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RIVER
DISTRICT



DOWNTOWN RIVER DISTRICT STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

FINAL DRAFT REPORT

PREPARED FOR:



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AUGUST 1, 2008

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Introduction

WELCOME TO THE RIVER DISTRICT

It's a place unlike any other. Here, the river, industry, art and history come together to create a new community in Fort Collins. Art galleries, music venues and theaters complement recreation on the river and preserved natural areas. Long-time industrial businesses work in partnership with new entrepreneurs. Modern housing, restaurants, shops and office buildings reflect the District's historic past and celebrate its future. The River District is not your run-of-the-mill downtown neighborhood. Actually, come to think of it, that's what makes it the perfect fit for Fort Collins.

Truly Unique

The River District is the only area in town that connects Old Town, the Poudre River, agri-industrial architecture and the rich history of historic downtown Fort Collins. What other place in Fort Collins, and northern Colorado for that matter, offers such a unique tapestry of convergent development opportunities? The vision for the River District seeks to meld the architectural character of yesteryear with the personality of today's arts and culture community.

Community Projects

The River District project is just one of many large-scale projects taking place in downtown and beyond. The River District works in partnership with Beet Street, UniverCity Connections and the Mason Corridor to leverage ideas and resources that seek to further the vision for the River District. This vision provides a common thread for how these diverse projects can work together to open the River District to the residents of and visitors to our great city.



River Preservation

The improvements recommended for the River District area have been designed to respect the Poudre River and its surrounding natural environment. All project elements support and follow the suggestions of the Poudre River Enhancement Project. What's more, many improvement recommendations from this project celebrate the Poudre and the richness that it once provided, and still provides today, to the shaping of our community.

Mobility

The improvements recommended for the River District will provide inviting and attractive streetscapes designed to serve all types of transportation - pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers and transit riders. Pedestrians and bicyclists are at the forefront of the project elements, providing ample connectivity and a greater sense of comfort for these users than in a typical urban setting. This experience for the pedestrian and bicyclist will not come at the expense of vehicular traffic, with vehicles of all shapes and sizes being accommodated, including the large trucks and recreational vehicles that drive through the area and access to local commercial and industrial buildings and other destinations.

Funding

The River District Design Project is jointly funded by the City and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA).



Project Goals

The City of Fort Collins and the Downtown Development Authority have a long standing partnership of collaboration to create enduring enhancements for our community's vibrant Downtown urban center.

Over the years, the City, DDA and a wide variety of community partners have produced many exciting ventures ranging from renovating Old Town Square and Linden Street to creating "Beet Street", a new program to promote and market the cultural arts landscape of downtown Fort Collins.

The Downtown River District project continues this exciting tradition of community partnerships. This project is jointly managed by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the City of Fort Collins. The core project team includes representatives from the DDA; the City's Planning, Development, & Transportation department as well as Utilities; and the Colorado Department of Transportation. The Project team has actively involved a wide variety of local stakeholders in the project development process,

including the Downtown Business Association, individual business/property owners, citizens from throughout the community, and various City Boards, Commissions and City Council.

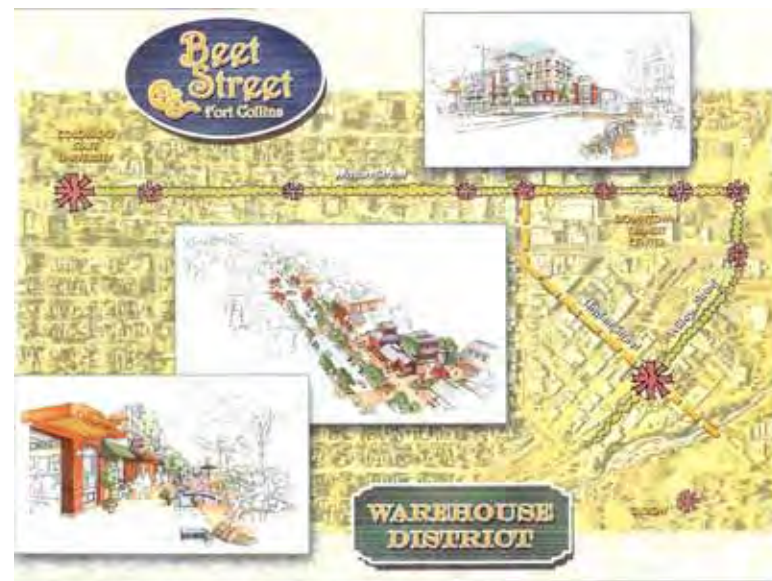
Through the combined efforts of these stakeholders, the Downtown River District project is recommending an exciting list of comprehensive improvements for the area to address short-term and long-range needs to fix existing deficiencies and set the stage for the future in-fill and redevelopment.

The goal of the project is to create a new sense of place by making the area welcoming, visually pleasing and ready for infill development. The recommended improvements for the River District are designed to address streetscape enhancements, traffic circulation, parking, bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements, as well as utility infrastructure upgrades. **Enhanced pedestrian mobility** will be achieved through the implementation of a more attractive streetscape and reduced exposure to vehicular traffic. Recommended street sections will **integrate traffic calming features** with an equal approach to accommodating anticipated traffic volumes and promoting safe travel through the River District. Finally, this report will demonstrate that the recommended improvements were developed through a **proactive stakeholder involvement approach** that sought to meld the divergent interests of each stakeholder into one common goal: to create a new sense of place that is ripe for development. Through the realization of these recommended improvements, the River District will offer our community a more enjoyable, attractive and inviting destination, which is paramount to the celebration of our city's rich history. Enhancement of these amenities is envisioned to generate interest by land and business owners in the area to become a part of the long term vision of the

area and to enhance property values as well as the attractiveness of the downtown district.

The River District improvements are designed to enhance the linkages with the surrounding neighborhoods, Downtown/Old Town, North College corridor and to celebrate the unique history of the River District as the birthplace of Fort Collins. These new amenities will enrich our opportunities to blend our historic roots with the evolving new visions coming forward from UniverCity Connections and the other exciting developments in the Downtown area; thus, continuing to build on the strong foundation of community partnerships - serving our community well today and into the future.

The deliverables of the River District design project include this report, which documents the project goals, processes and findings, preliminary-level design of the recommended improvements, and cost estimates for each element of the project and for the project as a whole. The recommended improvements for each street within the project area are illustrated in later chapters of this report.



History of Project Area

The River District includes the area just northeast of Old Town Square including Jefferson, Linden, and Willow Streets and Lincoln Avenue. This area is emerging as the next new opportunity to foster the on-going success of downtown Fort Collins.

Jefferson Street is also State Highway 14, serving to bring thousands of people daily to the heart of the city. Linden Street is the primary connection linking the River District to/from Old Town Square to the south and northward to the surrounding neighborhoods and employment areas. Linden Street also provides one of the main connections over the Poudre River and is one of the most convenient access points to/from the Poudre River Trail. Willow Street is a locally well-known route to connect from College Avenue/US287 through the River District to Lincoln.

The River District is a piece of what City Plan refers to as the Poudre River Corridor. The River District is described as a sub-district of downtown and as the “Historic and Cultural Core Segment” of the Poudre River Corridor. The core of the River District near Linden and Willow Streets is significant in its role in the settlement of the city of Fort Collins. The “Fort Collins” military post was established in 1864 and consisted of a parade ground, officer’s quarters & barracks, storehouses and other buildings. These structures were gradually removed one by one until 1942 when the last support building for the Fort was demolished. Cultural use and topographical changes occurred after the Army relinquished ownership in 1872. Uses that followed the military post have been (and in some cases, still are) residential, flour milling, retailing, farming and ranching, lodging, animal feed production and the city dump. The completion of the railroad in 1910 significantly changed the character of the area by leading to the demolition of some

buildings and to the construction of new ones, such as the freight depot and passenger depot. One significant topographical change included the channelization of the river between Linden Street and Lincoln Avenue. This resulted in the relocation of the river from the site now known as the “Oxbow” to the south in its present location. The river has scoured the channel in this section down to bedrock.¹

The portion of the River District between Jefferson Street and Willow Street is part of the Old Fort Collins National Historic District. The entire Corridor is part of a “national river corridor,” which Congress designated in 1996 for the Cache La Poudre River to recognize its critical historical value in the westward expansion of the U.S.¹

Despite community aspirations over many years to restore and revitalize the environs along the Cache La Poudre River near downtown Fort Collins, few improvements have come to fruition. There has historically been little coordination between isolated projects. The 1997-1999 Council Policy Agenda identified the need for a more coordinated approach towards action in the Downtown River Corridor. The completion of City Plan in 1997 also provided further impetus for a process and mechanism to improve the relationship of the city to the river in this area.¹

In January 1998, a committee made up of staff from a variety of City departments began work on the Downtown River Corridor Implementation Program. The Program’s mission was to coordinate city projects in the Corridor and to identify, filter and prioritize future projects recommended in various planning documents done over the years. The intent of the Program was to build on existing documents and studies rather than add a new vision for the Corridor. This report contains information and recommendations from the

first phase of the Program. The second phase will consist of implementation of the new projects contained in this report.¹

The Program generated a report that documented a list of 1st Priority, 2nd Priority and 3rd Priority projects that should be initiated in the River Corridor. Included in the list of 1st Priority projects were “Linden, Willow and Lincoln Streetscape Improvements,” “Jefferson/Linden Intersection Improvements,” and “Jefferson/Riverside Streetscape Improvements.” This Downtown River District project report has been developed to address these three 1st Priority projects, as well as the “Linden/Willow Urban Design Features” project that is listed as a 2nd Priority project.



Portion of bird’s eye view of Fort Collins, drawn by Pierre Dastarac in 1884 (view looking south), showing course of millrace through the Old Fort Site (Source: Swanson 1993).

¹ Downtown River Corridor Implementation Program; Adopted July 18, 2000, City of Fort Collins’ Advance Planning Department

**Redevelopment Potential –
Challenges, Attributes and Opportunities**

Private stakeholders, the City and DDA are uniquely positioned today to tap the existing array of positive attributes in the River District and seize upon the opportunities to overcome redevelopment challenges. This chapter frames the challenges, attributes and opportunities in a community revitalization and redevelopment context.

Challenges to infill and redevelopment in the River District have been identified over the course of many years through several organized planning projects that engaged civic and community stakeholders. The challenges are most easily presented in four categories: physical, political, environmental and economic. The challenges of infill and redevelopment in the River District are fairly well understood among stakeholders, and often issues surrounding these challenges overlap categories.

Attributes and opportunities for redeveloping the River District are discussed later in this section, explaining the concept of creating a new “Third Place” in downtown Fort Collins.

THE CHALLENGES

A clear understanding of the challenges that could impede the community from achieving its redevelopment goals is necessary for success. Challenges needn’t be characterized as positive or negative but rather as the “reality” that must be nuanced and refined to achieve desired goals.

The cost of overcoming redevelopment challenges can be monetary in nature as in the example of aligning funds to eliminate a physical infrastructure impediment.

Other costs can be time-related in nature as in the example of spending an amount of time to find an amenable solution to satisfy varying stakeholder viewpoints on a particular issue, or the passing of time that allows the real estate market and investment climate to catch up with the community’s long-term expectations for the redevelopment area. This section attempts to objectively restate and summarize the redevelopment challenges.

Physical Challenges

Pedestrian Accessibility

Pedestrian accessibility in the River District is impeded on several levels. There is an incomplete sidewalk system through much of the district north of Jefferson Street. As a result, pedestrian traffic is forced to use the shoulder along each street to walk through the District. Jefferson Street presents its own unique set of accessibility issues. Sidewalk users of this major thoroughfare report an unsafe feeling



while walking along Jefferson due to the speed and size of trucks and other vehicles in the adjacent travel lanes; the removal of on-street parking along Jefferson has located passing traffic adjacent to the sidewalk. Business owners have noted a significant decrease in pedestrian traffic resulting from these conditions which, in turn, has led to a significant impediment to efficient operation of their businesses. This lack of pedestrian comfort is also experienced at the pedestrian crossing at the Linden and Jefferson Street intersection.

Integration of design amenities that make pedestrians safer and eliminate the psychological barriers while crossing a busy road must be compatible with the current and future traffic capacity needs on Jefferson Street.

Roadway Capacity

There have not been any major challenges identified in maintaining adequate capacity now or in the future on segments of Willow Street, Lincoln Avenue, Linden Street or Pine Street. However, there is a challenge to maintaining traffic capacity on Jefferson Street (SH14) and accomplishing the design enhancement goals of this project to make pedestrian accessibility better, and regain on-street parking spaces for adjacent businesses. It is of great importance to CDOT that no degradation to the future capacity of the system occurs on this regionally important state highway.

Existing Structures on Jefferson Street

Physical constraint created by existing buildings with a zero-foot setback from the right-of way, some of which have historic characteristics, make it politically and economically difficult to consider design options to widen Jefferson Street. The recommended design alternatives for Jefferson Street, and other road segments in the River District, attempt to avoid disturbing existing structures, including those with historic characteristics.

Truck Mobility & Geometric Design

Many of the existing businesses in the River District generating local truck traffic will continue to operate for the foreseeable future, and the geometric design of proposed improvements must accommodate continued truck mobility to serve local commerce needs. The state highway designation of Jefferson Street (SH14) is unaffected by this project, so new infrastructure and enhancements resulting from this project must incorporate the necessary geometric design features to accommodate truck mobility.

Parking

On the macro level, the supply of existing parking in the River District is currently adequate, but new developments within and adjacent to the study area have the potential to change the situation to one where parking shortages will occur on a frequent basis. On a micro level, the physical removal of on-street parking on Jefferson Street, in the vicinity of the Linden Street intersection, has created an environment adverse to pedestrian safety, and is perceived as a liability to successful business operations in buildings where no storefront parking is available.



Political Challenges

Transportation Policy

There is a distinct difference in the policies of the City of Fort Collins and CDOT regarding priorities for multi-modal transportation. The City of Fort Collins has embraced through its Multimodal Transportation Level of Service Criteria (1997) that the level of service for pedestrian mobility in downtown should be weighted equally to that of automobile level of service. CDOT does not set a level of service standard for pedestrian mobility and is responsible for providing adequate vehicular capacity to move goods and services throughout the state as efficiently as possible. Melding these priorities is imperative to determining the optimal solution for transportation needs throughout the study area, particularly along Jefferson Street.

Throughout the development of this Downtown River District project, the DDA, City and CDOT have worked together to try to collaborate on the development of mutually beneficial improvements to enhance the safety and functionality for all modes of transportation, including the local and regional vehicular needs as well as for pedestrians. Recognizing the challenges inherent in trying to accomplish this joint approach, the agencies are continuing to explore design alternatives and options that will provide an appropriate context-sensitive solution for the downtown urban environment while at the same time respecting the state highway functionality needs for all types of vehicles.

Environmental Challenges

Udall and Gustav Swanson Natural Areas

The River District study area is adjacent to the Udall and Gustav Swanson Natural Areas. The Cache La Poudre Natural Areas Management Plan classifies the Gustav Swanson Natural Area as an “urban” site, and the Udall Natural Area as a “restorative” site. Redevelopment

occurring in the River District will need to be respectful of the goals set by the community for these natural areas, to maintain the ecological features and river-oriented character of these natural areas at an acceptable level, to provide recreational opportunities, and preserve these open lands for the public. The proposed improvements and elements presented in this document are respectful of the river and its surrounding natural environment and follow the suggestions of the Poudre River Enhancement Project.

An area along Willow Street at about the Schrader Oil Company site and the Northside Aztlan Center extending to the River was a historic landfill. Part of the contamination of this area was recently restored by the Environmental Protection Agency, however, according to mapping of the landfill, there may be additional areas to be addressed as part of future redevelopment.

Economic Challenges

Business and Customer Opinions

As noted earlier, Jefferson Street building owners and occupants identify negative impacts to the business climate as a result of excessive truck traffic and poor pedestrian conditions. Customers identify access to businesses along Jefferson Street as unsafe, and they identify the Linden and Jefferson Street crossing as unsafe and reason for not crossing into the River District.

Fragmentation of Central Core

To avoid fragmentation of the central core of Fort Collins, it is desirable to maintain the downtown as a regional center for commercial, financial, governmental, social, recreational and cultural activities and to prevent deterioration from occurring. Preventing the fragmentation of the central core would be accomplished by planning for a variety of land parcel sizes and mixed uses to foster a balance between small businesses, intermediate-sized projects and major

projects as well as between local owners, regional businesses and national businesses.

Accommodating Industrial and Manufacturing Type Uses

During stakeholder meetings, a concern was expressed by some land and business owners with industrial or manufacturing uses in the Downtown River District. Their concern was a deficiency of land with equivalent zoning designations elsewhere in municipal limits that would accommodate their business operations if they were to move from the River District. The challenge that these land and business owners communicated is maintaining their industrial or manufacturing use in an area that is experiencing urban redevelopment pressure, or feeling forced to search for land outside of Fort Collins municipal limits to relocate their business operations. Whether the stakeholders' observations are perceived or real, the City is challenged with the following:

- Effectively communicating the current availability of zoned land able to accommodate these uses so that the businesses can relocate inside Fort Collins municipal limits,
- Ensuring that future sub-area planning provides a supply of land appropriately zoned and compatible with these uses, or
- Accepting the possibility that these businesses may relocate outside Fort Collins municipal limits.

This is not to imply that business owners cannot operate effectively within the district and continue their existing operations. In fact, many of the uses existing today can happen together with an evolving new identity that is inspired by the architecture and industrial flavor of the current businesses. An example of where this approach has been successful is Granville Island in Vancouver, British

Columbia. Granville Island is a former federal economic industrial zone that once contained numerous lumber mills, shipping facilities and factories that produced construction materials. Today, the Granville Island community provides a vital pedestrian entertainment and shopping area, and housed in the heart of the district is an operating cement plant and other industrial uses.

The designs presented in this improvement plan recognize the operational needs of existing businesses in the River District and provide physical accommodation to allow their operation long into the future. The City and the DDA are committed to supporting the long term success of local businesses and will continue to seek solutions to retain local companies.



THE ATTRIBUTES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A New Third Place in Downtown Fort Collins

third place (THURD plays;)n. A place other than home or work where a person can go to relax and feel part of the community²

In the book *The Great, Good Place*, author and urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg refers to a concept of community building and social surroundings that exists away from our two usual environments of home and workplace. Oldenburg derives the term “the third place” from considering our homes to be the “first” places in our lives, and our work places the “second.” Oldenburg reasons that third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement and establishing feelings of a sense of place where a person can go to relax and feel part of the community. Revitalization of Old Town has successfully created the most popular third place in Fort Collins. Today, an opportunity exists to grow the concept of “third place” in our downtown by enhancing the unique identity of the River District through coordinated design and implementation partnerships.

The River District has many attributes that differentiate it from other areas of the downtown area. Its proximity to the Poudre River, its historic agri-industrial architecture, and the lore associated with Auntie Stone’s Mill and the original Camp Collins site make the district a unique place in the community. However, these attributes are known “in-the-raw,” so to speak, and have not yet been elevated to a “third place” experience such as we have with Old Town.

There aren’t any standing buildings remaining from the old fort, no remnants of the fort walls because our fort never had walls, and no longer a water driven mill.

Physical impediments such as the railroad tracks, lack of sidewalks, and the unsafe feeling when crossing Jefferson

² www.wordspy.com



Street from Old Town make it difficult and unwieldy for the casual downtown visitor to venture into the district. Most people are windshield-familiar with the River District, and are likely to experience it today as they drive through to other north Fort Collins destinations. Missing physical remnants of Camp Collins or Auntie Stone's Mill relegates knowledge of this important part of our community's history to those willing to read about the subject in history books or through exhibits at the museum. It's not currently a place that draws people to escape, relax and experience the community and public life, but it could become a fabulous place with good timing and a solid place-making strategy.

Transformation of the River District into a new "third place" is an exercise in place-making. This exercise must start with the necessities, such as construction of utility improvements, sidewalks and crosswalks, and improved intersections. These basic physical improvements move us closer to creation of an alive-feeling and captivating third place, but not quite all the way. By enhancing aesthetics in these public areas with interactive amenities such as the interpretive mill race water feature, brick streets, roundabouts and artistic sculpture or landscape elements that evoke memory of the former military camp, an exciting context and sense of place to showcase the district's attributes is created.



The remainder of the ingredients to transform the area into a "third place" will be provided through the ingenuity of private investment and entrepreneurship.

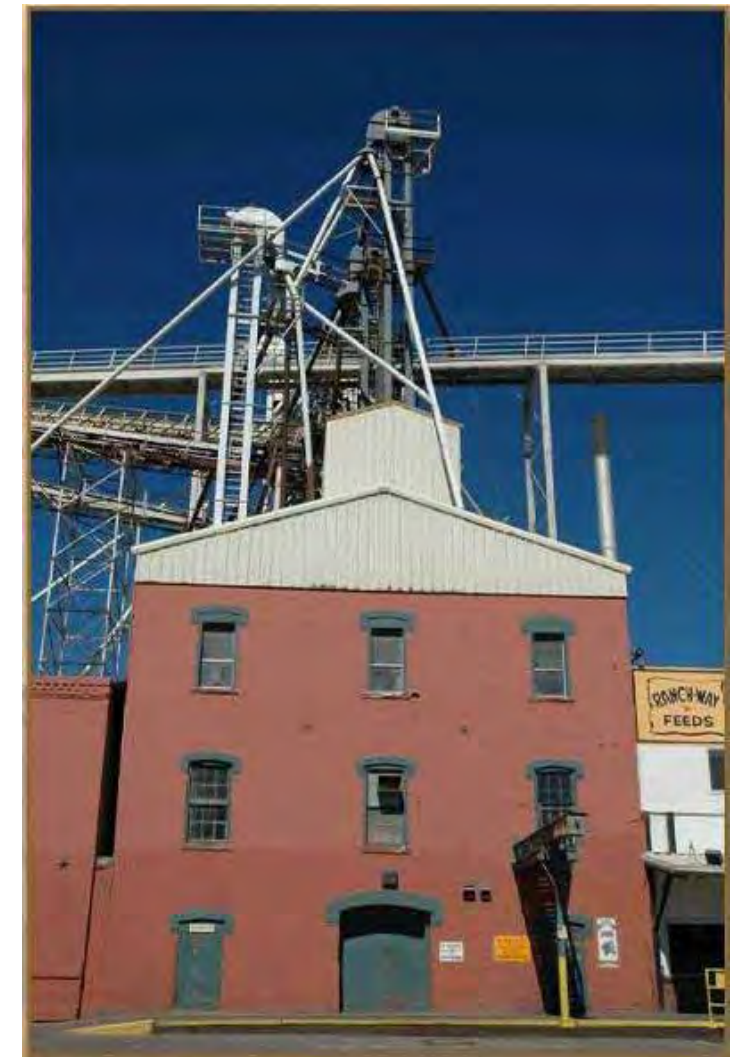
Private investment, as it occurred in Old Town over the past 25 years -- often in partnership with the DDA and the City -- has shaped the look, feel, taste and smell of the downtown through its many offerings. The transformation of the River District into a vibrant and beckoning third place cannot be realized without similar private investment. New, well-designed infill buildings will provide quality and balance in the streetscape, and the exciting uses within and amongst these building walls will fulfill the visitor's desire for relaxation, exposure to cultural activities, civic interaction and to simply enjoy quality time with family and friends. Restaurants and taverns with outdoor café seating, performances at the rehabilitated Bas Bleu Theater, uniquely Fort Collins retail stores, coffee and ice cream shops, and more will provide reason for people to visit the River District. The streetscape and its enhanced features will give people reason to linger, amble and experience the district as a new third place in downtown.

Architecture

The downtown river district has a distinct character. Given its roots in agriculture and other light industrial uses it has evolved with a unique expression of functional buildings. Ranchway Feeds in particular offers a sculptural like quality with its overhead conveyor systems. In addition several other buildings within the district offer unique high quality statements reflecting on the past and the working nature of this area. The architectural vision of this area should reflect this quality. As buildings redevelop or new buildings are added, the architectural expression of the district should continue to convey the theme of the working district. Metal, brick and exoskeletal expressions reflecting uses within should be accommodated as part of the character.

Architecture should also create density. For the area to redevelop with meaning and sufficient mass to create a vital area, taller buildings of at least two stories should be required, except close to the river where buildings should step down in accordance with the City Land Use Code.

A future task for this area would be to develop specific architectural guidelines to guide redevelopment of the area.



Auntie Stone's Mill

DOWNTOWN RIVER DISTRICT STREETScape IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Project Process

This chapter details the steps undertaken throughout this project to determine an optimal design for each street within the River District and develop an implementation strategy for the project area as a whole. Specifically, these steps included an infrastructure needs assessment, selection of preferred alternatives, preliminary design, prioritization of preferred alternatives and a recommended implementation strategy.

This project designed a stakeholder involvement plan that sought to involve impacted agency staff and various members of the public at strategic milestones throughout the process. This plan designated three groups as follows:

- Core Project Team – Included key agency staff from various departments within the City of Fort Collins, staff members from the Downtown Development Authority and representatives from the Colorado Department of Transportation
- Primary Stakeholders – Included property and business owners that owned property and/or operated businesses within and near the project area
- General Stakeholders – Included the general public and various boards and commissions within the City structure (i.e. City Council, Transportation Board, DBA Board, DDA Board)

The core project team was involved at regular intervals throughout the study portions of the project. This enabled all affected agencies to provide input in the decision making regarding alternatives development and analysis. The primary and general stakeholders were involved in the process via three rounds of public meetings. For the first two rounds of public meetings, the primary stakeholders were visited first for two reasons: 1) to express to this group that their interests were extremely important to the project's

direction and success; and, 2) to help the project team understand the direct impact that the alternatives would have on their businesses and/or residences.

As mentioned above, there were three rounds of public meetings. The first round included a public scoping meeting, which introduced the project and gained input on project direction. The primary stakeholders were invited to a meeting on March 21, 2006 and the secondary stakeholders were invited on April 6, 2006. In addition to the public meeting on March 21, primary stakeholders were also invited to set up a one-on-one meeting with the project team to privately discuss any issues that they had with the project. The second round of meetings was a project progress meeting that sought to gain input on the alternatives that were developed. The primary stakeholders were invited on September 13, 2006 and the general stakeholders were invited on September 18, 2006. The last round of public meetings was one final meeting that allowed all stakeholders to attend and provide feedback. The purpose of this meeting was to present the preferred alternatives. This meeting was held on May 2, 2007. More details on each meeting will be provided throughout this document.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Initiation of this project included an assessment of existing conditions and a public scoping meeting.

Existing Conditions Assessment

Assessment of existing conditions included a site visit, which involved a qualitative review of existing streetscape and urban design features, a photographic analysis, a historical review and a traffic study, which included a

quantitative review of traffic operational and safety conditions.

Site Assessment

The site assessment included a qualitative review of existing streetscape and urban design features, an assessment of pedestrian mobility and the presence of buildings that either are or could be placed on the registry.

Streetscape

Streetscape conditions along the four streets within the study area vary as greatly as the land use. All streets lack a consistent adherence to those features that one would expect in an urban condition.

Only Jefferson Street provides a sidewalk, most of which is narrow and attached to the street. Those sections of detached sidewalk are provided in short stretches and also are narrow. Jefferson Street does not include on-street bike lanes. Landscaping is provided along Jefferson only at the park that is located in the northwest corner of Jefferson and Linden Street. The presence of street furniture and other amenities that contribute to pedestrian comfort and aesthetics is limited only to the west end near Jefferson Station. The one bus stop that Transfort provides along Jefferson Street is on the westbound side at Lincoln Avenue. Businesses along Jefferson Street, particularly north of Linden Street, have expressed concern that potential customers avoid patronizing their businesses due to the intimidating nature of the streetscape and the frequency of large trucks rumbling along Jefferson.

Willow Street consists of a two-lane, undivided roadway that lacks urban design features, sidewalks and minimal street lighting, and the street meanders through parts of its right-of-way. Willow is flanked on its north side, east of Linden Street, by a railroad spur that serves Ranch-Way Feeds. The land use on the opposite side of Willow is used as

parking for light industrial. Though the centerline of this stretch of Willow largely adheres to the centerline of the right-of-way, the road meanders off the centerline on the west side of Linden. There are striped bike lanes on Willow Street connecting from North College to Lincoln. Storm water pools at several locations in an inconsistent roadside ditch, often requiring pedestrians to walk on the street in the two-foot shoulder. Pine Street intersects Willow near the Bas Bleu Theatre, providing vehicular access to the United Way building between Willow Street and the Cache La Poudre River. There are railroad track crossings on both ends of Willow Street, including one on the west side that cuts through the Schrader property and one on the east side that bisects Willow's intersection with Lincoln Avenue; the east side crossing is the spur mentioned above. Two bus stops can be found along Willow Street, including one in each direction on the west end of the street between College Avenue and the railroad tracks.

Linden Street is a two-lane, undivided roadway that provides a connection to Old Town from Vine Drive. This street is similar in nature to Willow Street, east of Linden in that the street largely follows the right-of-way centerline but offers little in the way of urban design features and limited street lighting. There are on-street bike lanes along Linden from Jefferson to Vine Drive. A narrow, random sidewalk exists along the west side of the street, north of Willow. On-street parking is randomly provided, primarily in front of the El Burrito restaurant that is located in the southeast corner of Willow and Linden. Access to the Poudre River pedestrian/bicycle trail is provided from Linden on the north and south sides of the bridge. The Union Pacific Railroad crosses Linden approximately 75 feet from the Jefferson Street north curb line, leaving little storage for traffic at the intersection with Jefferson. Four Transfort bus stops are provided along Linden, including two in front of

the Open Door Mission, one just south and west of El Burrito and one just north of the Poudre River bridge.

Lincoln Avenue is a two-lane roadway that is slated in the Master Street Plan to be a four-lane arterial. The stretch of Lincoln that is within the study area is barely more than one block in length, with the bridge over the Poudre River being located little more than 100 feet from the Willow Street intersection. This intersection has geometric issues that should be addressed as part of future street improvements. A short section of detached sidewalk and street landscaping is provided along the north side of Lincoln at Willow Street in front of the Harmony Mill building. The on-street bike lanes are narrow and not continuous and street lighting is limited. Transfort does not provide any bus stops along Lincoln.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Mobility

Because today this is an industrial working district, pedestrian facilities, amenities and overall comfort are lacking throughout the District. As described above, only Jefferson Street provides a sidewalk and many portions of



that sidewalk are characterized by its users as lacking in comfort and safety. Without serviceable sidewalks anywhere else in the study area, pedestrian travel is minimal. The River District is particularly uninviting at night due to the lack of street lighting. Residents and business owners within the area have expressed a concern with the lack of street lighting, especially with reference to the educational facility that is located across Linden Street from the El Burrito. This condition adversely impacts this facility's endeavors to host evening classes for the working population.

In addition to the study area being uninviting for a pedestrian, access to the River District from Old Town is also intimidating due to the presence of the "pedestrian mobility barrier." The pedestrian mobility barrier consists of Jefferson Street (which is also State Highway 14) and the UPRR tracks that parallel Jefferson on the north. The presence of this barrier is formidable, given the truck traffic that uses Jefferson Street and the train along the tracks. This barrier makes it undesirable for a pedestrian to walk from Old Town to the River District.

Planning for pedestrians should incorporate the generally accepted principle that pedestrians will walk on average about ¼-mile to ½-mile to get to a destination, depending



DOWNTOWN RIVER DISTRICT STREETScape IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

City of Fort Collins ~ 250 North Mason Street ~ Fort Collins, CO 80524 ~ Tel 970.224.6140
 Downtown Development Authority ~ 19 Old Town Square ~ Suite 230 ~ Fort Collins, CO 80524 ~ Tel 970.484.2020
 HDR Engineering ~ 19 Old Town Square ~ Suite 242 ~ Fort Collins, CO 80524 ~ Tel 970.419.4388
 BHA Design ~ 1603 Oakridge Drive ~ Fort Collins, CO 80525 ~ Tel 970.223.7577

PROJECT PROCESS

upon the quality of the pedestrian environment; this equates to about a 5-10 minute walk. The important point is that they will walk farther if there is a continuing series of destinations that are compelling and attractive magnets. This is the same principle used in mall development whereby anchor stores locate at opposite ends of a mall in order to draw pedestrians through the full length of a shopping center. The implication of this concept for the Downtown River District is that significant attractions (anchors) should be located at key locations in order to facilitate the visitor experience and encourage pedestrians to continue moving from one destination to the next. For the district, the key locations for anchors would be:

- Linden and Willow to connect Old Town to the middle of the District
- New Belgium and the Oxbow site at the north end of the District
- A future use to be determined at a future time for the southeast end of Willow Street close to Lincoln

Anchors at these locations would greatly foster the infill of smaller activities in between and along Willow and Linden Streets.

Transit service within the River District includes two bus routes, one of which runs along Jefferson Street and Lincoln Avenue and the other along Jefferson and Linden streets. These two routes are accessed by seven bus stops at various spots within the study area. A transit level of service analysis showed that transit service within the River District is at LOS D, as compared to the standard of LOS B. The primary reason for this shortfall is the headway of each route (30 minutes or longer).

Historic Buildings

The River District encompasses the original encampment of the city of Fort Collins. Although many structures within the

original parade grounds have been removed, several historic structures, or potentially historic structures, still remain.

Two buildings are designated as local landmarks, including Harmony Mill Building and the Lindell Mill within the Ranch-Way Feeds building. There is also a number of undesignated but locally significant historic buildings in the River District, including the Union Pacific Freight Depot, the Union Pacific Passenger Depot, the Poudre Valley Elevator Company Complex, the Giddings Machine Company building and two Quonset huts along Jefferson Street.

Traffic Study

A traffic study was performed to assess safety, traffic operations and parking supply needs within the River District.

Safety Analysis

The safety analysis reviewed crash history from January 2003 through December 2005 to identify crash patterns and potential safety issues that should be addressed during the development and analysis of alternatives. In general, the analysis found relatively favorable conditions in terms of safety, given that crash rates were generally low. The lone exception to this is the Willow Street & Linden Street intersection, which suffers a crash rate that is double that of the Jefferson Street & Lincoln Avenue intersection. It is also noteworthy to state that a majority of all crashes that occurred within the study area occurred along Jefferson Street.

Traffic Operations Analysis

The traffic operations analysis was performed for existing conditions and future-year conditions. The existing conditions analysis was performed using current-year daily and peak hour traffic data and other pertinent traffic characteristics, while the future-year conditions were

analyzed using projected daily and peak hour traffic volumes.

The analysis of existing traffic conditions included vehicular traffic operations, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities and transit service. These analyses were performed in accordance with the latest edition of the Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards (LCUASS). The analysis of vehicular traffic operations found that all six intersections within the River District currently operate at acceptable levels of service. The pedestrian analysis determined that pedestrian facilities in and around the River District do not meet the City's standards for directness, continuity, street crossings, visual interest and amenities, and security. The analysis of bicycle facilities found that existing bicycle lanes meet the City's standards because they provide adequate connectivity between neighboring north-south and east-west routes. Existing transit service was also evaluated against the City's standards for service frequency, proximity of stops to area land uses and number of hours of daily service; existing transit service was deemed to not be meeting these standards. The results of these analyses are presented below in **Table 1, Existing Multi-Modal Conditions Assessment**. These tables and supporting detail for these analyses can be found in "Transportation and Parking Study, May 2006."





Table 1 - Existing Multi-Modal Conditions Assessment

Mode	Minimum Acceptable LOS	Current Condition of DTRD
Pedestrian Facilities		
Directness	A	F
Continuity	A	F
Street Crossings	B	E
Visual Interest & Amenities	A	E
Security	A	F
Bicycle Facilities	B	B
Transit Facilities	B	D

Source: City of Fort Collins Multimodal Transportation Level of Service Manual

The analysis of future-year conditions included vehicular capacity needs of the project area and the parking supply needs associated with projected land use. The future capacity needs of the River District were evaluated using two metrics, including intersection operations and overall roadway capacity. The basis for these two types of analysis was future-year traffic projections, which were generated using land use projections from the “Downtown Strategic Plan, July 18, 2000.” These land use projections included a mix of residential and non-residential development, in addition to the revamped Northside Aztlan Center. Background traffic growth, which includes traffic growth resulting from development in other parts of town, was added to the traffic generated by these land use projections to generate future-year traffic projections; these traffic projections are provided in **Figure 1, 2030 Total Volumes**. The analysis of these volumes yielded that existing infrastructure could handle the projected traffic, with the exception of two intersections (Willow Street & Linden Street and Willow & Lincoln Avenue), as well as the approach capacity to another (Jefferson Street & Mountain

Avenue), and the capacity of two streets (Riverside Avenue and Willow Street).

Parking Supply Needs

A parking study was performed to evaluate the potential for overall parking demand within the River District. The basis for this analysis included the land use assumptions from the Strategic Plan and the current parking supply throughout downtown Fort Collins.

Parking needs were estimated to determine the necessary number of parking spaces within the River District. The City has a defined parking supply requirement for residential, but non-residential development is not obligated to provide parking within the downtown area. As a result, an estimation had to be made to accommodate non-residential parking needs.

Article 3 of the City’s land use code requires a total of 1.75 parking spaces per dwelling unit. The Strategic Plan identifies a potential for 163 dwelling units within the River District. Therefore, a total of 285 spaces will be needed for residential uses within the study area.

The number of parking spaces that should be provided to accommodate non-residential development was estimated based on existing parking supply throughout downtown. As reported in the Strategic Plan, the total number of existing parking spaces in the downtown area is 10,800 spaces and the density of existing non-residential uses in the downtown area is 3,073,716 square feet. Based on this information, the calculated parking demand is 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of non-residential square footage. The Strategic Plan calls for a potential of 230,000 square feet of non-residential land use within the study area, so a total of 805 parking spaces will be needed for non-residential development. This does not include any additional parking requirements which might develop as a result of either increased density in the downtown river district or other large venue parking that

might arise as part of development within the immediate vicinity of the district.

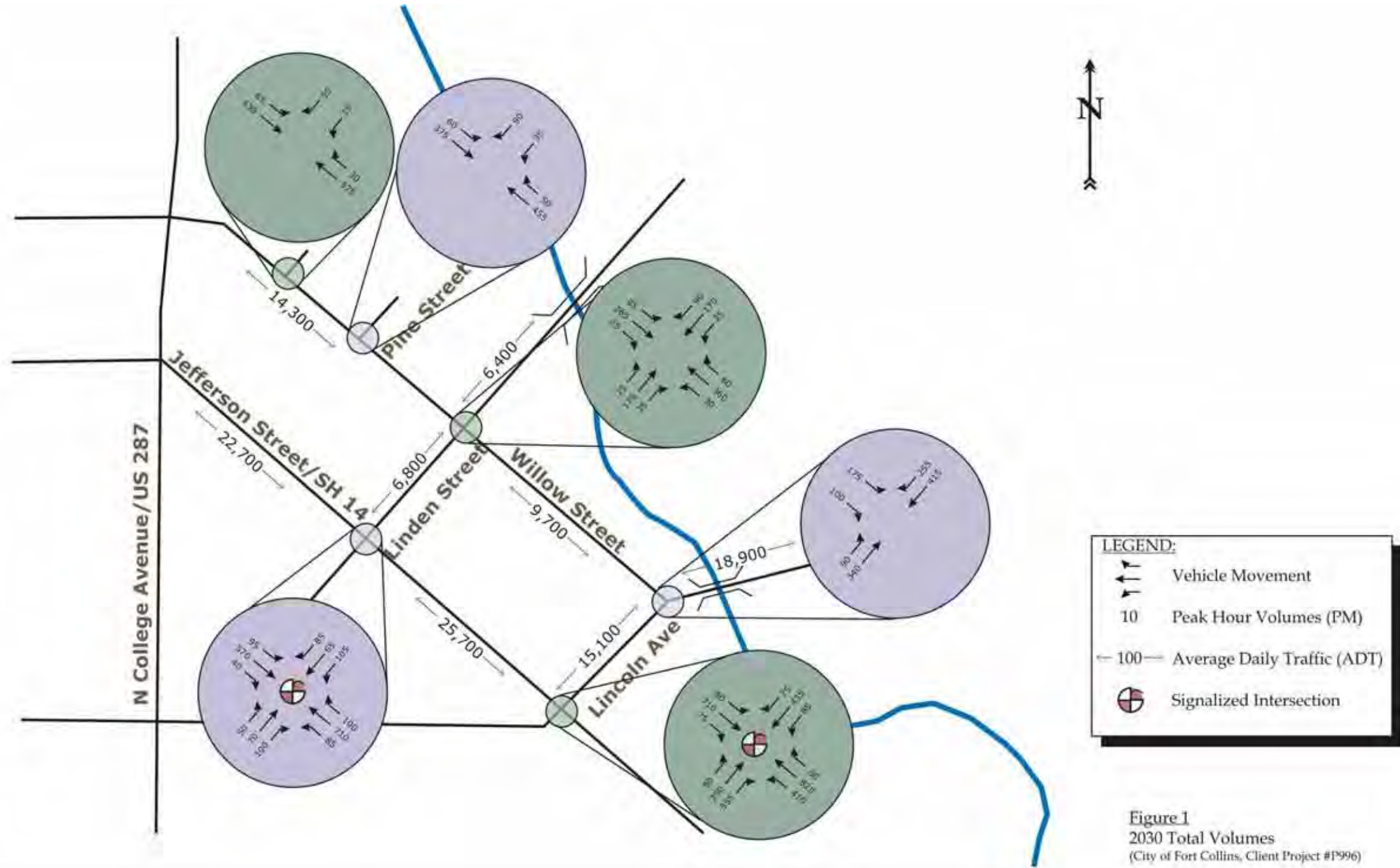
The sum of the parking spaces needed for residential development (285) and non-residential development (805) yields a parking supply need of 1,090 parking spaces. These parking spaces could be provided on-street and off-street.

On-Street: As will be discussed later in this report, this project included the development of preliminary design plans for roadways within the River District. These roadways include Jefferson Street, Willow Street, Linden Street and Lincoln Avenue. Pine Street and Poudre Street were also considered, but design plans did not include these two minor streets. Refinement of the design of these four primary streets provides an opportunity for estimation of the number of on-street parking spaces that could be provided through the future street improvement projects.

Jefferson Street currently provides limited parallel parking on both sides of the street. The concept for a future cross section of Jefferson includes parallel parking along both sides of the street throughout the study area. As such, up to 65 parking spaces could be provided along Jefferson Street; these 65 spaces would be new spaces.

Willow Street is planned as a two-lane collector street with parallel parking on both sides of the street and diagonal parking in the center (ala College Avenue). Given its 2,900 linear feet of street, Willow could provide up to 220 parking spaces between the railroad tracks on the west and Lincoln Avenue.

Linden Street is planned as a two-lane street with diagonal parking on both sides of the street. This would essentially be a continuation of the street section that is provided along Linden between Walnut Street/Old Town Square and Jefferson Street. With 1,200 linear feet of street, Linden could provide up to 70 parking spaces between Jefferson Street and the bridge over the Poudre River.





Lincoln Avenue could ultimately be constructed as a four-lane arterial, as called for in the current Master Street Plan. However, projected traffic volumes are such that, for the foreseeable future, a two-lane section should be able to adequately handle the anticipated travel demand. In either section (four-lane or two-lane arterial street), parallel parking is not typically provided and, given the presence of the UPRR tracks, the intersection improvements needed at Jefferson Street and the Poudre River bridge, few, if any, parking spaces could be provided along Lincoln. Therefore, it was presumed that Lincoln would not provide any on-street parking supply.

The sum total of on-street parking spaces to be provided along these four streets is 341 spaces.

Off-Street: The balance of parking supply needs for the River District would be provided in off-street parking facilities. With an estimated need of 1,090 spaces and an estimated on-street parking space supply of 355 spaces, there would be a need for at least 735 off-street parking spaces.

The parking facilities that would provide off-street parking supply could include surface lots and/or multi-level parking structures. This project did not seek to determine the locations of these lots and structures, choosing instead to allow site re-development and market interests to drive the location of these facilities. Many concepts were discussed during the early stages of this project as to how off-street parking could become reality. These concepts included such strategies as surface lots that could be shared by multiple land uses and eventually expand into multi-story parking structures that could be built into residential and mixed-use developments. The City and the DDA will encourage developers to look for ways to provide off-street parking supply that is beneficial to their developments and to the River District as a whole. Ideally, a joint public/private

parking solution could be developed to serve the Downtown River District area-wide needs.

Public Scoping Meeting

Public scoping meetings were held in March and April of 2006 to introduce the project to the public and to obtain their input on project direction. In accordance with the stakeholder involvement plan, this scoping meeting was first taken to the primary stakeholders, on March 21, 2006, and then to the general public on April 6, 2006. Following these two meetings, City and DDA staff presented this information to many City boards and commissions, including the DDA Board, the Transportation Board and the Historic Preservation Board.

The content of this meeting included presentation of project goals, current site conditions, current traffic volumes, current parking supply, current transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the access control plan for Jefferson Street, the Beet Street concept and the project schedule.

Meeting attendees were encouraged to provide feedback to project team members and to fill out a questionnaire/comment sheet. The input provided by members of the public and the various boards and commissions was used in the development of alternatives that were established to address infrastructure issues throughout the River District. A full inventory of the boards that were presented at this meeting and the input that was gathered can be found in the appendix.

ALTERNATIVES

The project team developed preliminary alternatives that attempted to address the issues that had been raised by the City, the DDA and members of the public. These alternatives included ideas for improving vehicular traffic flow,

pedestrian and bicycle facilities, public transit service, streetscape/urban design features, parking opportunities and other ideas that focused on improving the quality of life throughout the River District. The full list of alternatives can be found in the appendix.

An alternatives evaluation process was developed to incrementally refine the preliminary alternatives shown in the appendix to a list of preferred alternatives that could be carried forward to preliminary design. This evaluation process is provided in the appendix and is summarized below:

- Establish the preliminary alternatives list
- Screen preliminary alternatives through fatal flaw analysis
- Screen remaining alternatives through preliminary evaluation
- Present final alternatives to public and obtain input
- Perform detailed analysis on final alternatives
- Select preferred alternatives

Fatal Flaw Analysis

The alternatives were evaluated through a qualitative screening process that sought to eliminate those alternatives that demonstrated fatal flaws and were, thus, deemed infeasible. The determination of infeasibility was predicated on such considerations as cost and physical constraints. The results of this evaluation can be found in the appendix. Examples of some of the alternatives that were deemed infeasible during this stage include tunneling Jefferson under downtown, using the sidewalk along Willow Street to help accommodate on-street parking and construction of wetlands within the project area to assist in surface drainage and water quality.

Preliminary Evaluation

The alternatives that remained on the table after the fatal flaw analysis were carried forward into the preliminary evaluation. The primary focus of this phase of evaluation was to determine which alternatives would not fit the overall intent of this project.

To make this determination, evaluation criteria and an evaluation process were developed. The evaluation criteria were crafted to match the primary project goals of improved pedestrian mobility, ample parking supply, enhanced safety and pedestrian comfort through traffic calming, preservation of historic integrity and minimal right-of-way impacts. These five metrics were used as the evaluation criteria prior to the project progress meeting that provided opportunity for public input. After this meeting, stakeholder acceptance was an added criterion.

The evaluation process was another qualitative screening analysis that patterned its results from the popular Consumer Reports method. In this method, varying designs and colors of a dot pattern are used to denote a general level of satisfactory or unsatisfactory quality to each alternative. The core project team was not prepared yet to perform any level of quantitative, data-intensive analysis and the use of this qualitative analysis method allowed for another level of screening while still accomplishing this goal.

The consultant team developed a draft evaluation of the remaining alternatives and the core project team had an opportunity to comment. Once core project team comments were incorporated, the results were deemed to be a draft final and were later presented to the primary and general stakeholders for review and comment.

The outcome of this evaluation phase was a list of three to five street section alternatives, per street, that would be taken into the next phase of evaluation. In addition, alternatives related to urban design, parking supply,

intersection treatments and other design elements were carried forward. The alternatives and criteria were organized into an alternatives evaluation matrix that provided a visual assessment of which alternatives should be removed from consideration and which alternatives should be taken forward into the next phase of evaluation. The result of this phase of evaluation can be found in the appendix.

Detailed Evaluation

The alternatives that remained after the qualitative evaluations and the stakeholder review process were carried forward into a detailed evaluation phase. The result of this evaluation phase was a list of preferred alternatives that focused on the street sections for each street. Also included were various design details that were deemed influential to the overall cost estimate for each street, including such details as brick streets and modern roundabouts.

The alternatives that were carried into this phase included two-lane and four-lane alternatives along Jefferson Street; two-lane alternatives along Willow Street that offered different options for on-street parking treatments and sidewalk features; two-lane alternatives along Linden Street that offered different options for sidewalks, bicycle lanes and railroad crossing treatments; and two-lane and four-lane alternatives along Lincoln Avenue.

Public Presentation of Alternatives

A series of meetings was held in September and October of 2006 to present project progress, specifically the alternatives evaluation matrix, to the primary and general stakeholders. The primary stakeholder meeting was held on Wednesday, September 13, 2006. The general stakeholder meeting was held on Monday, September 18, 2006. The project team met with the DDA Board, the Transportation Board, the City Council and many other boards and commissions.

SELECTION OF PREFERRED DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

The selection of preferred design alternatives focused on the cross section for each street within the project area. This selection considered the technical merits of each alternative that was presented to the stakeholders in September and October of 2006 and the input that was received from these stakeholders.

Jefferson Street

The preferred section along Jefferson Street includes two 14-foot travel lanes, separated by a 14-foot raised median/left-turn lane, and an eight-foot parking lane on each side of the street. This width would occupy the entire 58-foot right-of-way along Jefferson. The sidewalk is not included within the right-of-way, so sidewalk width would remain as currently provided and future sidewalk widening and streetscape enhancements would be driven by the desires of infill and redevelopment that would occur along the corridor over time.



This alternative was selected as the preferred because of its ability to satisfy the goals of the project and those of land and business owners adjacent to Jefferson Street. The project goals that would be satisfied by this alternative include improving pedestrian mobility, enhancing parking supply and improving urban design features. Pedestrian mobility would be improved as a result of there being less pavement width for a pedestrian to cross when traversing from one side of Jefferson Street to another. The enhanced parking supply along Jefferson would also benefit pedestrian mobility by providing greater separation between the sidewalk and the street. Land and business owners would benefit from this proposal because it provides greater separation between the noise of the street, the fronts of stores, and greater opportunities for parking; this would likely lead more visitors/customers to their stores.

Willow Street

The preferred section along Willow Street includes two travel lanes that would be separated by diagonal parking in the center of the section (ala College Avenue), bicycle lanes on each side of the street, parallel parking on both sides of the street, a 10-foot attached sidewalk along the southwest side of the street, and a 20-foot attached sidewalk along the northeast side of the street. This section would occupy the entirety of the 100-foot right-of-way along Willow Street that the City owns from Auntie Stone’s Mill in Ranch-Way Feeds to the UPRR crossing on the west end of the project.



The right-of-way narrows in front of Ranch-Way Feeds, thereby requiring some narrowing of the sidewalk and/or modifications to the proposed streetscape improvements if/when this area redevelops.

This alternative was selected as the preferred for Willow Street due to its ability to maximize on-street parking, its enhancement to pedestrian mobility issues, the opportunities for significant urban design and cultural features and its accommodation of all modes of travel. Parking supply is of great concern for downtown as a whole, and this study area is no different. This alternative maximizes the amount of on-street parking that Willow Street could provide. Other ideas for parking supply, such as shared off-street parking facilities between adjacent property owners, will be encouraged. Also significant are the urban design features that this section could provide. The 20-foot sidewalk along the northeast side of the street allows for accommodation of the proposed interpretive mill race (linear water feature) and “site-specific annexation” of the sidewalk for use by businesses in creating a front-door patio (ala the patios that many restaurants in Old Town have incorporated along the sidewalk in front of their establishments).

Linden Street

The preferred section along Linden Street includes two 12-foot travel lanes, five feet of width for a bicycle-way on each side of the street, diagonal parking on both sides of the street, and a 15-foot attached sidewalk on each side of the



street. This section would occupy the entirety of the 100-foot right-of-way along Linden Street from Jefferson Street to the bridge.

This alternative was selected as the preferred for Linden Street because, just like the preferred alternative for Willow, it maximizes on-street parking supply, enhances pedestrian mobility in a manner that is consistent with Linden on the south side of Jefferson Street, provides opportunities for significant urban design features and accommodates all modes of travel. The diagonal parking maximizes parking supply along Linden and ties in very well with the proposed roundabout at the Linden & Willow Street intersection. The consistency with parking and urban design features with the rest of the street is also a distinct advantage, allowing for business “annexation” of the sidewalk that contributes to the energy of Old Town.

Lincoln Avenue

The preferred section along Lincoln Avenue includes two 12-foot travel lanes, a raised median, eight-foot bicycle lanes on each side of the street, an attached sidewalk on the north side of the street and a detached sidewalk on the south side of the street. This two-lane section will fit better into the existing right-of-way and create fewer business impacts than will the City’s current Master Street Plan designation that calls for a four-lane roadway.





This alternative was selected as the preferred because the narrower street should adequately serve the anticipated travel demand for many years to come. Maintaining a narrower street also fits well with the project goals of improved pedestrian mobility, as does the proposed detached sidewalk. This section does not include on-street parking. This is consistent with the City's policy that providing on-street parking on a designated arterial would not be in the best interest of the public due to safety considerations. Given the short length of the street and other physical constraints, not much parking would be provided, anyway.

It is also worth noting that the two-lane section will fit within the existing width of the bridge over the Poudre River. Avoiding the need to widen this bridge averts additional project cost and potential environmental impacts.

Intersections

There are four major street-street intersections within the project area, including two along Jefferson Street at Linden Street and Lincoln Avenue and two along Willow Street, also at Linden and Lincoln. Each was evaluated for potential changes in intersection control, with alternatives including maintaining the existing control (signalized or unsignalized) and consideration of roundabout control.

Based upon the technical traffic analysis and local stakeholder involvement, this project report recommends a two-lane modern roundabout at the Jefferson Street and Lincoln Avenue intersection. The purpose of the proposed modern roundabout at this location is twofold. One is to provide the greatest level of capacity along Jefferson Street, and the other is to best accommodate the preferred street section for Jefferson Street, which includes narrowing it from its current four-lane configuration to a three-lane section (one travel lane in each direction with a center left-turn lane). The proposed roundabout would consist of two

circulating lanes and would have nearly a 200-foot inscribed diameter.

In addition to addressing traffic capacity and safety considerations for Jefferson Street and for the intersection with Mountain/Lincoln, the design of the proposed roundabout would foster the gateway entry feature goals of the downtown community and fit with the urban downtown context. The roundabout concept for this intersection and the two-lane reconfiguration have been widely endorsed by property owners and business owners in the study area.

The project team understands the complexities associated with recommending a two-lane modern roundabout at this intersection, particularly given operational concerns for state highway functionality. The project team respects these concerns and is committed to continuing to work with local and regional partners to explore a wide-variety of design alternatives for the intersection and Jefferson Street, including more traditional signalized improvements as well as the proposed roundabout.

This project also recommends a modern roundabout at the Willow Street and Linden Street intersection. This is intended to alleviate the unsafe conditions found in the crash patterns that are experienced at this intersection. A modern roundabout would also serve as a gateway feature to the River District.

The other two intersections, including the Jefferson Street and Linden Street intersection and the Lincoln Avenue and Willow Street intersection, were considered for roundabout control and the Lincoln and Willow intersection was also considered for signal control. Analysis determined that both intersections should remain under current control.

Utilities

Stormwater Improvements

Improvements to the existing stormwater system were developed to address existing capacity limitations, resolve alignment issues, and address future conveyance and water quality needs associated with the redevelopment of the study area. Several stormwater conveyance and water quality alternatives were developed and are described in detail in the project Preliminary Drainage Report. The recommended concept includes new storm sewers located within the street right-of-way and abandoning the existing storm sewers that cross mid-block between Jefferson and Willow Street. The proposed storm sewer improvements also consist of improving the existing outfall to the Poudre River at the Lincoln Avenue Bridge and creating a new outfall at the Linden Street Bridge. The existing outfall midway between the two bridges will be abandoned under the recommended plan.

Across the project area, improving the quality of stormwater is addressed by a combination of diverting low flows to the existing stormwater quality facility within the Udall Natural Area and on-site Best Management Practices (BMPs). Low flows diverted to the Udall facility include those areas between Willow and Jefferson Street. Due to topography, the area between the river and Willow Street cannot be diverted to the Udall facility. As a result, the area between Willow Street and the river will require on-site BMPs to improve the quality of stormwater prior to discharge to the river. The Preliminary Drainage Report includes a series of small scale BMPs that could be applied on a parcel by parcel basis as this area develops to improve stormwater quality in a Low Impact Development (LID) based approach.



Water and Sewer Improvements

Improvements to the water distribution and sewer collection system were developed to remove pipe lines that cross private property and place them into the road right-of-way. Water system improvements also increase the reliability of the distribution system and improving available fire flows.

Stakeholder Acceptance

The challenge regarding stakeholder acceptance is to maintain a high level of momentum in the implementation phase of this project. The project team met with key boards and commissions to present the project's findings and recommended improvements. The team met with the Transportation Board on May 16, 2007, the DDA Board on June 14th, the DBA Board on June 13th and the City Council on June 12th. The result of these presentations has been overwhelming support for the project's proposed improvements. In fact, the Downtown Development Authority, the Downtown Business Association and the City's Transportation Board have formally endorsed the recommended street design options developed as part of the planning effort, including the proposal that would reduce Jefferson to a two-lane cross section, add a roundabout at Mountain and Lincoln and enhance pedestrian mobility through enhanced walkways and pedestrian crossings and streetscape enhancements throughout the River District.

There is a level of excitement and anticipation to initiate the physical infrastructure improvements in the River District as soon as possible. The quick and efficient alignment of funding sources so that construction can begin in a timely manner will help avoid waning acceptance of the proposed improvements. The details associated with implementation of the proposed improvements are discussed in the next chapter of this document.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE

The preferred design alternatives were carried into preliminary design. The intent of this level of design was to provide the City and interested stakeholders with a framework for constructing improvements within the River District. The plan set for this level of design is provided in the appendix of this report.

Please note that the stage of design development included in this project is preliminary in nature. As such, only the horizontal controls of the proposed improvements have been identified and the vertical elements of the proposed improvements are not set. Limited effort was made to ensure that the vertical geometry associated with the proposed improvements could effectively tie into existing topography. The primary reason for this approach was that the anticipated intensity of infill and redevelopment in the River District will likely result in a significant change to the topography of the study area. Users of this plan set are cautioned not to use these plans for final design purposes, but should consider this to be a flexible design package as a resource to guide their specific engineering plans.

The preliminary design package included in the appendix identified the proposed street improvements along all four streets in the study area and the associated storm drain system. This design package was reviewed by City Engineering and the Utilities department staff. Comments that were received during these review phases are also included in the appendix.

There were a few notable design issues that were not resolved in the preliminary design package. Some of these issues were not resolved because they fell out of the auspices of the scope of this project, while others remained unresolved due to the unpredictable nature of the potential redevelopment of private parcels within the River District. These issues are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Pine Street and Poudre Street

These two streets have been discussed in this report, with desire for brick streets and minimal sidewalk treatments along Pine Street and a pedestrian/bicycle/downtown alley concept along Poudre Street. These two streets were added to the study area during this project for conceptual-level analysis only and, thus, were not included in the preliminary design phase.

Modern Roundabouts

Detailed design of modern roundabouts was not included in the scope of this project. Their use was not anticipated at the outset of this project and, due to the complexity of modern roundabout design features, including them in this project's scope was financially infeasible. This is of particular note related to the proposed modern roundabout at the Jefferson Street/Riverside Avenue and Mountain Avenue/ Lincoln Avenue intersection. At the time of production of this report, the placement of the roundabout was not final, nor were the design features, pedestrian treatments, railroad crossing mitigation issues, etc. The City and the Colorado Department of Transportation are continuing to explore options for developing a thorough alternatives analysis process for Jefferson Street/SH14 that would include evaluation of a wide-variety of improvements to this intersection and to Jefferson Street. As such, users of this plan set should exercise added caution when attempting to incorporate the represented intersection improvements into his/her plans.

Phasing of Improvements

Detail on the phasing of the proposed improvements will be provided later in this section of this report. The phasing that is provided in this report represents the culmination of project prioritization and the feasibility of this prioritization from an engineering standpoint. Although certain infrastructure features must be installed prior to others (i.e.

downstream storm drain improvements must be in place before upstream improvements), it is possible that later roadway phases depicted in this report could occur before earlier roadway phases. Timing of improvements will likely be driven by private market forces for infill and redevelopment projects and/or public capital project funding as it comes available over time.

Other Street Design Issues

As noted above, the user is cautioned in using the preliminary design set from this project for use in developing his/her final design package. Roadway profiles were developed to match existing centerline profiles as closely as practical. The user of this plan set is encouraged to explore other options for vertical geometry. For example, the centerline profile along the east end of Willow Street depicts the street profile matching the elevation of the railroad track spur that services Ranch-Way Feeds. It is possible, however, that improvements to this stretch of Willow Street will occur only if the Ranch-Way Feeds site redevelops, in which case the railroad tracks would no longer be in place. Another example of this would be the proposed striping at the Lincoln Avenue and Willow Street intersection. This plan shows the pedestrian crossings being skewed to avoid these tracks, but, again, these tracks may or may not be in place when improvements to this intersection occur. These and other such street design issues or changing physical characteristics within the area need to be resolved at the final design level.

Words of Caution

Prioritization Plan: Real Life Happens

It must be noted that actual development activity could amend this prioritization plan. Local, state, and federal grant funding could accelerate certain transportation or utility projects ahead of others. Such an amendment would likely be based primarily on available funding and which projects are approved through regional competitive processes, as well the timing of private infill and redevelopment projects. These opportunities may necessitate a review regarding the feasibility of restructuring priorities. For example, upstream storm drain improvements could be made only if downstream infrastructure were already in place. If development activity occurs that first requires upstream infrastructure improvements, then there may be a need for adjustments in the proposed prioritization in other parts of the River District. In summary, the prioritization that is proposed in this document is simply one alternative for how these improvements could be constructed and actual development and available funding could require the City or developers to take another approach.

Preliminary Design Package

It is also important to note that the design improvements contained within this document were taken to preliminary-level design only and should not be construed by the user of these plans as being a final design product. This preliminary design identified only how the preferred alternative typical sections could fit within the available rights-of-way. As such, this design effort did not include vertical geometry nor did it identify where toes of slope would match to existing ground.

The nature of redevelopment of the study area lends itself to this approach, given that vertical geometry of many parcels of land adjacent to the streets within the study area could also change. Centerline elevations were matched as closely as possible to minimize the impacts to existing ground

(again, existing ground could change), but notable changes are likely. The centerline elevation along Willow Street between Linden Street and Lincoln Avenue where the railroad spur to Ranch-Way Feeds crosses Willow Street is one example. When/If redevelopment of the Ranch-Way Feeds property occurs, the tracks may be removed and the nature of Willow Street could change significantly. As another example, the vertical geometry of Lincoln Avenue would also be impacted by the removal of the tracks.

Aside from vertical geometry, other design features within the study area are likely to change as redevelopment occurs and the ultimate configuration of these streets is constructed. One example is the configuration and pedestrian treatments at the Willow and Lincoln intersection. As shown, the pedestrian crossings at this intersection would need to avoid the railroad tracks. This condition requires that pedestrians cross a longer distance of roadway than what would be ideal. Removal of the tracks, however, would allow for a more direct and shorter crossing for pedestrians.

In summary, the reader is advised that the design plans provided in this document are preliminary-level design only. Users of these plans need to consider geometric and other design issues that are specific to the site that he/she is designing.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The final product of this project is an infrastructure design plan with an enhanced vision for the River District. As such, the recommended strategy for plan implementation requires the coordination of existing street standards, existing fee programs, and the pursuit of various funding initiatives – public & private – to achieve this enhanced vision.

An underlying tenet of this project is to prime the pump for infill and redevelopment by adequately planning the future infrastructure needed to support the land-use goals for the River District. The recommended strategy for plan implementation seeks to avoid the placement of cost for enhanced design features fully on either the public or the private sector. The intent is to approach the implementation through a combined partnership among a diverse group of stakeholders over time to create the necessary infrastructure and land uses envisioned for this important community area. Another tenet of this project is to build out the River District infrastructure in a logical pattern reflecting the short-term and long-range needs of the area and to avoid “piecemeal” construction of streetscape segments on the various sections of roadway in the project area.

It is more desirable to construct the streetscape for various road segments at the same time and under the control of a single contractor, thereby eliminating physical gaps in the streetscape when properties redevelop at different times, and ensuring consistency and quality of construction. This approach also seeks to avoid the “first one in pays” concept, and eliminate the undue burden on a private redevelopment project to pay for the entire cost of the improvements on their block and then wait for adjacent properties to build and reimburse their investment. This approach also helps minimize business impacts during construction by targeting

key project phases together and avoiding repetitive closures and detours.

The implementation strategy is multi-faceted in terms of aligning funds to accomplish the plan goals. The first facet of this strategy is to determine what improvements (or portion of improvements) in the River District can be paid for with existing City funding mechanisms as development occurs.

The second facet of the implementation strategy is to collect in escrow from project developers at the time a property redevelops, the equivalent number of dollars that would be required to improve the street and streetscape to the City’s existing street standards per the Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards. These funds could then be set aside and used as local cash match to leverage grant funds. This practice of escrowing a developer’s portion of the local street has already been applied recently to several infill and redevelopment projects in the River District.

This practice also ensures that the private sector is not subject to a financial disincentive, such as being asked to pay for the enhanced costs of the brick streets, mill race water feature, etc. as compared with developers building projects in other areas of the community. Rather, the private sector’s cost for redeveloping property in the River District would be proportional to the cost of developing elsewhere in the municipal limits.

Lastly, project staff will continue to investigate and pursue a wide variety of funding sources to cover the expense of the “enhanced” features proposed in this project (brick streets, wider sidewalks, decorative lighting fixtures, street furniture, transit stop enhancements, etc.). A matrix that identifies the various funding sources is provided in the appendix of this report. Examples of funding sources include federal transportation enhancement funds, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, local/regional capital project initiatives such as “Building on

Basics” and others. Two of these funding sources have already been applied for by project staff in an effort to jumpstart infrastructure improvements in the area. These two funding sources include transportation enhancement funding to initiate streetscape improvements on Linden Street and CMAQ funding for Jefferson Street.

When funding sources are identified and committed to eligible street improvements, construction will occur in accordance with the proposed project phasing and in response to private market-driven forces.

PRIORITIZED LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS

The impetus for this project was the increase in infill and redevelopment interest that the City and the DDA have responded to in recent years for parcels of land throughout the River District. At the time of this report, several development applications have reached some stage of fulfillment, ranging from inquiries about the development application process to submission of application documents to final construction and ribbon cutting. Some of these development applications have included:

- Redevelopment of the Northside Aztlan Center (open for business)
- Construction of the CTL Thompson building in place of the old train depot (open for business)
- Willow Street Lofts (under construction)
- Interest in potential infill and redevelopment projects for several other parcels throughout the River District area

The unpredictable nature of development activity, coupled with uncertainty in the economy, make scheduled implementation of the proposed improvements tricky to predict at best. The next section of this report deals with

implementation strategies that could help navigate the proposed improvements recommended by this project over time as these market forces play out. Understanding the potential, logical prioritization of these improvements provides a foundation for a solid implementation strategy that could be conducted in advance or concurrently with the private sector efforts. This next section offers a potential approach to prioritization of these improvements.

Prioritization

Development of the prioritization plan that is proposed in this section is predicated on the ideal staging of surface improvements. The ideal plan seeks to maximize the level of interaction between the burgeoning Old Town/Downtown atmosphere and the energy that the DDA and City planning efforts have sought to cultivate in the River District. This requires providing attractions to visitors in Old Town/Downtown to want to migrate towards the River District, and ultimately vice versa.

As noted, this ideal focuses on surface improvements. Subsurface improvements also require a level of prioritization, but those priorities were considered secondarily wherever possible. There certainly are instances where subsurface priorities govern, but most of the proposed prioritization falls under the guise of maximizing orderly development of surface improvements.

The prioritization plan will be discussed in the following paragraphs of this section. This plan is also displayed graphically in **Figure 2, Prioritization Plan**, found on Page 22.

Phase 1 – Linden Street

This phase seeks to construct the proposed street section and all subsurface improvements along the Linden Street alignment, from Jefferson Street to the Poudre River bridge. Street improvements include widening to the two-lane

section that is shown on Page 15. The street section would include two 12-foot travel lanes, five feet of width for a bicycle-way on each side of the street, diagonal parking on both sides of the street, and a 15-foot attached sidewalk on each side of the street. Subsurface improvements beneath Linden Street include a 42-inch storm drain and 54-inch storm drain, with laterals placed where required to collect surface flow. This line would outfall into the Poudre River beneath the bridge at the northeast end of this stretch of roadway. This outfall would include high-flow stormwater, for which direct flow into the river is considered acceptable.

This phase was selected as Phase 1 because it provides an immediate visual impact and physical connection for all modes of transportation to the heart of Old Town/Downtown with the River District. To enhance this effect, pedestrian mobility improvements would also be made to the Jefferson Street and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossings that separate Old Town/Downtown from the River District. Improvements to the Jefferson Street crossing

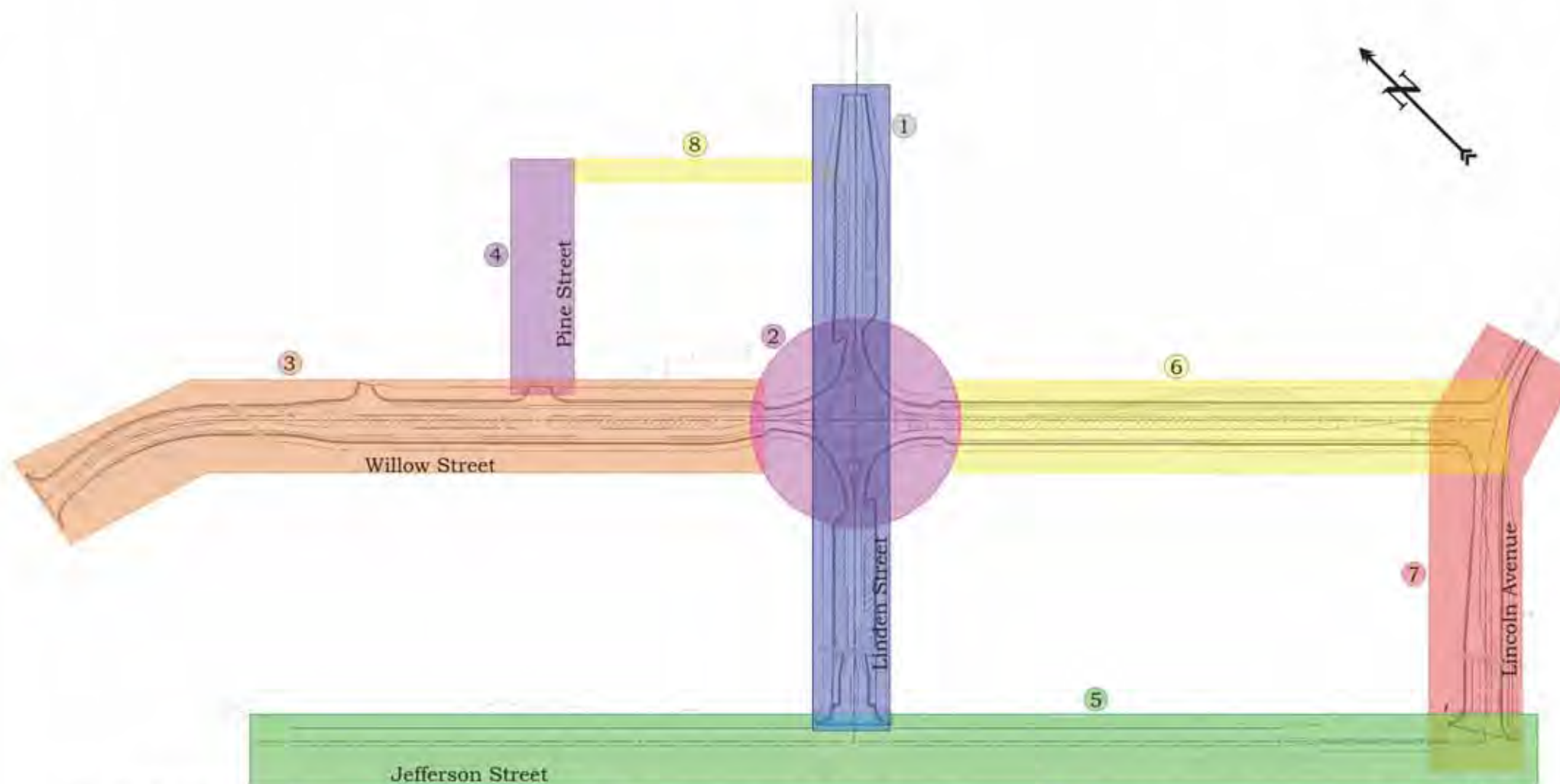
could include bulb-outs at the intersection, which would reduce the pedestrian crossing distance and enhance the aesthetics of the crossing. The viability of this improvement is predicated on the ultimate configuration of the Jefferson Street corridor. This project proposes narrowing Jefferson Street from its current four-lane configuration to a three-lane configuration, thereby reducing the pavement width of Jefferson. Improvements to the UPRR crossing could include such visual and safety enhancements as colored concrete, fencing and pedestrian gates.

Other pertinent design details include brick street construction, thematic signage and lighting, transit stop improvements, and connections to pedestrian and bicycle facilities that link outside of the study area.

Phase 2 – Intersection of Willow Street and Linden Street

This phase seeks to construct the proposed intersection improvements at the Willow Street and Linden Street intersection. The proposed improvements include a one-lane modern roundabout with an inscribed diameter of 130 feet.





- ① Linden Street, from Jefferson Street to the Poudre River bridge
- ② Willow Street and Linden Street roundabout
- ③ Willow Street, from College Avenue to Linden Street
- ④ Pine Street, from Willow Street to the United Way parking lot
- ⑤ Jefferson Street, from College Avenue to Mountain Avenue (includes roundabout at Mountain Avenue)
- ⑥ Willow Street, from Linden Street to Lincoln Avenue
- ⑦ Lincoln Avenue, from Jefferson Street to the Poudre River bridge
- ⑧ Poudre Street (pedestrian mall)

Figure 2
 Prioritization Plan
 (City of Fort Collins, Client Project #P996)

The roundabout is intended as a preferred alternative to four-way stop-control that also serves as a landmark entry feature that tells visitors that they are in the heart of the River District. The aesthetics of the roundabout could also serve as a location for cultural interpretive imagery and as an attraction for those who are participating in the events and shopping within Old Town/Downtown and along Linden Street, between Walnut Street and Jefferson Street.

Phase 3 – Willow Street, west of Linden Street

This phase seeks to construct street and subsurface improvements along Willow Street from the UPRR crossing on the west end of the project to the Linden Street intersection. The street section includes two travel lanes that would be separated by diagonal parking in the center of the section (ala College Avenue), bicycle lanes on each side of the street, parallel parking on both sides of the street, a 10-foot attached sidewalk along the southwest side of the street, and a 20-foot attached sidewalk along the northeast side of



the street. Subsurface improvements beneath this stretch of Willow Street include a 36-inch storm drain that would tie into the storm drain that would be constructed under Linden Street in Phase 1.

This phase was selected as Phase 3 in response to the level of development activity that has occurred within the study area. The redevelopment of the Northside Aztlan Center and the Lagunitas Companies’ loft development, between Aztlan and the Bas Bleu Theater, are the first of this activity. Given the attractions that are the Aztlan Center and Bas Bleu, improvements to this stretch of Willow Street would greatly benefit the District and its users, primarily given that there aren’t any existing pedestrian or designated parking facilities along Willow Street.

Other pertinent design details include brick street construction, thematic signage and lighting, transit stop improvements and an interpretive mill race that would be contained within the 20-foot sidewalk on the northeast side of the street. At a width of three or four feet, the mill race would be an interpretive water feature that seeks to capture the history of Willow Street, which used to be a 37-foot wide waterway that diverted water from the Poudre River, upstream of existing College Avenue, to run Auntie Stone’s mill, which is located within the building structure of Ranch-Way Feeds. This project would also seek to incorporate signage along the mill race that would offer historical facts about Auntie Stone and the original mill race.

Phase 4 – Pine Street

This phase would construct a “mixed-use” street facility that accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicular traffic in the same space. The street would include a 60-foot wide envelope, including sufficient width for vehicular traffic and perpendicular on-street parking. This street would surface drain all stormwater to Willow Street or through the United Way parking facility and into the drainage chases that

currently convey stormwater to the Poudre River. The intent is that this street would be constructed of brick.

Phase 5 – Jefferson Street

This phase seeks to construct street and subsurface improvements along Jefferson Street from the west end of the project to the east end, as well as to construct a two-lane modern roundabout at the Jefferson Street/Lincoln Avenue intersection. The proposed street section includes narrowing Jefferson Street from its current four-lane configuration to a three-lane section. The proposed street section would include two 14-foot travel lanes, separated by a 14-foot raised median/center left-turn lane. The sidewalk is not included within the right-of-way, so increased sidewalk width opportunities would be driven by the desires of redevelopment that would occur along the corridor.



The roundabout would consist of two circulating lanes and would have nearly a 200-foot inscribed diameter. The roundabout is considered integral to the success of narrowing Jefferson Street, due to the intersection's impact to street capacity. Traffic analyses revealed failing levels of service in future years due to the lack of capacity of the signal; installing a modern roundabout would alleviate this condition. As stated previously in this report, the City is continuing to work with CDOT to explore an alternatives analysis process to evaluate traditional and modern roundabout improvements for this intersection, as well as design alternatives for Jefferson Street/SH14 between College Avenue and Mountain Avenue.

This phase is the fifth phase due to its significance in improving business viability along Jefferson Street and pedestrian mobility connecting to and within the study area. Elements of Phase 1, such as the curb bulb-outs at the intersection of Jefferson and Linden, may be dependent on the success of narrowing Jefferson Street, so those Phase 1 improvements may need to be delayed until Phase 5.

Subsurface improvements would include a 42-inch storm drain between Pine Street and Linden Street and between Chestnut Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Subsurface improvements contained within Phase 5 would likely also include storm drain improvements beneath Lincoln Avenue and from Lincoln Avenue to the Poudre River and Udall Natural Area. Stormwater conveyance beneath Jefferson Street is bound for the Udall Natural Area and, ultimately, the Poudre River, thus requiring more storm drain construction than what will be beneath Jefferson Street. This condition would exist independent of the preferred intersection control at Jefferson and Lincoln.

Phase 6 – Willow Street, east of Linden Street

This phase seeks to construct street and subsurface improvements along Willow Street from the Linden Street

intersection to Lincoln Avenue. This street section would be identical to the section on the west side of Linden Street, with two travel lanes, center diagonal parking, bicycle lanes on each side of the street, parallel parking on both sides of the street, a 10-foot attached sidewalk along the southwest side of the street, and a 20-foot attached sidewalk along the northeast side of the street. Subsurface improvements beneath this stretch of Willow Street include a 30-inch storm drain that would tie into the storm drain that would be constructed under Lincoln Avenue in Phase 5.

This phase was selected later in prioritization due to the lesser level of noted development interest in adjacent sections of the study area.

Other pertinent design details include brick street construction, thematic signage and lighting, transit stop improvements and the interpretive mill race described above. This stretch of roadway would not realize the proposed improvements in their entirety until redevelopment of the Ranch-Way Feeds site. This is due to the need to maintain railroad spur access to the facility and the presence of the tracks would inhibit construction of the section. However, some street improvements along this segment of Willow Street could be constructed along with the sidewalk and streetscape improvements along the south side of Willow prior to any changes at the Ranch-way Feeds site.

Phase 7 – Lincoln Avenue

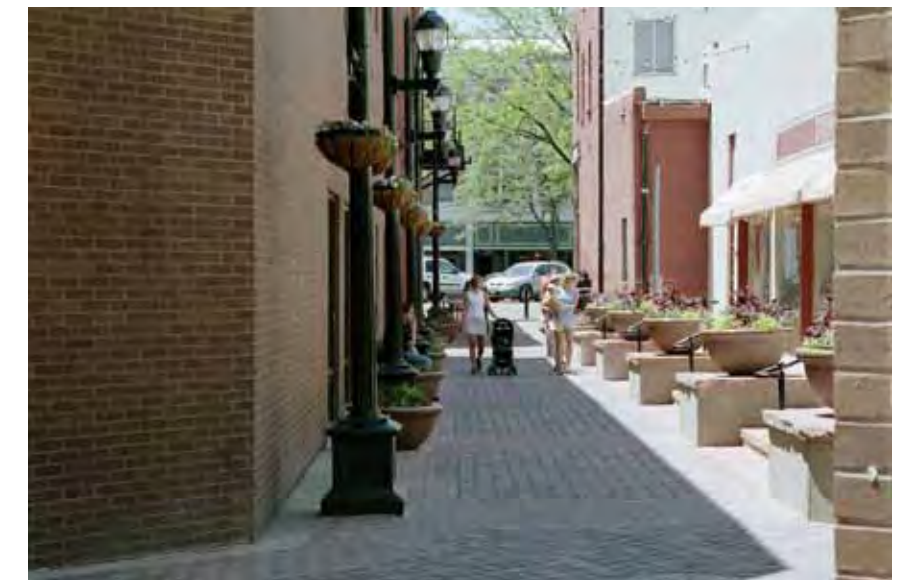
This phase would construct street improvements along Lincoln Avenue from Jefferson Street to the Poudre River bridge. The proposed street section includes two 12-foot travel lanes, a raised median, bicycle lanes on each side of the street, an attached sidewalk on the north side of the street and a detached sidewalk on the south side of the street. It is anticipated that subsurface improvements

beneath Lincoln Avenue would have been constructed with Phase 5.

As with Phase 6, this phase was selected later in prioritization due to a lack of known development interest adjacent to this street.

Phase 8 – Poudre Street

This phase would construct a pedestrian/bicycle only, brick alley way along the alignment of this existing alley section. The street could include a 20-foot wide street that emulates pedestrian-focused brick streets in Europe and recent downtown alleyway improvement projects constructed by the DDA. Surface drainage would be funneled to the center of the street, with subsurface storm drains that tie into the line beneath Linden Street.



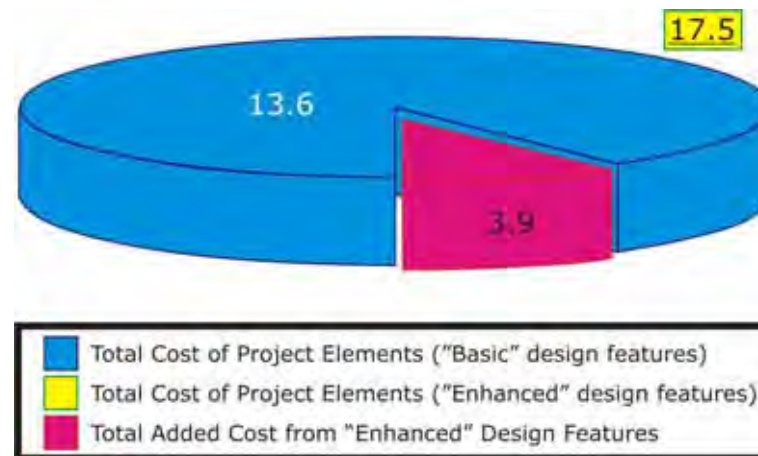
At the time of this report, the City and the DDA were successful in securing federal grant funding from CDOT and the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization to begin Phases 1 and 5. Street enhancement funding was granted to begin Linden Street improvements in 2009 and CMAQ funding was approved for the design phase of the Jefferson Street/ SH14 improvements. At the time of this report, the City, DDA, and CDOT are still exploring options for conducting the alternatives analysis process for Jefferson Street/SH14. A final determination on the next steps for this project will likely be determined in mid-2008. As such, the CMAQ grant could accelerate components of Phase 5 to occur prior to Phases 2, 3 and 4. This scenario speaks to the variability that prioritization of the recommended improvements could experience as the study area redevelops and as various public funding resources become available.

PROJECT COSTS

Preliminary-level design cost estimates were developed for each element of the project. The costs of each element were combined and a total cost for the proposed improvements is provided in this section. The detail associated with each element of the project can be found in the appendix.

The costs were developed using the preliminary-level design as the basis. The most notable aspect of the costs that were developed for this project involve the calculation of “basic” urban design features versus “enhanced” urban design features. The concept of “basic” urban design features includes those street features that you would find along most streets in Fort Collins (adequate sidewalks, street lighting, asphalt or concrete streets, etc.). The concept of “enhanced” urban design features includes street elements that are more typically found in Old Town, as well as some additional design features that were developed specifically for this project (wide sidewalks, thematic lighting, brick streets, etc.).

The total cost for the “basic” level of the proposed street improvements is \$13.6 million. This number includes the “basic” urban design features for all streets within the study area and the necessary stormwater improvements. The total cost for the “enhanced” level of the proposed improvements is \$17.5 million. This number includes the “basic” cost estimate plus the additional dollars for “enhanced” urban design features. It should be noted that these costs were developed using Year 2007 unit costs.



PROJECT ACTION ITEMS

Paramount to successful implementation of this project will be the satisfaction of specific action items to be taken by City and DDA staff. These action items are listed below:

1. Actively pursue future grant funding opportunities from a wide variety of potential sources to build the recommended improvements;
2. Explore short-term and long-range parking strategies;
3. Conduct an inventory and assessment of available land within the city limits and/or Growth Management Area boundary for industrial businesses wishing to relocate out of the River District; and,
4. Support the implementation of the UniverCity Connections recommendations for the River District, particularly the wayfinding/information system improvements and new transit loop to link the project area to/from downtown and the surrounding areas.

It is important to keep in mind that the timing of the actual construction of the recommended improvements will be determined based on available funding sources and development activity within the project area. However, it is necessary for the City and the DDA to work proactively over the next few years to help encourage and support the exciting transformation of the Downtown River District!