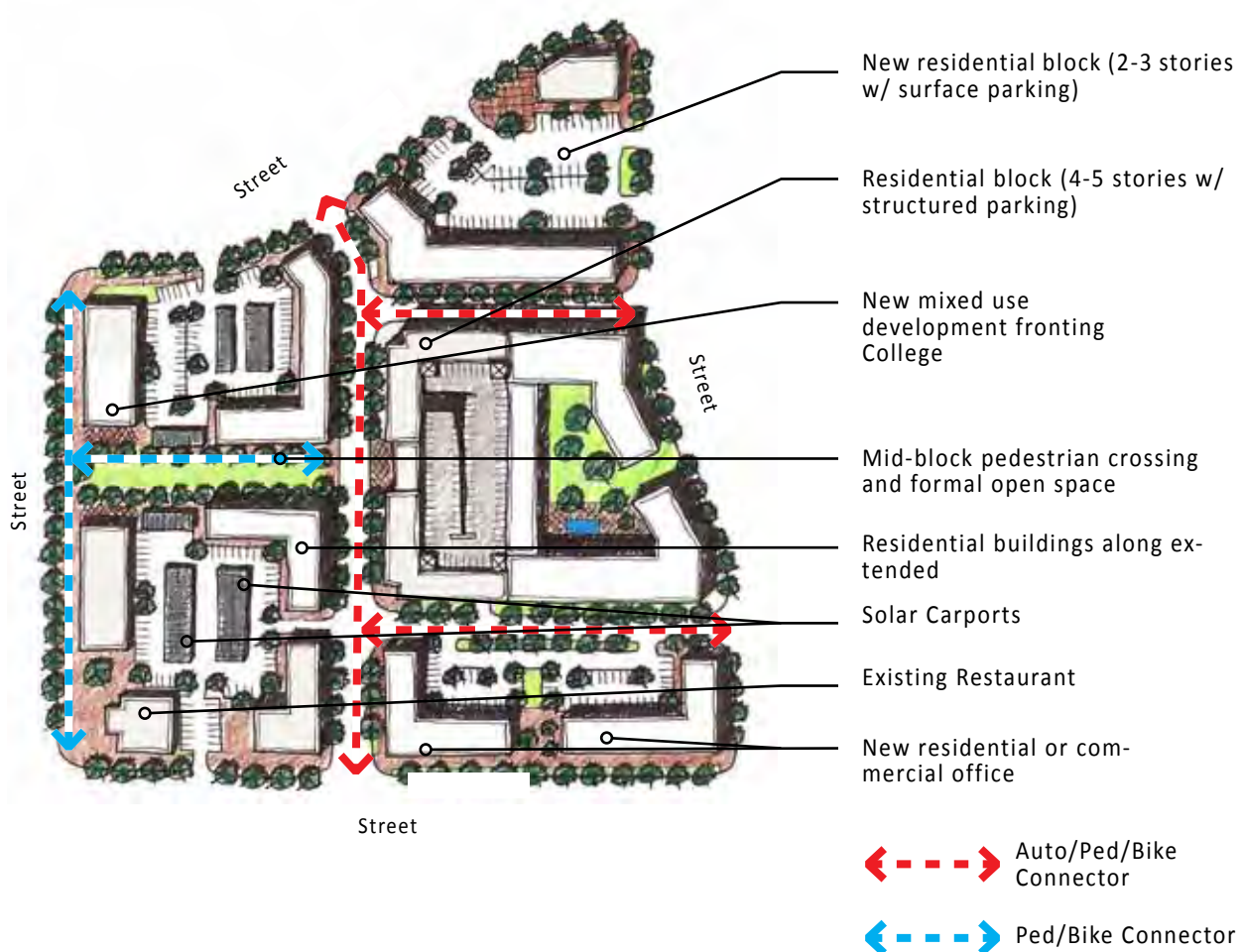


## CASE STUDY 7:

### Multiple Blocks Coordinated

This scenario illustrates how the principles for redevelopment can extend to several adjoining blocks, in which public streets and internal private lanes are interconnected to provide continuity of circulation. New buildings define street edges, with parking located to the interior (some in surface lots, others in structures.) Open spaces provide pedestrian access through some blocks as well, and reduce walking distances.

Combined, these blocks are more intense in the density of their development. While some buildings are only two or three stories, some rise to four and even five stories.





### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Break up into smaller blocks to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment
- Provide a diversity of higher density housing options
- Buildings address and define streets
- Encourage pedestrians and bicycles
- Create plazas and courtyards
- Internalize and wrap parking
- Minimize curb cuts

### CASE STUDY 7

Property Area:

13 AC

Building Square Footage:

Retail/Office - 93,000 gsf

Residential - 285,000 gsf /  
(285 units)

Parking Spaces

Structured - 360 spaces

Surface - 340 spaces

---

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles*



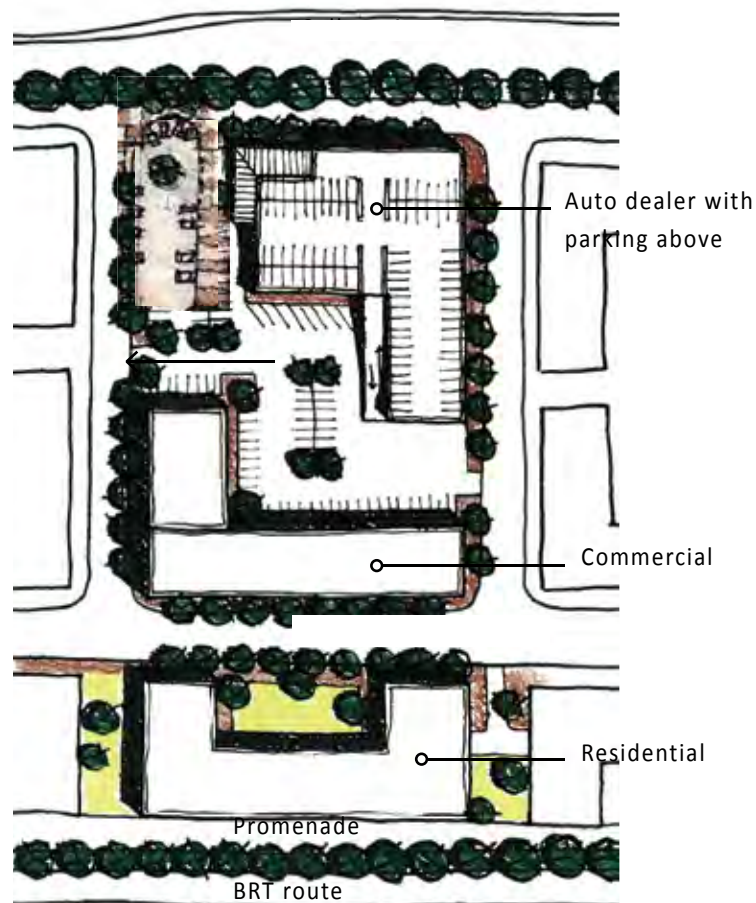




## CASE STUDY 8:

### Redevelopment of an Auto Dealership:

As Midtown redevelops into a pedestrian-first environment, some existing car dealerships may decide to redevelop. This scenario shows how an auto dealership along College Avenue might redevelop over time into a more “urban” format, in a new building that fronts the street and where cars might be displayed in a smaller frontage corner location, with extra cars exhibited atop the building. In this particular example, the parcel is large enough that the existing building could remain in business while the new building is constructed and then cars could be moved to their new locations to allow the rest of the block to redevelop into a more urban edge along the proposed Mason Street extension.





## KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- Create urban edge along College
- Allow uses to stay and redevelop over time
- Create a smaller display area for cars and move the rest out of sight, but easily accessible
- Allow for penetration of Mason Street
- Engage Mason Street and BRT route

## CASE STUDY 8

Property Area:

4.5 AC

Building Square Footage:

Auto - 35,000 gsf

Retail/Office - 25,000 gsf /

Residential - 143,000 gsf /  
(145 units)

Parking Spaces

Structured - 300 spaces

Surface - 150 spaces

## ILLUSTRATIONS:

*Below are some examples of buildings and their adjacent space that represent the scale of development illustrated in the sketch plan and their related design principles.*





## PHASING STUDY:

The preceding Case Studies illustrate the cumulative benefits of coordinating redevelopment on abutting sites. In some cases, individual redevelopment projects may occur concurrently with others, which is ideal. That will yield more integrated circulation and open space systems and a reconfigured street edge character. However, there will be situations in which properties will improve in phases. Some may redevelop early in the plan implementation years, while other sites will redevelop at a later time. Still others may see interim façade rehabilitations, deferring more extensive redevelopment until later. Market forces, parcel assembly patterns and the plans of individual property owners and developers will influence these schedules.

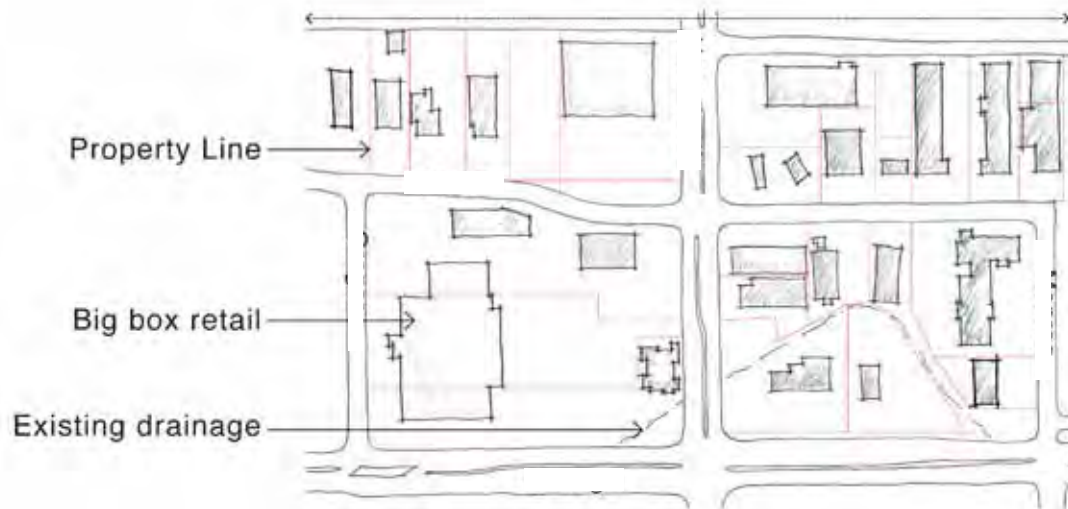
The series of sketch plans on these pages illustrates the feasibility of implementing improvements in phases. It uses a set of blocks with “real” parcel lines, and imagines a variety of scenarios that individual property owners might take. The sketch plans show three phases of improvements, with some of the earlier projects being more modest than some of the later ones, which reach greater densities.

The take away for each phase is that it gets incrementally more dense. The less problematic sites, i.e. the ones under single ownership or already consolidated parcels, are the first ones to redevelop while the more complicated sites to redevelop happen in the longer-term.

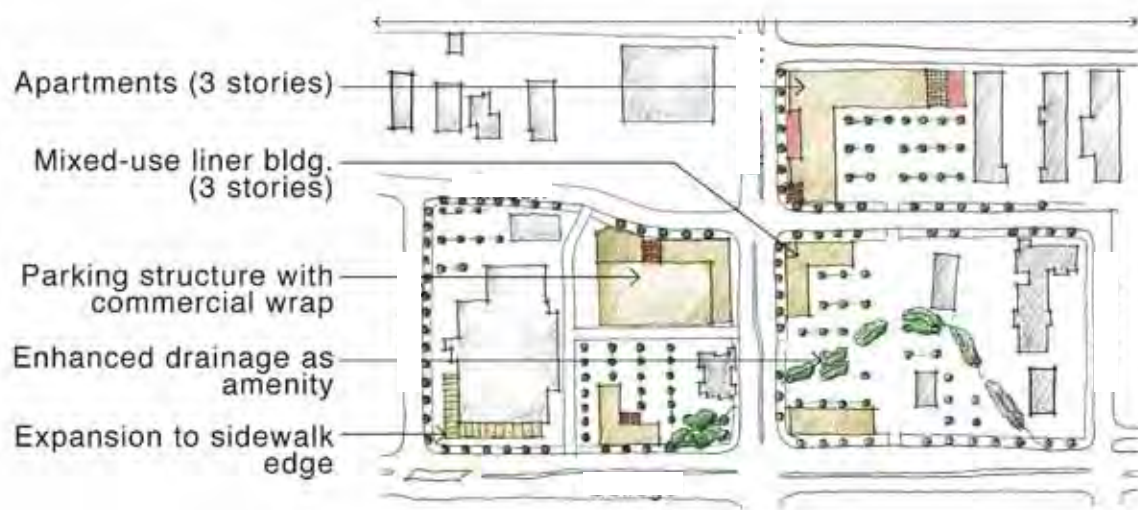
Note that this study is for illustrative purposes only and does not reflect formal proposals by any property owners or by the city.









## Starting Conditions



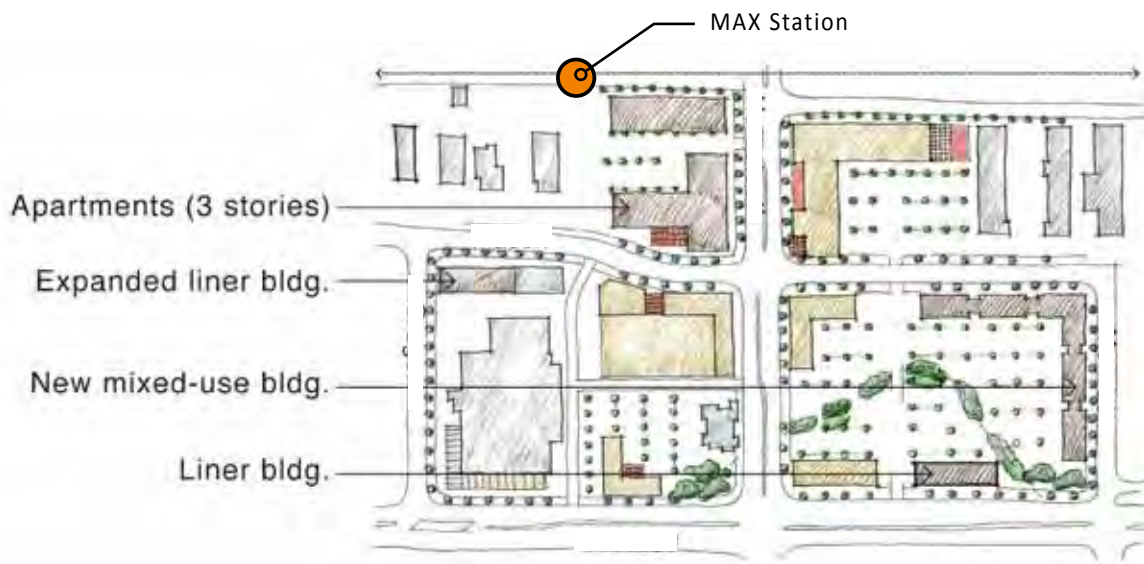
## Phase 1 Improvements



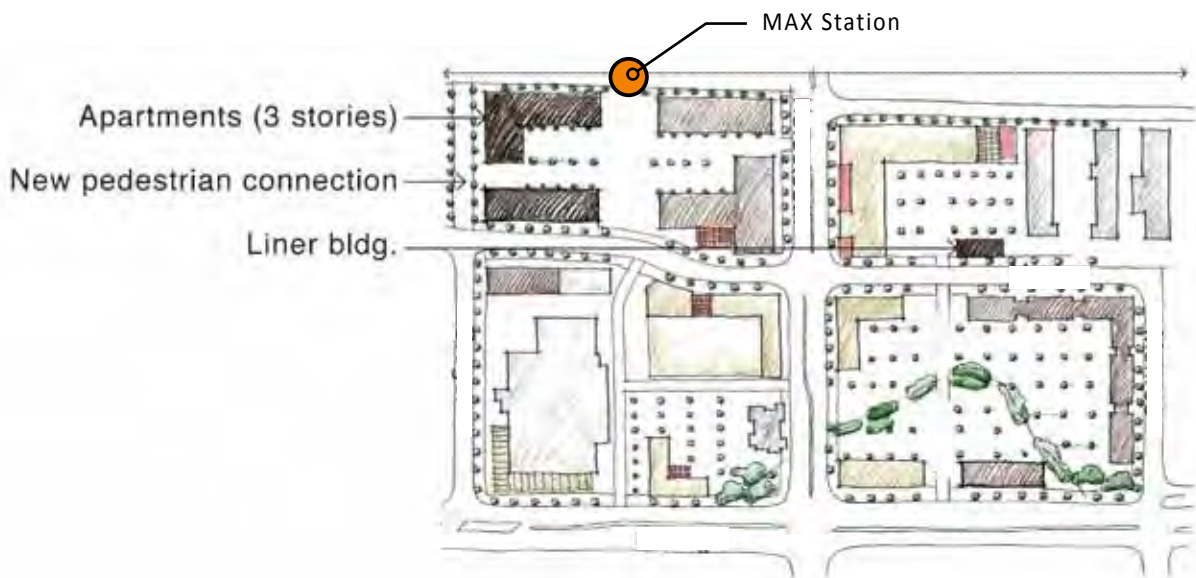
KEY: Building Phase				Site Work Phasing	
					
Existing Building	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Courtyard	Trees









## Phase 2 Improvements



## Phase 3 Improvements



KEY: Building Phase				Site Work Phasing	
					
Existing Building	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Courtyard	Trees



# SUMMARY POINTS

## DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPES

- **A variety of parcel sizes and development prototypes** can and should play a role in the revitalization of Midtown - new development should not only consist of large-parcel, mixed-use development. Smaller, nuance site designs and development prototypes will add to the overall character and charm of Midtown.
- Concepts shown are “**ideal scenarios**” for high-density development. Market conditions at the time of development will determine the true outcome, however, solid urban form and principles should be followed.
- **New development can be phased** to allow funds to be secured and development to realistically happen over time.



# 6 - DESIGN GUIDELINES

Midtown is envisioned as transforming from an auto-oriented, single-use retail environment into a **mixed-use, transit-oriented, vibrant neighborhood** that supports a **variety of incomes**, where **design is paramount** and the **identity** of Midtown is established and authentic.

The guidelines set forth in this Chapter support existing development regulations, and suggest design solutions to the public realm, site and building that help establish a “sense of place” for Midtown. These are not mandatory in order to receive approval. However, the design principles are highly encouraged, and in cases where implementing this vision may add cost above and beyond minimum standards, public-private partnerships may be an option to help achieve the ideal design scenario.



Midtown is currently a single use retail environment that caters to the automobile.



The pedestrian experience along many streets in Midtown is less than desirable.





P1: Achieve excellence in design.++



P2: Promote creativity.



P4: Design with consistency.



P5: Design for durability.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### P1: Achieve excellence in design.

Each project in Midtown should express excellence in design, and it should raise the bar for others to follow. This includes using high quality materials and construction methods and paying attention to detail.

### P2: Promote creativity.

Innovation in design is welcomed in Midtown. Exploring new ways of designing buildings and spaces is appropriate when they contribute to a cohesive urban fabric. This type of creativity should be distinguished from simply being “different.”

### P3: Design with authenticity.

Midtown should be defined by buildings and places that reflect their own time. The result should be a sense of authenticity in building and materials. All new improvements should convey this quality.

### P4: Design with consistency.

Buildings and places in Midtown should have a cohesive quality in the use of materials, organization of functions and overall design.

### P5: Design for durability.

Midtown’s buildings and spaces should be designed for the long term with durable materials.



## P6: Design for sustainability.

Aspects of cultural, economic and environmental sustainability that relate to urban design should be woven into all new improvements.

## P7: Enhance the public realm.

Sidewalks, promenades and other pedestrian paths should be designed to invite their use through thoughtful planning and design. Improvement on private property also should enhance the public realm.

## P8: Enhance the pedestrian experience.

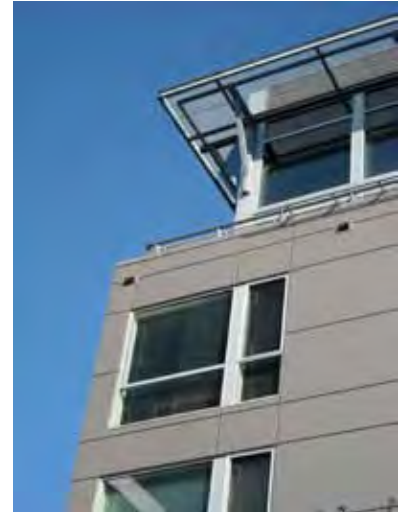
Each improvement project should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment. This includes defining street edges with buildings and spaces that are visually interesting and attract pedestrian activity.

## P9: Provide open spaces and habitat.

These include public and private squares, promenades, plazas and courtyards. Enhance natural resources when they exist, or create pockets of habitat for wildlife on-site, for the public to experience.

## P10: Keep the automobile subordinate.

Parking lots and structures should support other functions and not dominate the urban setting. They should be hidden, or at least visually buffered.



P6: Design for sustainability.



P7: Enhance the public realm.



P9: Provide open spaces and habitat.



These design guidelines may be applied by the City, the URA, or a BID, when considering assistance or participating in projects in the Midtown area. They also may be used voluntarily by others who seek to contribute to the overall sense of continuity and identity that is envisioned.



Mid-block passages could enhance the public realm.



Storefront windows and outdoor patios should activate the public realm.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

It is important that each development contributes to an overall sense of continuity and identity in Midtown. Design principles that encourage compatible scale and pedestrian-oriented environments serve as the basis for the guidelines in this section.

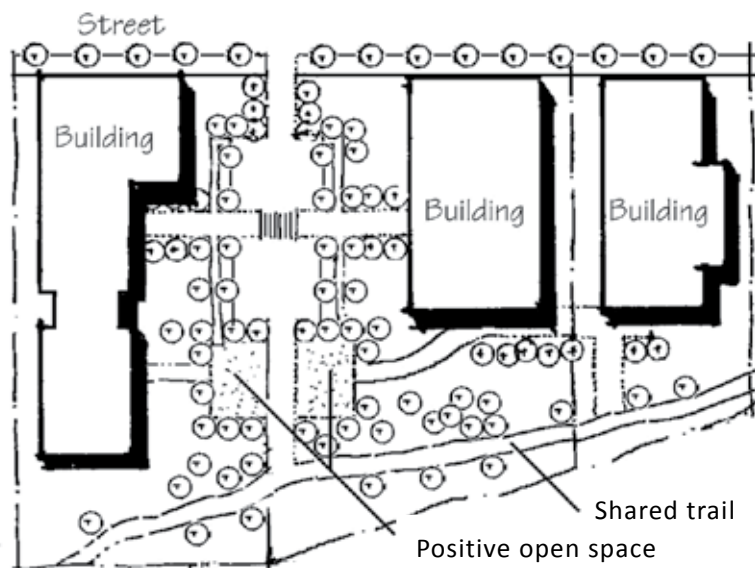
### Design Guidelines for the Public Realm

#### DESIGN OF THE PUBLIC REALM

The public realm of Midtown should be dynamic, active, inviting and be of high-quality materials.

**1. Development projects should be designed to contribute to the public realm in a positive way using the following design elements:**

- Active street frontages
- Pedestrian-oriented entries
- Street-facing windows
- Small, public spaces linked to the sidewalk
- Public art



Open space that can be enjoyed visually and functionally is considered to be "positive," as opposed to areas that are not well designed to accommodate use or serve as a visual amenity.



## PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Pedestrian circulation systems should provide access to buildings, courtyards, paths and plazas. These should interconnect to facilitate pedestrian movement throughout the area. In most cases, these connections will simply involve providing an extension of the existing sidewalk network, but may also include new internal circulation systems within a development.

### 1. Connect new development to external pedestrian ways.

#### a. Appropriate pedestrian connections include:

- Sidewalks
- Walkways, within an individual property
- Mid-block passages
- Multi-use alleys

### 2. Locate a new walkway to animate the Midtown pedestrian network and its associated outdoor spaces.

#### a. Direct a walkway through a plaza, courtyard or other outdoor use areas to help animate the space.

### 3. Use landscaping, special paving and distinct lighting to make the walkway an attractive, inviting and safe experience.



Provide connections to public sidewalks.



Provide pedestrian connections between properties.

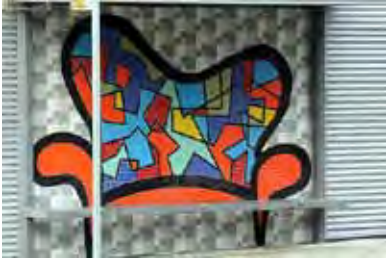


Direct a walkway through a plaza, courtyard or other outdoor use areas to help animate the space.



Provide street trees to make the walk pleasant.





A customized design for site furniture is appropriate.



Public art should contribute to a better pedestrian experience (photo credit: Richard Hansen).



Public art should be contextual



Locate public art to help activate an outdoor space.

## PUBLIC ART

Installing public art is highly encouraged as a way of bringing visual interest and special identity throughout Midtown. A wide range of art media, from sculpture to murals and artistic lighting, can be appropriate.

### 1. Incorporate art in a public and private project.

- Public art should be complementary to the primary structure on site and the surrounding context.
- A public art piece located exterior to a building should be suitable for outdoor display, including its long-term maintenance and conservation requirements.
- Utilizing the “Art in Public Places Program” is encouraged, especially including an artist in the design phase of a project. Art should be project-specific and well-integrated into a project.

### 2. Design public art to enhance the public realm and the pedestrian experience.

- Use public art to enhance places of community gathering and active public use.
- Avoid designs that impede pedestrian flow or could endanger the safety of adjacent property, pedestrians, or automobile traffic.
- Consider a public art location that will frame or enhance an important public view opportunity.



Public art can double as useful public space, in this case, benches and small “plaza” (photo credit: Joe McGrane).



## Design Guidelines for the Site

This section addresses site design within a single parcel or assembled group of parcels or within a project site. The objective is to promote projects that have a comprehensive approach to the use of land, with a focus on enhancing the street, providing for efficient functional requirements and high quality improvements.

### BUILDING SETBACKS AND BUILD-TO LINES

The uniform alignment of building fronts along a block helps to define a “street wall,” which provides a sense of enclosure and a comfortable scale for pedestrians.

#### 1. Buildings should align at the sidewalk edge.

- a. For predominantly commercial character, a clearly defined street edge may be varied to some extent for outdoor dining, plazas and courtyards.
- b. For areas predominantly multifamily residential, buildings should establish a uniform front yard setback to provide room for stoops and porches.

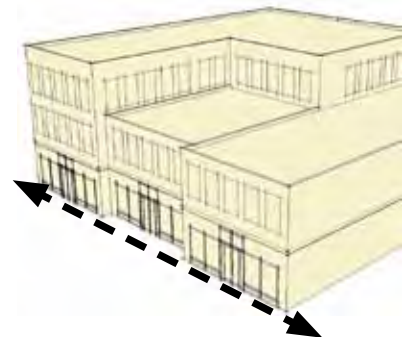


In areas that are predominantly commercial in character, buildings should align at the sidewalk edge.

#### 6. Design Guidelines



Buildings should establish a uniform front yard setback. In multifamily contexts, this should provide space for stoops and small courtyards.



A clearly defined street edge, composed of storefronts at the sidewalk, is the preferred pattern in commercial areas.



In residential areas, buildings should establish a uniform front yard setback





Provide a sheltering element such as a canopy, awning, arcade or portico to signify the primary entrance.



A pergola defines the entry into a multifamily project.



A canopy defines the entry into a mixed use project.

## BUILDING ENTRANCES

Building entrances should be accented to provide hierarchy to a building's facade and direct the buildings' users. The objective is to provide a sense of connection with the neighborhood, and add "eyes on the street."

### 1. Orient the primary entrance of a building to face a primary street, sidewalk, or plaza.

- a. Primary entrances should orient to a major street, sidewalk, or plaza. In some cases, the front door itself may be positioned perpendicular to the street, in which case, the entry should still be clearly defined.

### 2. Design the main entrance to a building to be clearly identifiable.

- a. Provide a sheltering element such as a canopy, awning, arcade or portico to signify the primary entrance to a building. This may be achieved by incorporating a porch, stoop or canopy for residential building types, or a recessed entry, canopy or awning for commercial/mixed-use building types.



A corner tower defines a primary building entrance.



## OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT

Open space should be provided in a project, when opportunity exists and may take the form of a plaza, courtyard, mini-park or a landscaped feature that is visible from the public way.

### 1. Create open space for public enjoyment.

- a. Where open space is required for landscaping, consider designing the area so that it can be used or observed by the public as an asset.
- b. Include shade trees, seating, dining areas, and water features as public amenities.
- c. When open space is needed to meet engineering requirements, such as storm water retention, consider designing the feature or area so that it can be actively used or observed by the public as an asset.
- d. Incorporate native or wildlife-friendly plants to attract pollinators and other species to the site.
- e. Create vegetation structure in the site. For example, layer grasses, shrubs and trees to provide refuge for species and viewing opportunities for residents.



Layer grasses, shrubs and tree top provide refuge for species and viewing opportunities for residents.



Softscape natural amenity.



Hardscape plaza amenity.



Create open space for public enjoyment.



Stormwater detention facilities can be designed to be enjoyed by the public.





Courtyards and plazas provide places for people to gather, engage in activities and enjoy a sense of community.



Orient plazas/courtyards to link with other pedestrian activities, circulation paths, views and natural features.



Plazas and courtyards should take advantage of solar access.



Size the space to provide a comfortable scale for pedestrians.

## COURTYARDS AND PLAZAS

Courtyards and plazas provide places for people to gather, engage in activities and enjoy a sense of community, and these are encouraged throughout Midtown. These places should be planned to activate streets and enhance the pedestrian experience.

### 1. Design a plaza or courtyard to be inviting.

- Orient this space to link with other pedestrian activities, primary circulation paths, views and natural features.
- Size the space to provide a comfortable scale for pedestrians.
- Define the space with building fronts that convey a human scale.
- Locating a space at the sidewalk level is preferred; a sunken or raised courtyard separated from the sidewalk is discouraged.
- Take advantage of solar access.
- Provide seating so people may rest.



Design a plaza or courtyard to be inviting.

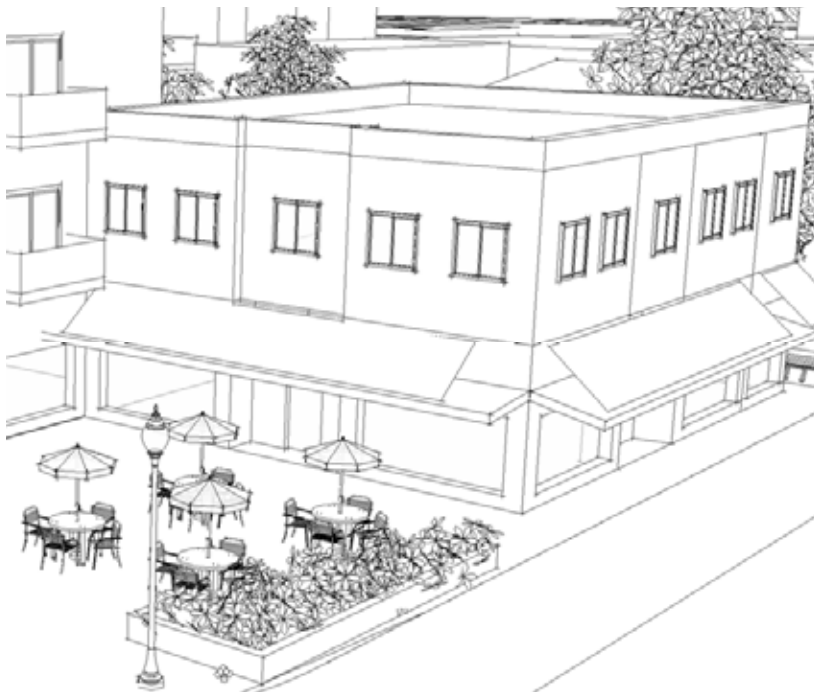


## OUTDOOR DINING AREAS

Outdoor dining areas and sidewalk cafés help animate the public realm and are welcomed throughout Midtown.

### 1. Locate an outdoor dining area to accommodate pedestrian traffic along the sidewalk.

- a. Placing the dining area immediately adjacent to a building front is preferred, thus maintaining a public walkway along the curb side.
- b. Maintain a clear path along the sidewalk for pedestrians; a width of 8 feet for this clear path is recommended, but this may be reduced to 5 feet where no other obstacles in the sidewalk will impede pedestrian traffic.
- c. Frame outdoor dining areas with walls that are visually interesting and provide a human scale. (See also building design guidelines on page 7-22.)



Locate an outdoor dining area to accommodate pedestrian traffic along the sidewalk.

## 6. Design Guidelines



Placing the dining area immediately adjacent to a building front is preferred, thus maintaining a public walkway along the curb side.



Outdoor dining areas and sidewalk cafés help animate the public realm and are welcomed throughout Midtown.



Maintain a clear path along the sidewalk for pedestrians.





Screening the parking with a visual filter softens the view of parked cars.



A planted buffer may consist of a combination of trees, shrubs and ground covers, as this one does.

## SURFACE PARKING ON SITE

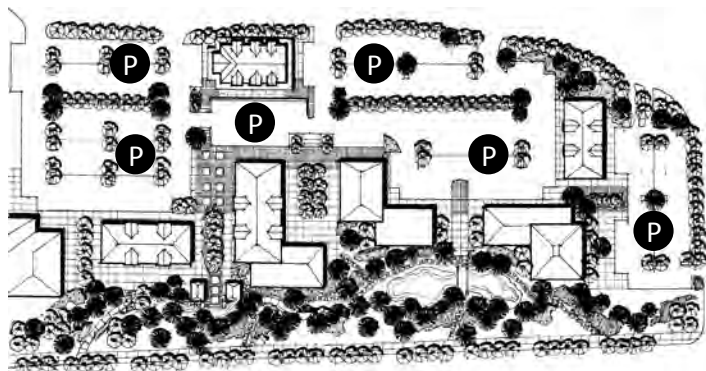
A goal for Midtown is to increase the density of development such that most parking will be in structures, either in facilities primarily designed for parking, or in a building in which parking serves other uses on the site. However, some surface parking will continue to be necessary. Where it does occur, the visual impact of surface parking should be minimized.

### 1. Locate a parking area to the interior of a site where feasible.

- This is especially important on a corner property.
- This is generally more visible than an interior lot, and it is important to provide a sense of enclosure to the street wall.
- Place the parking at the rear of the site, or if this is not feasible, beside the building.
- Provide a clear path from parking to a building entrance.

### 2. Provide a visual buffer where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk.

- Note that “buffering” does not mean fully screening the parking, but it does involve creating a visual “filter” that softens the view of parked cars.
- A low wall may be used as a buffer. Its materials should be compatible with those of the building on the site.
- A planted buffer may also be used, consisting of a combination of trees, shrubs and ground covers. (Usually a minimum of 3 feet in width.)



Divide a large parking area into small “pods” with landscape buffers.



## STRUCTURED PARKING

The design of structured parking facilities, whether attached to buildings or stand alone structures, should be similar in material and design quality as the buildings they serve.

- 1. When parking in a structure occurs at the street level on a primary street, it should have an active use at the sidewalk edge.**
  - a. An active use may include residential units, commercial storefronts, office space and/or civic uses.
  - b. On a secondary street, other methods of providing visual interest may be employed. In these locations, use architectural details, murals and public art, wall sculpture, landscaping or display cases at the street level to provide interest to pedestrians.
- 2. An architectural screen should be an integral part of the building design of a parking structure.**
  - a. Screens should be of durable materials and finish.
  - b. Screens should include decorative patterns, railings and details to provide visual interest.
- 3. Massing of parking structures**
  - a. Massing of parking structures should be similar in scale to other adjacent active use buildings.



The massing of a parking structure should appear similar in scale to other active use buildings in the area. (This structure has an interior parking deck behind the “wrap” of articulated storefronts).

## 6. Design Guidelines



An architectural screen should be an integral part of the building design.



When parking in a structure occurs at the street level on a primary street, it should have an active use at the sidewalk edge, as this one does.



Parking garages screened with buildings or ground floor uses help to maintain the scale of an urban street.



**NOTE:**

While structured parking is encouraged to be developed throughout Midtown, some publicly-assisted structured parking should be developed near key MAX stations. These guidelines apply to those conditions.

**STRUCTURED PUBLIC PARKING LOCATION CRITERIA**

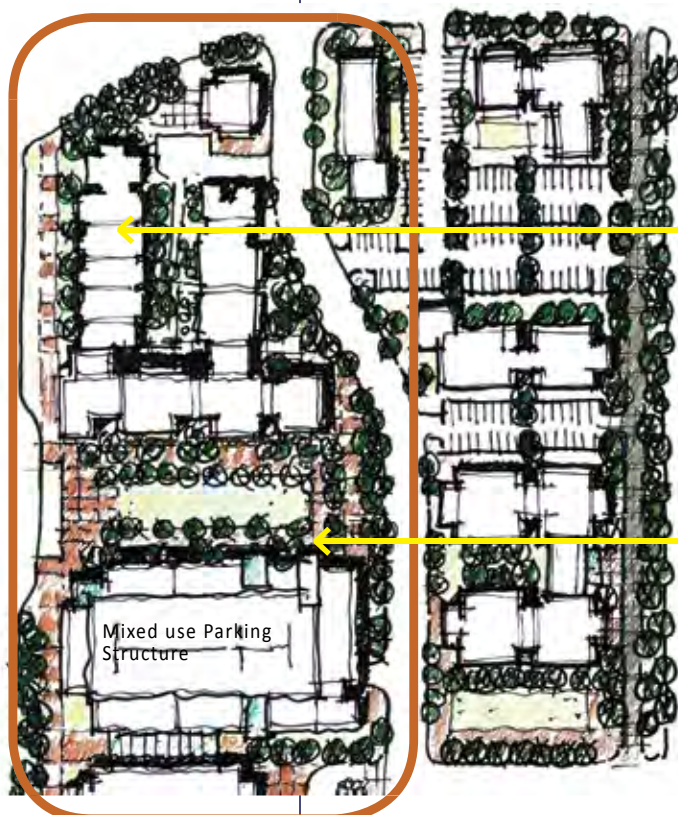
A publicly developed, or assisted, parking structure should be located close to a MAX transit station to optimize use of the BRT. It should also be located in an active environment, where it can support a mix of uses in a relatively dense setting.

**1. Locate a public parking structure near density.**

- a. The area should include higher density housing, an urban plaza and/or green space, and mixed-use buildings. It should be an inviting, pleasant, walkable environment.

**2. Locate a public parking structure close to a MAX station.**

- a. The first priority is to locate the parking facility immediately facing a MAX station plaza. This provides the most convenient and enhanced access to users of the system.
- b. If not immediately adjacent, the parking facility should be within 500' of the transit stop.



The area should include high-density housing.

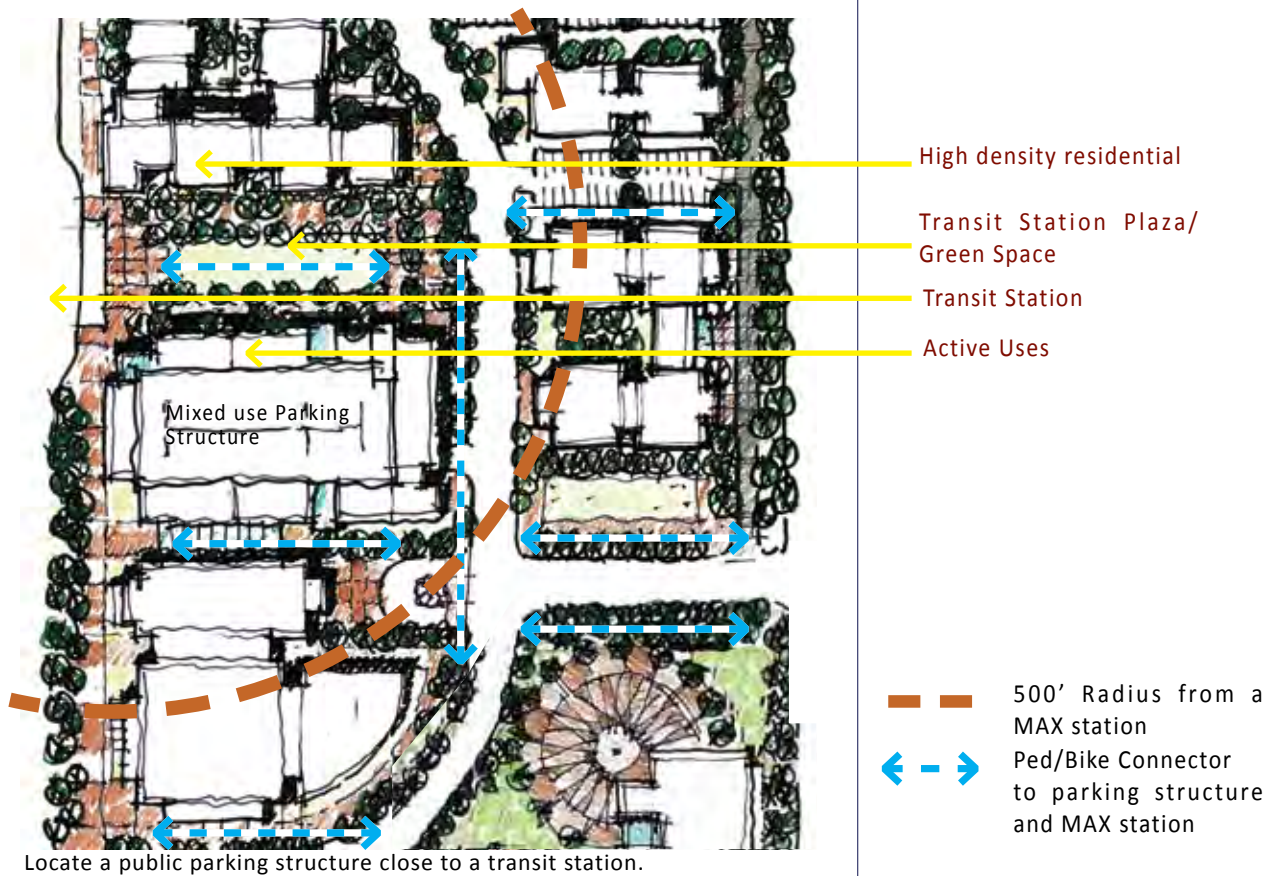
The structure should be wrapped with a mix of uses.

Locate a public parking structure near dense development and transit.



**3. Enhance the pedestrian experience along the path to the parking structure.**

- a. Provide an attractive path to a structured parking facility. This can increase the comfort level of the user and thus increase the use of the facility.
- b. Provide active uses along the pedestrian way.
- c. Avoid locating a parking structure adjacent to empty parcels, surface lots, and primary arterials.







Screen a service area with a wall, fence or planting. (This brick wall is an example.)



Service areas should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building, as this one is.



Screen equipment from view or design it to be visually subordinate to the building.

## SERVICE AREAS

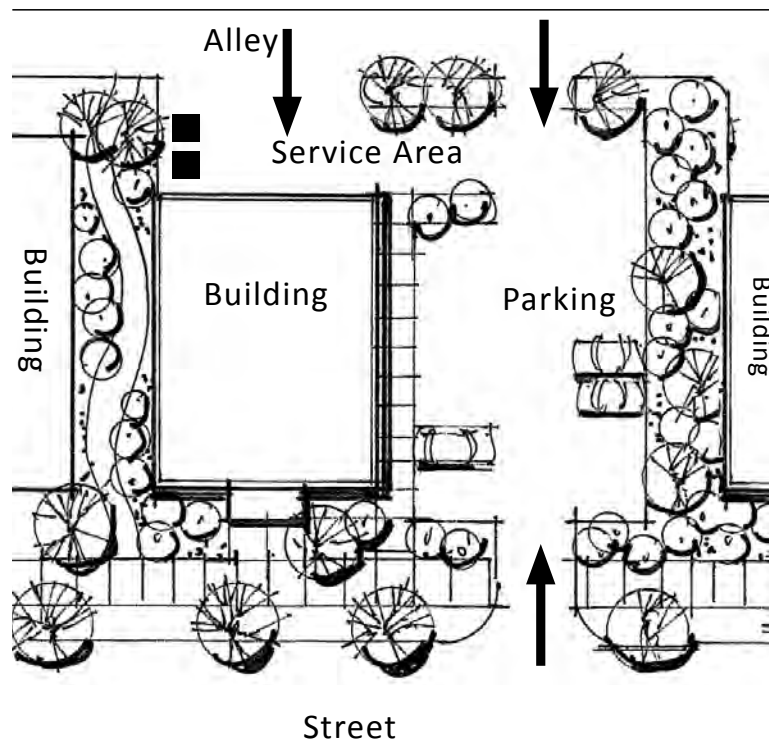
Service areas, such as loading docks, dumpsters, and delivery entrances, should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building. Vehicle access should be located to minimize conflicts with pedestrian circulation.

### 1. Minimize the visual impacts of service areas.

- Orient the service area toward a service lane or alley and away from major streets.
- Screen a service area from view with a solid wall, opaque fence or landscaping.
- Where a service area must be oriented to the street, screen it with an architectural feature. The design should be in character with the building and provide visual interest at the street level.

### 2. Locate vehicle access to service areas away from pedestrian circulation.

- Locate service areas where conflicts with pedestrian circulation will be minimized.



Locate vehicle access where conflicts with pedestrian circulation will be minimized.



## DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES

Some commercial operations, such as bank tellers, gas stations, fast food restaurants and other retail and service-oriented businesses, may have drive-through facilities. They should be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians, and should assist in achieving goals for consistent street edges defined with building walls. In that regard, a drive-through facility should be located to the interior of a property and should be visually subordinate to the primary structure.

- 1. Driveways and waiting lanes should not be located between the sidewalk and the primary building.**
  - a. Locating the primary building at the sidewalk edge is preferred.
  - b. If the building is set back, the space between it and the sidewalk should be landscaped, and not used for drive-through lanes.



Design drive-through facilities to minimize conflicts with pedestrians.



The space between a sidewalk and driveway/waiting lane should be landscaped.





Provide variation in building height in a large project.

## Design Guidelines for the Building

### BUILDING HEIGHT

Variation in building height helps to provide visual interest and establish a sense of human scale, and is encouraged.

- 1. Provide variation in building height in a large project.**
  - a. This is especially relevant for larger buildings that extend for a major portion of a city block.
- 2. Design floor to floor heights to establish a sense of scale.**
  - a. While overall building heights may vary along a block, a similarity in height should be perceived at the street level.
  - b. The first floor height should be taller than upper floors and should appear as the dominant floor within a building.

Note that maximum height limits are established in the Land Use Code, Section 4.21 (D)



While overall building heights may vary along a block, a similarity in height should be perceived at the street level.



## BUILDING SCALE

A new building should convey a sense of human scale. This can be achieved when one can reasonably interpret the size of a building by comparing features of its design to comparable elements in one's experience. Generally, a building's mass, height and articulation define human scale in a building.

- 1. Establish a sense of human scale in a building design with use of materials.**
  - a. Use materials that convey scale in their proportion, detail and form. For example, materials applied in units, panels or modules help to convey a sense of scale.
- 2. Establish a sense of human scale in a building design with vertical articulation.**
  - a. Use moldings, columns, a change in material or an offset in the wall plane to define different building modules.
  - b. Organize vertical articulation to reflect traditional lots widths or facade dimensions.
- 3. Establish a sense of human scale in a building design with horizontal expression at lower floor heights.**
  - a. Use moldings, a change in material, or an offset in the wall plane to define the scale of lower floors in relation to the street.
  - b. Align the features with similar ones along the street, where a distinct alignment pattern exists.



Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce apparent scale.



Establish a sense of human scale with materials on the ground floor such as brick, blocks or panels.



Establish a sense of human scale with vertical articulation using material changes or an offset in wall planes.



An offset in the wall plane above the first floor establishes horizontal expression and human scale.





Contemporary interpretations of traditional materials are encouraged.



Architectural metals are encouraged.



Brick and stone are encouraged.

## BUILDING MATERIALS

Materials that are “authentic” and durable are preferred. They should contribute to the visual continuity of the street and convey high quality in design and detail.

### 1. New building materials should contribute to the visual continuity of the street.

- Genuine masonry, metal, concrete and glass are preferred at street level.
- Imitation materials, such as synthetic lap siding, paneled brick or stone veneer and plastic, are generally inappropriate.
- The use of highly reflective materials also is discouraged.

### 2. Use high quality, durable materials.

- A material should be proven to be durable in the Fort Collins climate.
- Materials at the ground level should withstand ongoing contact with the public, sustaining impacts without compromising the appearance. (Note that some synthetic materials will not sustain this degree of frequent contact.)

### 3. The use of traditional masonry, stone and concrete materials are encouraged.

- Use genuine masonry units, which appear authentic in their depth and dimension.
- Assure that masonry units wrap around corners of walls, and thus do not appear to be applied veneers.



Architectural concrete that is detailed to provide a sense of scale is appropriate.



4. **Architectural metals, which are detailed to provide a sense of scale, are appropriate.**
  - a. Metals which are applied in panels that convey a sense of human scale should be detailed.
5. **Genuine stucco may be considered as a material.**
  - a. Stucco that is applied and detailed by hand is appropriate.
6. **The use of synthetic stucco (such as EIFS) is discouraged.**
  - a. However, it may be considered for use in limited applications, as small wall panels or as an accent on upper floors.
7. **Architectural glass may be considered as a primary material.**
  - a. Detail glass to provide a sense of scale.
  - b. Using glass that permits views into activities in the building is preferred, to provide visual interest.
  - c. The use of tinted windows on the ground floor is inappropriate.
8. **Architectural concrete may be used.**
  - a. It should be detailed to provide visual interest and convey a sense of scale.



Fiber cement board, formed in lap siding or as a board and batten panel design, may be an appropriate material.



Architectural concrete block is an appropriate material.



Architectural metals, which are detailed to provide a sense of scale, are appropriate.



The use of traditional masonry materials, stone and concrete is encouraged.



Detail glass to provide a sense of scale.





Sophisticated architectural details provide visual interest to pedestrians.



In this example windows and doors, canopies and streetscape elements provide visual interest.



Wall art provides visual interest.

## STREET LEVEL INTEREST

Buildings should be designed to provide visual interest to pedestrians. For example, commercial buildings with storefronts are of interest to passersby, while porches, courtyards, and decorative wall surfaces add interest to multifamily housing designs. These features encourage pedestrian activity and should be used.

### 1. Develop the street level of a building to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

- a. All sides of a building should include architectural details to avoid presenting a “back side” to the street or to neighboring properties. Provide visual interest with:
  - Windows and doors
  - A display window that provides views to activities in the building
  - Display cases for exhibits
  - Decorative wall surface, for example, a change in materials
  - Building articulation
  - Site walls and raised planters



Provide visual interest with storefronts, canopies and small dining areas.





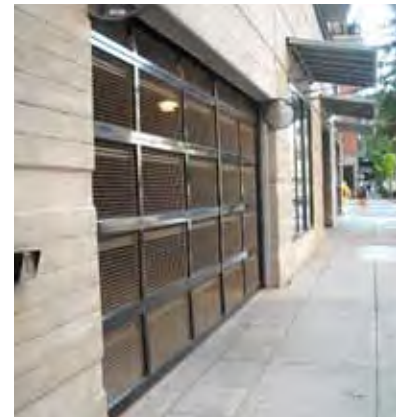
## STREET LEVEL INTEREST IN RETROFITS

Improvements to existing buildings should enhance the pedestrian experience, especially along primary pedestrian ways and street frontages. For example, an existing commercial strip building that is accessed from College could also provide some storefronts along the promenade, resulting in a double-fronted building. Other decorative wall surfaces treatments may also be employed. These types of features enhance the pedestrian experience and should be encouraged.

- 1. Develop the street level of an existing building along primary pedestrian ways and street frontages to enhance the pedestrian experience.**
- 2. All sides of a building should include architectural details to avoid presenting a “back side” to the street or to neighboring properties. Provide visual interest with:**
  - Windows and doors
  - A display window that provides views to activities in the building.
  - Display cases for exhibits
  - Decorative wall surface, for example, a change in materials, canopies
  - Building articulation
  - Site walls and raised planters
  - Murals
  - Decorative garage doors



Planters and screens



All sides of a building should include operable doors and should be designed to not feel like a blank wall.

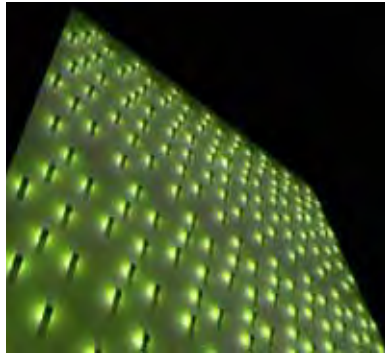


Adding textural artwork to a blank facade makes it more pleasant to walk and sit by (photo credit: Carolyn Braaskma).



### **Murals and Screens Along MAX**

Along the Promenade and MAX line, many “big box” stores, warehouses, and light industrial buildings exist. A quick and effective way to add visual interest to these buildings is to add murals and/or “screens” to the blank facades to give visual interest and identity to them.



An LED light mural allows the building to light up at night and become iconic and a source of wayfinding.



Panels on a rigid frame pulled away from the building allows shadows to dance on the building.



Punched metal screens could be customized to fit in with the surrounding streetscape elements.



Cast concrete and sandstone can also be shaped into unique forms to add interest to existing facades.



## Design Guidelines for the Environment

The conservation and efficient use of energy is a key objective in Midtown. This Plan already suggests a sustainable approach for the neighborhood through encouraging public transit and thereby reducing vehicle miles travelled and by intensifying development which requires less consumption of land than conventional land use patterns. New projects should target high levels of energy performance resulting in less operating costs and reduced environmental impact, while offering higher levels of occupant satisfaction.

### PUBLIC REALM DESIGN

The public realm provides a stage for showcasing sustainable practices throughout Midtown. Streetscapes, plazas and parks should all represent environmentally responsive measures.

- 1. Utilize sustainable, low imprint materials for streetscape furnishings and signage.**
  - a. Use local and/or sustainable materials, such as recycled steel or regional stone and masonry, where possible.
- 2. Use lighting fixtures that create a sense of place and safety, but that do not contribute to light pollution.**
  - a. Position and space street lights appropriately as to not create adverse effects on the environment or the users of the space.
  - b. Incorporate LED light saver whenever possible.
- 3. Use indigenous, low water plants where possible.**
  - a. Right-of-way and public park and plaza landscaping should utilize local indigenous plants that do not require a lot of water, and thus reduce the need for irrigation and maintenance.
  - b. In some cases, temporary irrigation may be needed to establish a plant's tolerance to local climate conditions, but could be removed after a few years.
  - c. Use low-water landscape plants that are attractive and flower.

#### NOTE:

These are general and very broad-based guidelines for environmental awareness in the design of new public and private improvements in Midtown. If a full Sustainability Guidelines report is desired for Midtown, a more thorough study would need to be explored in the future.



This art sculpture is made from recycled railroad ties.



This ROW planter area allows water from the street and the sidewalk to be channelled into it.





Pervious materials are encouraged.



On-site swales act as stormwater management techniques and provide a pleasant landscape for users.

## SITE DESIGN

Individual projects should be environmentally sensitive in their site design and layout. The design process should include an evaluation of the physical assets (site shape, landscape, elevations, soil type, views, solar exposure, etc.) to minimize environmental impact. Off-site development impacts should also be considered.

### **1. Use stormwater management techniques to minimize impact on the municipal stormwater system.**

- a. Pervious materials are encouraged to allow water to permeate into the ground rather than be pushed off site and into the stormwater system.
- b. On-site swales, rain gardens or other landscape features can act as stormwater management techniques as well as provide a pleasant landscape for users.

### **2. Minimize use of water for landscaping.**

- a. Use indigenous, low water plants where possible.
- b. Use higher water plants in areas of higher concentration of people, such as outdoor patios, plazas, etc.

### **3. Maximize solar access for public enjoyment.**

- a. Place buildings on a site as to not block solar access from public or semi-public outdoor areas.



## BUILDING DESIGN

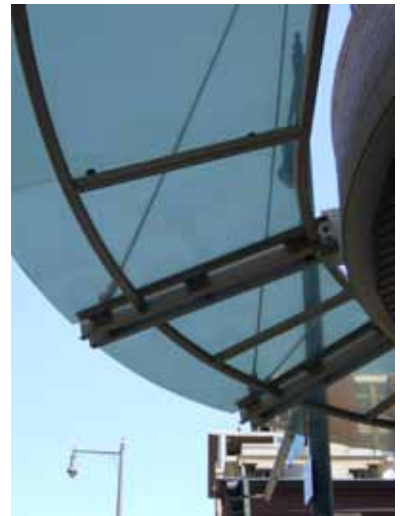
Buildings should be designed to maximize energy efficiency and conservation. Designs should also address seasonal changes in natural lighting and ventilation conditions.

A design also should take into account potential effects on and benefits from an adjoining property, in terms of solar access/shading and potential effects of each site on the other's to implement sustainable design principles.

- 1. Locate a new building, or an addition, to take advantage of micro-climatic opportunities for energy conservation.**
  - a. Orient a building to be consistent with established development patterns, when they are a part of the desired features for the context.
  - b. Consider seasonal solar and wind exposure patterns when positioning a new building on its site.
  - c. Utilize external shading (landscape and/or integrated into the building) to keep out summer sun and let in winter sun.
- 2. Design a building to take advantage of energy-saving and energy-generating opportunities.**
  - a. Design windows to maximize daylighting into interior spaces.
  - b. Use exterior shading devices, such as overhangs or deciduous shade trees to manage solar gain in summer months and welcome solar access in winter months.
  - c. Renewable energy devices, including solar collectors and wind turbines, are encouraged.
  - d. Specify highly efficient internal equipment (e.g. lighting, plug loads) and controls.
- 3. Maximize solar access for all properties.**
  - a. New buildings should minimize impacts to solar access on adjoining properties, especially for residential uses.



Renewable energy generation is encouraged.



Use external shading devices to control solar gain.



Deciduous vines provide shade in warmer months and allow the sun to provide warmth in cooler months.



## SUMMARY POINTS

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

- New development should be guided by the design principles and guidelines listed in this chapter. The **principles and guidelines help to implement the overarching vision** for Midtown.



# 7 - IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Midtown Plan provides a critical opportunity to create a **bold vision** for the corridor that encourages investment, redevelopment and ultimately revitalization of this important area. To achieve this, several things must occur in tandem with any investments in the physical infrastructure and design of the corridor. This chapter provides a strategy for implementing the recommendations contained in the Midtown Plan.

The Plan establishes a bold vision with suggested improvements that range in size, cost, and beneficiary. Successful implementation requires a **coordinated effort** between public and private entities and tools that can facilitate investment from both sectors; this includes refining existing tools that support economic development, and establishing new options that will expand the opportunities for implementing an economically dynamic Plan.

Key players will be property owners and developers, the business and property owners associations, other public agencies and the City of Fort Collins. Together, prioritization can be established for catalytic improvements that could jump-start additional investment that align with the vision.



The primary goal is to ensure property owners and developers uphold the fundamental goals and policies contained in the Plan. It is vital for the City to be flexible in the implementation of specific recommendations, provided the overall vision is being met.



“It used to be we could get good stuff in Midtown, but slowly those stores left and discount chains came. Today, I don’t even bother going there – when I need something important, I just get in my car and drive south to Denver. But I’d much rather get those things here.”

- Midtown Stakeholder



Projects like grocery stores, which have a direct benefit to local residents, are highly encouraged.

## PROMOTE MIDTOWN’S VISION

Midtown was once a very vibrant and valid place in a former economy. However, it no longer represents vibrancy, nor buyer preferences. Development is car-oriented and mostly big-box retail focused. Changes in the economic environment have left many of these large facilities now outdated or outmoded. The area has little single-site mixed-use development, entertainment, multifamily residential, or major employment uses, making it a narrowly focused district both physically and economically.

The good news is that market studies make a clear case for development potential in Midtown. Looking at leakage numbers, development gaps, and vacancy rates indicates that Midtown must “find its place” in this new economy. Promoting the vision for Midtown, as set forth in this Plan will help Midtown do this. Midtown should be promoted as a ***sustainable, mixed use district that is pedestrian and bike-friendly, adjacent to a state-of-the-art new transit system and has a distinct identity with great architecture and public open space.***

There is a growing and thriving population that falls in Midtown’s trade area. The City of Fort Collins is growing, as are areas surrounding it. That means more people shopping, more businesses opening, and more housing that is needed. Numbers show a significant demand and potential for the following uses to support both existing and new populations:

- A more substantial **regional retail hub**
- **Commercial business and employment** opportunities
- **Urban residential** uses
- **Neighborhood services**

Stakeholder outreach identified consistency around the idea of Midtown as a reinvigorated district - a dense, mixed-use, vibrant district that offers an **alternative to downtown**. The urban neighborhood, with offerings and opportunities would speak to consumers in their 30s, 40s and beyond.



Substantial opportunity exists, and Midtown is well positioned to capitalize on it. The corridor should build on the clear opportunities:

- **Regional retail, with a local twist:** in 2012, Midtown accounted for 36% of net taxable sales in the City (much from the auto dealers) and 38% of the 10.2M square feet of retail in Ft. Collins. Total retail sales have continued to grow over the past five years, even despite tough economic times. In addition, thousands of residents (and workers) live within walking distance to the corridor and 60% of the jobs in Fort Collins are located within a mile of each side of College Avenue, particularly in the service sector. This proximity means major buying power if the offer is right. And importantly, the mall redevelopment – in the heart of Midtown – serves as a major retail catalyst.
- **Housing hub:** With residential vacancy rates below 4% in the city, there is high demand for new development. Midtown provides ample opportunity for more dense residential development, which is something existing stakeholders said they would support. Beyond multi-story/multi-unit development, stakeholders mentioned a desire to see more townhome/brownstone type development integrated into retail/commercial uses. As these developments occur, they will drive neighborhood supporting uses – including businesses, parks, open space and entertainment.
- **Job center:** Business development is on the rise, particularly in the small-to-mid-size business category. Many times, it is these business types that struggle to find a home. Creation of dynamic flex space that could serve such uses could serve Midtown well now and into the future. As businesses succeed and grow, efforts could be made to provide places in Midtown so they can remain in the neighborhood.
- **Enliven:** There is general consistency among stakeholders that Midtown should become a vibrant and thriving district with the addition of more culture, arts, activity and open spaces.

“We used to be the place where families would drive from around the region to spend a weekend getting all their shopping done. They’d come to Midtown on a Friday and check into a local hotel, and leave on a Sunday with a new car, new clothes, home goods and other things, having left behind substantial revenue in our district.”

- Midtown Stakeholder



A project that serves multiple users or interest groups is encouraged; a cafe seating/public plaza is a great example of a flexible space that serves multiple users.





Some projects may leverage funds from other sources to construct part of a sidewalk, add more public amenities and landscaping to enhance the project.

## A COORDINATED EFFORT

The development scenarios presented in the Plan are “generic;” they **could apply to many locations** and should serve as starting points for implementation. While these are highly recommended concepts, it is important to acknowledge the likelihood projects could be built differently due to market conditions and/or specific site constraints. The Plan **accommodates flexibility**, and therefore variations on these illustrative sketches should be expected.

Some of these improvements are **public sector concepts**. The intent is that these should **serve as catalysts** to attract private investment. At the same time, there will be cases in which some private sector projects come forward that meet the intent of the Plan, but at a time earlier than anticipated. When this occurs, the public sector should adjust its own spending priorities to **help support the private development**, to the extent possible.

Both the **public and private sectors must share in the responsibilities** of implementation, including funding. While the City of Fort Collins is a key player in terms of financial tools available, it is essential that Midtown property owners and businesses engage in funding parts of the Plan as well. In many cases, this will be an individual property owner investing in their land. In addition, it will be important for the City to help support some projects with **coordinated investment**. This may include participating in some streetscape and building facade enhancement, pocket parks, and parking structures.

There are two existing private sector groups that are actively collaborating to address business needs on the corridor today. These include the **South Fort Collins Business Association (SFCBA)** and the **Auto Dealers Association**. While not representative of every stakeholder in the district, they represent strong private sector interest in revitalizing Midtown. The recommendations in this Plan aim to engage, support and build on the investment of these and other existing property and business owners by reflecting their interests, and giving them a meaningful way to participate in its implementation.



## INCENTIVIZE INVESTMENT AND ENACT POLICIES TO GUIDE NEW DEVELOPMENT

Critically important to advancing this Plan – and to encouraging, incentivizing and proactively planning for redevelopment - is an **economic development toolbox** that can generate resources and support from both the public and private sectors to advance change.

Incentives are important tools to help move revitalization forward in challenged areas. Such “carrots” come in the form of incentives, programs, and tools that make it easier for development to happen and for business to open. These should also be balanced with “the sticks”, or regulations, to ensure that incentives are directed towards achieving the desired vision for the area.

The following sections identify existing and new tools that should be considered to support implementation of this Plan.

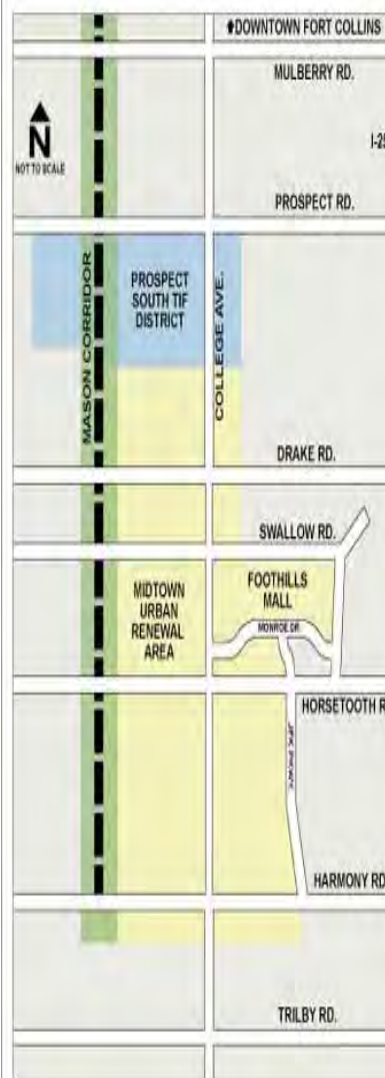


El Monte's is a great example of a project that is consistent with project goals and visions, such as providing amenities such as outdoor seating, beautiful landscaping and a pleasant aesthetic.

### Public Acquisition of Land:

This Plan does not emphasize public acquisition of property. However, *if* acquisition of any private land, buildings or other facilities is needed to implement a specific project, it would be on the basis of a “willing buyer, willing seller” arrangement.





In Midtown, one TIF District already exists, Prospect South, and another one was created in 2013 for the Foothills Mall redevelopment.

## TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the public financing tool that is used for subsidizing redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects in the URA. The Midtown Urban Renewal Area and Prospect South TIF District were established in September 2011 and have already helped spur one student housing project, the Summit on College, at Prospect and College and will potentially help fund the new redevelopment at the Foothills Mall. TIF is a highly effective redevelopment tool that should continue to play a role in assisting future projects.

## TAX ABATEMENTS

Many revitalizing districts have successfully utilized property tax abatements to jumpstart an economic turnaround. These abatements can be targeted and time-limited, but are often enough to catalyze the first few projects and get them out of the ground. Such abatements have most commonly been utilized in recent years to encourage residential development. Access to quality, affordable and market-rate housing is needed in Fort Collins and Midtown has been identified as an opportunity area for this to occur. Downtown Fargo's Renaissance Zone program, for example, gave 5-year property tax abatements on residential development which jump-started an economic turnaround and quickly reinvigorated the downtown area helping to bring thousands of new residents to the historic core. Such programs work for residential in particular – even in a TIF area – because the overall impact to the TIF is generally small but the incentive is tremendous for residents looking to buy homes.

The City also uses personal property tax rebates and manufacturing use tax rebates to support businesses looking to expand or relocate in Fort Collins. While the amount of rebate available is dependent upon the level of investment made by the business, they are useful tools to help offset certain costs.



## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

BIDs are financing and place management tools that allow property owners within a defined area to collectively fund enhanced services or improvements within a district's boundaries via an additional tax or fee. Yearly operating budgets of BIDs can range from a few thousand dollars to millions of dollars.

Stakeholders in the Midtown area expressed a strong interest in getting involved to help finance improvements in the district through a BID. In fact, the SFCBA has already noted this as a potential option. A BID is highly recommended as a tool to help give property owners a vehicle through which to invest and take ownership of the marketing and overall management of the Midtown area. In Chapter 8 of this Plan, we identify how best a BID fits into the big picture and what types of things a BID may support, though the ultimate determination of the use of BID funds would be left to the property and business owners to determine in the BID creation process.

## BUSINESS RETENTION/RECRUITMENT

Successful districts often get there because of very focused assistance in the realm of business recruitment and retention. Targeted recruitment efforts, in particular, can pay off when paired with some of the other incentives and programs highlighted here. This work, to succeed in the Midtown area, may need to be done through a public/private sector partnership, where the City takes a role in larger business/job/employer recruitment, and the SFCBA, new BID, or other private sector group gets involved in smaller business recruitment as well as retention work. This work need not be just retail focused. There is a real opportunity here to encourage an "innovation economy" through targeted job creation efforts and encouragement of entrepreneurs – both of which would help fill Midtown with buzz and economic activity.

## Creating a BID

There are four steps to creating a BID. They are as follows:

1. Local business and/or property owners in the area work together to create a BID.
2. They develop a management plan to identify services, assessment rates, and budgets as well as other operational details.
3. A petition or formal vote determines that the majority of business and/or property owners want a BID.
4. Legal creation and establishment of the BID is made.



### CDC Resource Allocations:

CDC's most commonly direct resources toward:

1. Tackling development or redevelopment projects that are too difficult or costly for the private sector to undertake alone.
2. Providing incentives for businesses and retailers/restaurants to locate in the business district.
3. Developing residential projects that are otherwise difficult to do.

### CDC Resource Generation:

CDC's most commonly get resources from:

1. Business/Corporate Donations
2. Banks
3. Investors
4. Personal Donors
5. City, County or other Governmental Entity
6. Local, National and Federal Grants.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CDC)

Community Development Corporations are not-for-profit entities that allow for multiple investors to participate in acquiring sites, preparing them for redevelopment, and even in some cases, developing properties in challenging areas such as Midtown. CDC funds can also be utilized to help incentivize business creation. They are effective in managing tough redevelopment projects by allowing land acquisition, assemblage, environmental remediation, etc. to occur by the CDC and then marketing the land back to the private sector for redevelopment, thus creating a return on the investment. CDC's are growing increasingly common in this economic time where financing big projects can be tough. Among the benefits of CDCs is their 501c3 tax-exempt organizational status, meaning the public sector can easily contribute and that grant dollars are easier to access.

### EXPEDITED PERMITTING AND FEE REDUCTIONS

For new development within Midtown that meets the vision for the area, the City could explore reducing any development or permitting fees and fast-tracking the development review process. These policies could be in place for both development and businesses, setting the tone that this is indeed a business-friendly environment and development and growth are supported.

### SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

A special assessment district provides a financing mechanism for large-scale public infrastructure improvements. The district generates revenue through a special assessment on specific properties that will benefit from the improvement, providing the ability to issue Assessment Bonds to pay for the project.

### PRIVATE ACTIVITY BONDS (PAB)

Each year, the City receives a bond allocation from the State, which may be issued on behalf of a local business to provide a source of tax exempt financing. PABs have a broad spectrum of uses, from building affordable housing to expanding manufacturing facilities. The bonds may be used to pay for buildings, equipment/machinery, land, soft costs, and landscaping.



## METRO DISTRICT

Typically used for large scale developments, metro districts can issue General Obligation and Revenue Bonds to pay for infrastructure and other improvements specific to the project, such as streets, stormwater infrastructure, parks, as well as infrastructure operations and maintenance. Bonds are paid using revenues based on a property tax assessment. Metro Districts must have a Service Plan that requires approval by City Council; current policy caps the assessment at 40 mills.

## REVOLVING LOAN/GRANT FUND

Establishing a pool of funds that can be utilized by investors in the study area to meet the goals defined in the plan would be a relatively quick and effective method of generating new investment in Midtown. Many communities set aside a pool of funds for independent businesses and property owners to utilize for projects on which they may not otherwise be able to get a bank loan (and may not have the capital on hand to do themselves). Allowable items to qualify for funding might include:

- Façade/shopfront improvement program, including funds to cover paint, windows, lighting and overall enhancements (also consider money for design services).
- Signage improvements.
- Additions or enhancements to a property.
- Necessary interior improvements, such as upgrading old buildings.

Typically, these are small loans/grants (e.g. under \$50,000) and the projects must go through formal approvals and design review before the funds are awarded. Grants are usually awarded only on some matching basis (i.e. for a \$25,000 project the owner must front half the cost, and the fund would grant the match) while loans are usually given at low-interest with longer-term repayment options. Some communities establish forgivable loans for business that, for example, stay in business in the location for 3-5 years.

## Storefront Improvement Program (SIP)

Fort Collins currently utilizes a SIP to encourage voluntary rehabilitation of commercial buildings, improvements and conditions within the North College URA by offering financial assistance to property owners and/or business tenants seeking to renovate or restore their commercial storefronts and/or building facades. Approved SIP participants are eligible to receive a grant, upon the completion of their approved project. While the grant acts as financial assistance to property owners and/or business tenants, the fundamental purpose of the grant is to further the goals and objectives identified in the North College Urban Renewal Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan. While SIP is currently only available in North College area, future plans include expanding it into Midtown to supplement traditional TIF assistance.



## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Through the Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) process, the City may allocate a portion of its General Fund toward implementation of public-sector improvements, like rights-of-way and parks improvements. Additionally, citywide tax initiatives, such as Building on Basics, provide opportunities to create a funding source for major improvements in Midtown that have a community benefit.

It is best suited for projects that can be completed within a single year or that can be phased without a multi-year commitment. For example, a limited portion of sidewalks may be constructed each year, or a fixed number of street furnishings may be acquired annually. These funds are well suited for improvements that benefit the community at large.

This tool is especially useful for projects that must move quickly. It does require establishing some projects within the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These funds may be used for an initial design phase of a planned CIP and they could be used as a contribution to larger projects, such as the construction of parking facilities, when joint ventured with private development or a not-for-profit organization.

## ZONING

Another essential tool is zoning, which regulates land use and development through the City's Land Use Code. Although this Plan is not recommending any changes to land use or development standards, as implementation progresses there may be a need to better regulate elements that will ensure implementation of the vision.

## GRANTS

Some key grants may be awarded by federal, state and local agencies for public improvements that fit within the guidelines of specific programs. Others may come from private foundations, typically for smaller projects.

## PRIVATE INVESTMENT

The greatest source of investment will be the private sector. Private investment will be encouraged by adoption of the plan and will be further stimulated by regulatory and financial incentives that may be available from time to time.



## PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In general, the community should set a high priority on an improvement when it can help support private development that is consistent with the vision and economic development goals of Midtown. The community will need to be both proactive in making implementation improvements, and responsive to new opportunities and changing conditions that will inevitably arise.

A cornerstone for successful implementation is continued collaboration between business and property owners and the City. An implementation working group has already been formed from these stakeholders to be discussing prioritization. Key outcomes from these initial conversations include:

- Identifying a catalytic project, or series of projects, that will jump-start additional investment in the corridor. Acknowledgement was given to the City's investment in MAX, but looking for additional projects in key locations will be of additional benefit.
- Recognizing the role of the South Fort Collins Business Association (SFCBA) as the primary private-sector driver to communicate the value of the Plan's vision and implementation to Midtown businesses. The SFCBA is actively pursuing to increase membership to establish a cohesive voice for the district. This will be a key factor in determining whether or not a Business Improvement District can be utilized.
- Ensuring frequent review of the Midtown Plan and re-considering of prioritized improvements is important to being able to adapt to changing conditions.

### A Bilateral Approach:

The community should use a “bilateral” approach for implementing the Plan: it should be both **proactive in leading efforts** to implement the Plan as described, and it also should **be responsive**, and react to new opportunities and changing conditions as they arise in the private sector.



## SUMMARY POINTS

- **Promote Midtown's Vision** and competitive advantage in order to revitalize this historically vibrant area.
- Highlight the fact that implementation of this Plan will be a **coordinated effort** between the public and private sectors.
  - **Engage the private sector** to allow existing property and business owners to reflect their interests and participate in a meaningful way.
    1. Public and private sectors should generally **agree on the vision** and steps necessary to implement it.
    2. Private and public sectors should **work together** to develop tools that encourage, incentivize, and support investment and business development.
    3. Public and private sectors should **set clearly defined roles and responsibilities** to make revitalization happen.
- **Incentivize new investment and enact policies to guide development** to help set forth a clear strategy for implementation that aligns with the Plan's vision.
- Setting clear **priorities for implementation** for both the private and public sectors.
  - **Create a public/private sector task force** to work together to ensure the tools established are meaningful and strategic.



# APPENDIX