

Image#: 2.54

Score: -0.8

These multi-family developments—as well maintained as they certainly are-receive a negative reaction from people. This is most likely caused by the unrelenting repetition of the building block in which nothing distinquishes or individualizes one unit from the next. Another contributing factor is the view of the dominant parking lot. As one views the parking lot, one is unsure of whether you are looking into the front yards or the backyards. Is there a private realm or is all constantly on public display? Where are the front doors? The backyard receives an even stronger negative reaction. Constant exposure to such monotonous and sterile housing conditions causes stress.



Image#: 1.22

Score: -2.4



Image#: 2.57

Several alternative patterns are suggested by VPS<sup>™</sup> results; all can easily employ the Fort Collins color palette—salmon brick. The first image (2.57) presents an architectural format that lines the sidewalk, and provides several subtle, but interesting, design details. Elevated stoops proceed from the sidewalk, a design which clearly announces a transition. The circular architectural form embraces a small, internal park thereby establishing it as a legible, comfortable building. Projecting, pedimented box windows and recessed entrance doorways articulate the space.

Another alternative for the design of multifamily housing locates apartments above shops (factory outlet stores in the image at right). Complete communities must provide a variety of housing types for all ages and income levels. The questionnaire confirmed that 65% of the participants agree that a neighborhood should contain a variety of housing types for varied incomes and ages. Placement Score: +4.6

of apartments and townhouses in close proximity to downtown, or other activity centers, provides less affluent people access to jobs without reliance upon the private automobiles. Furthermore, a concentration of people is important for maintaining a healthy commercial core. These ratings indicate that multi-family housing is not only appropriate, but desirable, if designed properly.



# Visions For the Pedestrian Realm



Image#: 1.68

Score: +6.2





Design lessons and standards appropriate to create the desired pedestrian character and scale are found in one of the highest rated images. The image above illustrates the guintessential sidewalk in a residential neighborhood. A wide planted parkway and trees buffer pedestrians from moving traffic, indicating that someone thought about the street and edge design from the pedestrian's perspective. In order for people to have a fair chance within the mechanistic realm, they must be designed for; design must clearly indicate the primacy of pedestrians through properly designed sidewalks. Futhermore, tight curb radii force traffic to significantly slow down when turning the corner, thereby underscoring the importance of pedestrian safety.

Landscaping and fencing define the transition from the public realm of the street and sidewalk to the semi-public realm of the front yard. This demarcation signals to passersby that in some areas they have complete freedom; however, ownership and therefore behavior changes in other areas. Such meaningful design improves perceptions of security.

The importance of providing residential sidewalks where one can actually walk to something is reinforced in the questionnaire responses. 86% of the respondents agree that neighborhoods should be designed to allow and encourage walking. This may successfully be done through the design of a humane pedestrian realm that links a closely located mix of uses.

#### Image#: 1.66

Score#: +4.9



Commercial centers, areas of employment, schools and other public buildings should be located within walking distance of residential neighborhoods. One clear example of this thesis is demonstrated in the university area of West Elizabeth Street. This area contains a captive audience of potential customers in close proximity to a range of uses. Unfortunately, the commercial buildings have been sited behind a parking strip, creating a most foreboding pedestrian realm. Imagine the intrepid pedestrian who braves walking sandwiched between head-in parked cars that might pull-out without notice on one side and the passing traffic on the other. At the expense of the pedestrian, the entire zone is given over to the car, and paved with asphalt. In order to understand the potential value of the street, slide simulations were generated to create a proper pedestrian realm. Diagonal, head-in parking was pulled out to the street edge where it will not threaten the pedestrian, but rather, will

Image#: 1.60

Score: -4.8



Image#1.62

Score:+3.4



separate them from moving traffic. Street trees were planted to further that goal. The existing building was replaced with a mixed-use (commercial below and office or apartment above) two story structure. The design of this building, with its large display windows, engages the

passing pedestrian. The reaction to the simulation was almost a nine point improvement. Obviously this redevelopment scenario was found desirable and is highly recommended by the Fort Collins' participants.



Image#: 1.50

Score: +5.3

Contributing to the success of the Downtown is a combination of eating and shopping establishments that are located near offices and dwellings. Even the most creative combination of uses must be linked by sensitively designed sidewalks in order to further their success. It is recommended that the commercial sidewalk be wide enough to accommodate several people (a minimum of eight feet) comfortably. Even better would be to provide commercial sidewalks wide enough to accommodate benches, plants, trash receptacles and bike racks.



From a marketing perspective, it is important to prolong the pedestrian's stay on a commercial strip by keeping them interested, thereby increasing the chances of a purchase. In order to encourage walking, a sidewalk must follow several design principles. Pedestrians must be separated from moving traffic by providing on-street parking and planted parkways. Extensive land-scaping and/or a seamless street facade provide pedestrians with visual entertainment. Solid, blank walls are inappropriate. Furthermore, It is not desirable to place pedestrians between moving traffic and parking lots; a wall or landscaping should conceal cars to the hood height.

Echoing the themes of the first category, Visions for Open Space, the natural environment or green space is highly valued in Fort Collins. These ratings underscore the importance of incorporating greenery into the urban environment.





# Visions For Personal Mobility



As in most other cities, the private automobile is the primary method of transportation in Fort Collins. While the convenience of getting into your car wherever you want is indisputable, there are repercussions. Unfortunately, this results in traffic jams, a consequence that disturbs everyone. However, there is no viable, competitive alternative. For this reason current development patterns that disassociate uses and focus on the private car, excluding all other modes of mobility, must be limited.



Alternative transit modes can work if properly designed and planned. But first they must overcome all the existing negative imagery of transit. In order to attract customers, transit should go where the customers want to go, when they want to go. Additionally, transit vehicles should be small, clean, safe and comfortable promoting a dignified appearance. It is recommended that transit stops be attractive, with cafes and newsstand nearby. They should be connected, through pleasant pedestrian paths, to residences, employment centers and commercial areas.





The results of the questionnaire and the image ratings acknowledge a need for alternatives. People want sidewalks with proper edges, bike paths, and greenways; they want alternative transportation methods and routes explored. 70% of the participants think that the City should do what it can to reduce dependency upon the private automobile. 62% want the cost of reinstating the trolley evaluated. People, for the most part, will trade some dependence on their automobiles for an adequate alternative.



Image#: 1.57

Score: +4.4



Image#: 3.28

Score: +3.4 Image#: 3.29

Score: +4.5



BEFORE

AFTER

# Visions For Parking



Image#: 3.17

Score: +2.9

Continued development of residential streets that visually emphasize the car through frontloaded garages should be abandoned in favor of designs that create a more inviting public realm. One solution can be found in the rear yard alley or lane. In such situations, garages may be permitted a second floor for a granny flat or office. Rear alleys are also a good location for small, pocket parks. Both of these designs can increase security.





Image#: 3.21

It is unlikely that surface parking lots will, in the foreseeable future, disappear. Consequently, we must design them to be pleasant for all users. The most positive parking lot image incorporates a generous intrusion of trees from our other most highly rated images; this design puts the "park" back in the parking lot and creates a parking orchard.

It is important that people, once out of their parked vehicle, feel safe as they continue into the stores. Pedestrian pathways, in a different color or texture, must create a separate nexus in which the pedestrian has the right-of-way. As a motorist crosses the black asphalt to a painted surface or one with a varied texture it should be immediately apparent that they are no longer dominant, thus their behavior changes. The goal is to give the pedestrian an even playing field.

Score: -2.3

# Visions For Streets and Connections

Streets are our most important public spaces; it is from them that residents and visitors alike primarily experience a city. Thus, it is critical that a positive image emanate from the street.



Image #: 3.47

Score: +5.6



Image #: 3.49

Score: +5.4

# Recommended Minimum Standards for Street Sections



#### **Residential Avenue**



#### **Residential Boulevard**



Image #: 3.50

Score: -3

Image 3.50, depicts a classic confusion between road types. Traffic engineers want the traffic to move through quickly; commercial establishment and signage encourage frequent stopping. High speed traffic requires large signage that VPS<sup>™</sup> participants feel is inappropriate. This reaction indicates that future highway-scaled commercial development and signage should be prohibited directly along the road edge.

Not only is this construction unattractive, but is threatening and intimidating to the pedestrian. In this image, pedestrians are not even afforded a proper sidewalk. Rather, a meager, leftover strip is sandwiched between the mechanistic realms—the travel lanes, the parking lots and the signage. This sidewalk area is clearly insensitive to the pedestrian. No one thought about how a person would feel as they traversed this strip, or what their view would be like as they walked on the edge. Furthermore, with signage scaled for cars, how do pedestrians appreciate what is advertised?

Commercial uses should be placed within pedestrian friendly centers that are appropriately scaled and have detailed signage. Alternatively, centers may be located along frontage roads separated from the travel lanes and large traffic volumes by planted boulevards. Roads intended to move people rapidly from one part of the city to another, or to another city entirely should reserve curb cuts for street intersections, separate directional lanes with planted medians, and plant outside edges so as to create an impressive boulevard.



Image #: 3.45

Score: +3.5

#### Recommended Section



#### Commercial Mixed-use Boulevard

#### Image#: 3.54

Score:+4.14





Residential and commercial streets should be designed to slow traffic down. In commercial areas slower traffic can be tempted by stores on both sides of the street, allowing pedestrians of all ages to safely cross the street. Similarly, in residential areas, traffic should move more slowly and cautiously so as not to present a hazard to residents. Two simple methods for managing traffic within neighborhoods are on-street parallel parking and circles within the intersections.





Image #: 3.75

Score: +2.4

It is from the street that we define community character. Two of the characteristics that participants found desirable were the rustic and rural. Rail fences and vistas of snow-capped peaks are among the desired images. Roads should not present a generic suburban character; design must celebrate the individual spirit of Fort Collins with all its unique character.



#### **Recommended Sections**

Concern about generic street views is underscored in the next four simulations. The existing condition of this typical residential street received a neutral reaction. The following observations were made about this image that may have contributed to the rating; the pavement is overly wide; sidewalks are attached to the curb and gutters; landscaping is minimal; and the view down the road terminates in a garage door. Several people hypothesized that the negative reaction resulted mostly from the small tree size and not the overall streetscape design. Consequently, the photo simulations began modestly by growing the trees on individual lots by several years. The score climbed from a o to a +1.

# Image #: 3.58 Score: +0.4

#### Existing Conditions 1995

Image #: 3.59

Score: +1.1



Envisioneering computer simulations of vegetation growth at year 2010.

The next in the series simply reduces the width of the road surface by eight feet with the inclusion of two four-foot wide planted parkways, one on each side of street. Distancing the pedestrian from traffic and beginning a visual sense of street enclosure raised the value of the street from a +1 to a +2.6. In the final sequence in the series, in which the street trees are grown more, the score rises to a +3.4. Mature landscaping encloses the space while bringing the highly valued commodity of greenery into the built environment.

The VPS<sup>™</sup> results on streetscape analysis suggest the following set of street sections. They are street designs that the participants have chosen and found desirable for the City of Fort Collins.



Image#: 3.80



#### Recommended Residential Street Section

lmage#: 3.60

Score: +3.4



A final recommended section is for a residential lane. This functions as the primary access to rear yard garages. The alley allows positive exposure to the house front while providing another community space. Fences and rear yards can be open or visually impervious. No fence should extend higher than five feet.



Image #: 3.17

Score: +2.9



Residential Lane or Alley

# CONCLUSION

Despite the forecast growth pressures, the City of Fort Collins can remain a fantastic place to live, work, shop, attend college, visit as a tourist, or participate in outdoor sports within the foothills region. This will require a well regulated plan that unifies the opportunities, visions and potentials into an implementable reality. The results of Visual Preference Survey<sup>™</sup> for the City of Fort Collins are the choices and preferences stated by the citizens. This is the most direct way of getting the community involved in the planning process of their city. The results are basically what the community likes, dislikes, and wants in Fort Collins. It gives alternatives to some design and planning techniques that are not very successful. The VPS<sup>™</sup> should quide policy decision-making in the design and use of the buildings and public spaces of the Downtown and other districts and neighborhoods. With this document serving as a record of the choices made by the community, the City of Fort Collins will be well equipped to fulfill its potential and continue to be an attractive and functional city.

#### Change will occur.

It can be positive or negative. The challenge is to know what is wrong and how it can be changed. The City of Fort Collins wanted a specific definition of their vision. These results record, clearly and precisely, the choices that the citizens have made. It states the aspirations of the community and provides certainty about future development. The Visual Preference Survey<sup>™</sup> has given us the information to craft a plan which is directed by the city residents.

#### Do not be afraid to be ambitious.

Small plans can not succeed. They lack the power to inspire the citizenry into action. Do not be afraid to learn from what others have done that is right and that which was wrong. Remember both those places that you rated as positive and those that are negative. Cities can have a distinguished and lasting heritage.

Therefore, do not be afraid to look beyond the trivial concerns of the day. A city may last forever. Whether it continues its history as a source of pride and well-being to its citizens, or withers away into obscurity and despair, whether it becomes a place which respects its past, its current character and has a strong vision for the future character of buildings, streets and openspaces, or becomes just a continuation of contemporary sprawl development patterns depends entirely upon you, the citizens.

#### A plan is not only a bundle of processes.

It is neither a set of goals, nor a set of statistics. Those things have a role in its formulation, but the plan should aspire to an end product—a conclusion. For a developing area like Fort Collins, an acceptable plan should attempt to meet the citizens' view of desired streetscapes, building and public space! Thus, its goals become democratic, comprehensive, and implementable.

Finally, through the initial phases, everyone must understand that the short term costs will lead to long term value and benefits. Successful development and implementation of a plan depends upon full-time professional commitment in concert with continued citizen participation. It is our belief that this will continue to be the case in Fort Collins.



# Appendix

#### CITY PLAN Visual Preference Survey<sup>TM</sup> Supplemental Questionnaire

Please indicate your answers to this questionnaire by using a pencil and circling the: appropriate number. If you decide to change an answer please be sure to erase completely your first answer so it is clear what answer is your desired response.

#### Section I. Respondent Information

Please tell us a little about yourself so that we have some idea of the characteristics of the people who are taking the Visual Preference Survey and this Supplemental Questionnaire.

1. If you live in the Fort Collins area, using the map below, please indicate the section in which you live.

(17.1)	Ι.	Area 1	(25.5)	4.	Area 4
(10.3)	2.	Area 2	(9.1)	5.	Area 5
(25.7)	3.	Area 3	(12.4)	6.	Area 6



- 2. What is your current age? (15.4) I. Under I 8 years (25.9) 4.
  - (15.4)I.Under I 8 years(25.9)4.45 64(12.3)2.18 24 years(4.3)5.65 74 years(40.9)3.25 44 years(1.3)6.Over 75 years
- 3. Which of the following best describes your current residence?
  - (80.0) I. Single-family detached
  - (5.6) 2. Single family attached (townhouse, condo)
  - (3.3) 3. Duplex or Triplex
  - (2.4) 4. Apartment building with at least 4 units but no more than 8 units
  - (4.5) 5. Apartment building with 9 or more units
  - (2.4) 6. Group quarters (dormitory, fraternity or sorority, congregate care, etc.)
  - (1.6) 7. Mobile home
- 4. Do you, or your family, currently own or rent your current residence? (76.9) 1. own (23.1) 2. Rent
- 5. What is your household's yearly total gross income (before taxes), including all income earned by all household members?
  - (9.5)I.Less than \$20,000(28.5)5.\$50,000 \$79,999(10.1)2.\$20,000 \$29,999(9.3)6.\$80,000 \$99,999(10.1)3.\$30,000 \$39,999(8.9)7.Over \$100,000
  - (13.1) 4. \$40,000 \$49,999 (10.5) 8. Don't know
- 6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?
  - (5.6) I. Not currently employed
  - (45.9) 2. Employed full-time (40 hours a week)
  - (12.2) 3. Employed part-time (less than 40 hours a week)
  - (10.0) 4. Self-employed
  - (3.3) 5. Home business or home maker
  - (7.7) 6. Retired
  - (14.9) 7. Student
  - (0.5) 8. Other

7.

How long have you lived in Fort Collins?

(8.7) I.	Less than I year	(13.8)	6.	11 - 15 years
(6.4) 2.	1 year	(17.2)	7.	16 - 20 years
(10.7) 3.	2 - 3 years	(11.9)	8.	21 - 30 years
(7.8) 4.	4 - 5 years	(8.1)	9.	More than 30 years
(15.4) 5.	6-10 years			

8. How long do you intend to live in Fort Collins?

(28.6)	1.	Less than I year	(7.0)	6.	11 - 15 years
(3.2)	2.	1 year	(2.4)	7.	16 - 20 years
(2.1)	3.	2 - 3 years	(3.6)	8.	21-30 years
(7.5)	4.	4-5 years	(3.7)	9.	Rest of my life
(6.6)	5.	6-10 years	(35.3)	10.	Don't know

Don't know

- 9. Before living in Fort Collins, where did you live?
  - (25.4) I. In a major city (over 500,000 people)
  - (17.6) 2. In a large city (between 100,000 and 500,000 people)
  - (13.1) 3. In a small city (between 50,000 and 100,000 people)
  - (16) 4. In a large town (between 10,000 and 50,000 people)
  - (10.8) 5. In a small town (between 2,000 and 1 0,000 people)
  - (6.6) 6. In a rural or ranch area, or in a town of less than 2,000 people
  - (10.5) 7. Have always lived in Fort Collins
- 10. Which of the following best describes your work and residence situation?
  - (63.4) I. Live and work in Fort Collins
  - (4.4) 2. Live in Fort Collins but work elsewhere
  - (5.0) 3. Live elsewhere but work in Fort Collins
  - (8.2) 4. Retired, living in Fort Collins
  - (18.9) 5. Student
- 11. What is the main type of street pattern in the neighborhood in which you currently live (see example diagrams below)?

(43.3) 1. In a grid or modified grid system similar to the older parts of Fort Collins with many street connections to adjacent areas

(56.7) 2. In a loop-road and cul-de-sac system with fewer connections to adjacent areas

#### Section II. Community Section.

This section asks you a series of questions about the community of Fort Collins as a whole.

12. Fort Collins now has a population of 100,000. What do you think will be the increase in popula tion over the next 20 years?

(17.7) I.	10,000 to 50,000	(8.6) 4.	150,000 to 200,000
(37.7) 2.	50,000 to 100,000	(10.2) 5.	More than 200,000

(17.8) 3. 100,000 to 200,000 (8.0) 6.

13. Is the number of people who may eventually live in Fort Collins as important to you as the way the community develops (how it looks, how easy it is to get around, the "feel" of the place, etc.)?

- (5.7) I. The number of people who may live in the city is more important to me than as the way the community develops
- (46.7) 2. The number of people who may live in the city is equally important to me as the way the community develops
- (43.2) 3. The number of people who may live in the city is not as important to me as the way the community develops
- (4.1) 4. Don't know
- 14. The City should continue to allow the development of large areas into single family subdivisions, even though this kind of development increases dependency on private automobiles, which leads to traffic congestion and air pollution, and also increases the costs for public services and facilities.
  - (11.4) I. Strongly agree with the statement
  - (18.6) 2. Agree with the statement
  - (21.8) 3. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (26.2) 4. Disagree with the statement
  - (22.0) 5. Strongly disagree with the statement

- 15. The City should do what it can to reduce dependency on private automobiles since cars are the primary contributors to traffic congestion and air pollution.
  - (69.9) 1. Agree with the statement
  - (18.6) 2. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (11.3) 3. Disagree with the statement
- 16. The City should encourage the mixing of shopping, jobs, and housing into neighborhoods in or der to reduce dependency on on private automobiles and encourage other ways of getting around, such as walking, biking, or transit.
  - (74.4) 1. Agree with the statement
  - (13.9) 2. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (11.7) 3 Disagree with the statement
- 17. Fort Collins should have edges or open spaces which make it easy to distinguish it from other adjacent communities.
  - (75.2) 1. Agree with the statement
  - (16.8) 2. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (7.9) 3. Disagree with the statement
- 18. The City should continue its current program of spending tax dollars to purchase and preserve open spaces at the edges of the community.
  - (54.9) I. Strongly agree with the statement
  - (24.6) 2. Agree with the statement
  - (10.2) 3. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (6.2) 4. Disagree with the statement
  - (3.9) 5. Strongly disagree with the statement
- 19. Land development should be restricted in environmentally sensitive areas (wetlands, foothills, wildlife habitats, etc.) when such development would cause excessive damage to those areas.
  - (89.4) 1. Agree with the statement
  - (6.7) 2. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (3.8) 3. Disagree with the statement
- 20. Natural areas along streams should be preserved in their natural state by the City in order to provide continuous green belts and open space corridors, such as the corridors along Spring Creek.
  - (91.9) 1. Agree with the statement
  - (5.7) 2. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (2.4) 3. Disagree with the statement
- 21. Should Fort Collins continue to have just one major city center the downtown which contains governmental, civic, and commercial uses (city hall, library, museum, performing arts center, spe -cialty shopping, upscale restaurants, cultural events, etc.)
  - (27.0) 1. Yes, continue to have one major city center as the main focus of the community
  - (55.2) 2. Yes, continue to have one major city center, but also have additional small centers to supplement the major center (with branch libraries, etc.)
  - (12.8) 3 No, Fort Collins should have many centers with no one major center
  - (5.0) 4. Don't know

- 22. The downtown should have a Transportation Center ( a central meeting point for buses and other forms of transportation) to reinforce the downtown as the major city center.
  - (47.0) 1. Agree with the statement
  - (29.6) 2. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (15.3) 3. Disagree with the statement
  - (8.1) 4. Don't know

23. Fort Collins should be a community of one to three story buildings,...

- (23.0) I. Except in downtown, where mid-rise buildings (3 to 10 stories) would be permitted
- (11.8) 2. Except in downtown, where mid-rise buildings (3 to 10 stories) and high rise build ings (10 or more stories) would be permitted
- (22.0) 3. Except in downtown and certain other designated places, where only mid-rise build ings (3 to 10 stories) would be permitted and high rise buildings
- (15.2) 4. Except in downtown and certain other designated places, where both mid-rise build ings (3 to 10 stories) and high rise buildings (10 or more stories) would be permit ted
- (16.5) 5. Taller buildings should not be allowed anywhere
- (11.5) 6. Don't know
- 24. The City should consider replacing the existing large Transfort buses with smaller buses.
  - (33.0) I. Agree with this statement
  - (32.5) 2. Neither agree or disagree with this statement
  - (19.1) 3. Disagree with this statement
  - (15.2) 4. Don't know
- 25. I find that commercial buildings which are set-back and separated from the street by a parking lot make it more difficult for me to use alternative transportation modes (transit, walking and bicy cling) to get to them.
  - (9.9) 1. Strongly agree with this statement
  - (16.7) 2. Agree with the statement
  - (27.5) 3. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (20.8) 4. Disagree with the statement
  - (8.3) 5. Strongly disagree with the statement
  - (16.8) 6. No opinion
- 26. The City should evaluate the costs to reinstate the Trolley as a form of transportation.
  - (27.8) I. Strongly agree with the statement
  - (34.2) 2. Agree with the statement
  - (16.7) 3. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (15.7) 4. Disagree with the statement
  - (5.7) 5. Strongly disagree with the statement
- 27. The City should continue to use tax dollars to support the operational cost of the Transfort Bus System as a service to the community.
  - (33.4) I. Strongly agree with the statement
  - (41.4) 2. Agree with the statement
  - (16.3) 3. Neither agree or disagree with the statement
  - (5.9) 4. Disagree with the statement
  - (3.0) 5. Strongly disagree with the statement.